

**USE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES BY STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL  
NEEDS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL), OYO, OYO STATE,  
NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

This study assessed the use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. It adopted a quantitative research method. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The study population comprises of 331 students in the Schools of Cerebral Disability (CBD), Hearing Impairments (SHI), Learning Disabilities (SLD), Physical Impairments (SPH), Visual Impairment (SVI) and Rehabilitation Education (SRE). Total enumeration was used due to the manageable size of the population and the analysis was based on the 267 responses received. The findings show that available types of library information resources were Assistive technologies, textbooks, newspapers/Magazines, and e- resources like e-books, e-encyclopedias, e-journals, etc. These were frequently used for the purpose of writing project, current awareness/information, leisure and recreation, to pass examination, research findings, assignment, lesson notes, employment searching purposes, to improve medical/health awareness, etc. Factors hindering the use include physical accessibility, inadequate skills by users, inadequate staff training, financial constraints, communication barriers, lack of assistive technologies, etc. The study therefore recommended the provision of funds available to the College and the library to ensure the inclusivity of service provision, acquisition of up-to-date information resources, implementation of policies that encourage staff trainings/workshops and conferences, better communication and approach and skills acquisition for better service delivery.

**Key words:** College Library, Library Information Resources, Use, Students with Special Needs.

**Introduction**

The college library provides a comprehensive selection of authoritative books and documents needed by the school members to pursue their research programs; promotes the proper use of the reading materials available in the stack, and trains students in making use of

the library properly to derive full advantage out of it. Special libraries attached to colleges involve in the provision of information resources and services in, supplementary to and or different from those provided in the regular library services by a systematic modification and adaptation of instructional techniques and resources to meet the needs of the disabled learners. It is to help them to become self-independent in the search for education and information.

Among the users of the college library are students with special needs; vulnerable groups, the students with disabilities who equally need to benefit from the information resources of the college library. The World Health Organization (2022) defines special needs as physical or mental characteristics labelled or perceived as impairments or dysfunctions and some personal or social limitation associated with those impairments. Goodley, et al (2019) described special needs as ‘having sensory, physical, and cognitive impairments. These categories of people are further described as having hearing, or visual impairments, speech disorders, emotional disorder, mental retardation, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities among others. Students with disabilities can include students with physical, visual, sensory, or learning disabilities. Disability is divided into five major types, which are mentally disabled, visually impaired, hearing-impaired and talking-impaired, orthopedically handicapped, and perpetual disabled (Bakpo, 2014). These categories of students irrespective of their disabilities are required to be provided with information resources in the college library.

These information resources can include but are not limited to government publications, rare books, textbooks, fiction, encyclopedias, dictionaries, geographies, maps, atlases, and journals. Examples of published information resources include books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, while unpublished materials include projects, theses, conference papers, workshop papers, and seminar papers. There is hardly any possible development of knowledge in the field

of human endeavor today without the contribution of library books and various types of information resources which exist in libraries (Emasealu, 2019). Information resources in the college library are meant for use by students with special needs.

Use of information resources refers to the extent to which users make use of the resources of a library to meet their information needs. Use is the single criterion, which could be used to determine the reason for retaining a document within the collection of a library, and use is essential in guiding the collection development effort of a library. Information resources are to be used for the purpose of recreational reading, that is, reading for pleasure and personal development. This study was therefore designed to assess of the use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

The use of library information resources by students with special needs remains an underexplored area, despite the increasing emphasis on inclusivity in education. Understanding how students with special needs access and engage with library resources is crucial for ensuring equitable access to information and promoting their academic success. This study aims to investigate the current patterns of usage, barriers, and facilitators encountered by students with special needs when accessing library information resources with goal of informing the development of targeted interventions and supports or enhance their learning experience thus necessitates the assessment of the use of library information resources by students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study will provide information on the available types of information resources used, purpose

of use, frequency of use and factors hinder the use of library information resources by student with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

- i. To identify the types of library information resources used by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria;
- ii. To ascertain the purpose of use of library information resources by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria;
- iii. To determine the frequency of use of library information resources by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria; and
- iv. To find out the factors hindering the use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

Library Information resources are very important in achieving the academic aims of the challenged. Information resources are those information-bearing materials that are both in printed and electronic formats which may require digital devices before they are accessed and used. Information resources are interpreted to mean only those resources that have been acquired and processed for use (Nwabueze and Ntogo-Sanghanen, 2017). These resources are identified, according to Atabor (2015) and Rayini (2017), to include Braille books, talking books, tape audio, large print materials, electronic texts, moon type, and DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) books. These resources are further identified, according to Iroeze, Chima-James, Agim and Opara (2018) and Akanwa and Udo-Anyanwu (2017), that include pictures, electronic bulletin boards, films strips, slides, realia, graphics, finger alphabets, mockups. By the time the hearing impaired has mastered letters of the alphabets and word formations using the above information resources, they will then be able to use the conventional information resources to enhance their knowledge. Other identified special information resources for hearing impaired users are, according to Iroeze, Chima-James, Agim and Opara (2018), these include

picture books, easy to read books, motion pictures, television, posters, talking books on cassettes and records, games, toys. Also, Information resources provided for the physically challenged which are books/prints, non-prints, and electronic information resources. It is believed that the availability of various alternative formats of information resources will greatly enhance their use.

Therefore, the use of these library information resources by the persons with special needs, Ajobiwe (2019) opined that the provision and use of alternative formats such as Braille, large prints, talking books and the availability of reading aids, volunteers and transcription services in libraries serving persons with visual impairment in Nigeria will go a long way in making information accessible to the blind and partially sighted. Use of information resources by visually impaired pupils has to do with visually impaired pupils consulting information resources to satisfy their information needs. However, Onifade and Sowole (2009) rightly noted that, for libraries to add to the advancement of knowledge, they must not only provide resources but also ensure that the resources are effectively used. Ekwelem, (2013) carried out a study and revealed that there is nothing on the ground for disabled student to participate fully in the ongoing technology exploits. It was found that the only electronic resources available are taped books and online public access catalog (OPAC) and these have not been fully used. The study also indicated that all the items for the mobility challenged were not available in any of the studied samples, suggesting that, in general terms, that mobility challenged users are not benefiting from the new technology.

Kiambati (2021), carried out a study on the usability of digital libraries during the information retrieval by persons with visual impairment in selected public universities in Kenya. The study findings revealed the followings: that digital libraries were not friendly to use by students with visual impairment, on the efficiency of digital libraries, slightly more than half of students with visual impairment reported that digital libraries are efficient; that user's level of satisfaction was independent of their gender and age; that majority of students with visual impairment found the digital libraries not easy to learn; that digital libraries were not accessible to persons with visual impairment and that some of them lacked the basic accessibility

requirements for the visually impaired as guided by the World Wide Web Consortium standards. The study concludes that prior training of students with visual impairments in assistive technology improves overall user experience with digital libraries. Thus, the study recommends the following: the institutionalization of assistive technology training as a strategy to enhance the use of digital library resources among users with visual impairment, and involvement of persons with visual impairment in usability testing of information retrieval (IR) systems such as the digital library to facilitate the design of friendly, efficient, easy to use, easy to learn and accessible systems.

Asuata and Emasealu (2022) in their study on availability and utilizations of library information resources in Secondary Schools by special patrons. Finding reveals that information resources in the libraries understudied were inadequate and under-utilized. Also, it was established that among other barriers, under-funding is a major barrier to making information resources available for the physically challenged. It was recommended that schools offering special education for the hearing impaired should pace up in their developmental gap by providing such resources and ensure adequate funding by all stakeholders. Thus far, there is no known literature on the use of library information resources by students with special needs at Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria, hence this study.

### **Research methods**

This study employed a descriptive survey method. The population of the study comprises 331 of students with special needs in six schools in the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. Total enumeration method was used to sample all persons with special needs. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data gathered through questionnaire were presented in tables while descriptive statistics (percentage and mean

scores) were used in the data analysis. A total of 331 questionnaires were administered to the participants, out of which 267 usable questionnaires were returned from the students who were met in their respective classes. A 4-point scale was used. The mid-point of 2.5 criterion mean is accepted as positive response. Any mean score that is 2.5 above is considered as positive and accepted and any mean score below 2.5 is considered as negative and rejected. For the percentage, 50% and above is regarded as positive and accepted while any below 50% is regarded as negative and not accepted.

### Data presentation and analysis

Out of the 267 copies of the questionnaire returned, 151 (56.55%) were male while 116 (43.45%) were female. This indicates that a larger proportion of respondents were male. In the same vein, most of the students who responded with higher percentage were 300L with frequency of 143 (53.56%), followed by 200L with frequency of 121 (45.32%), while the lowest were 100L with the frequency of 3 (1.12%).

**Research question one:** What are the available types of library information resources used by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 1.** Analysis on the available types of library information resources use by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Available types of library information resources used. I use:	Highly Used (HU) (%)	Used (U) (%)	Rarely used (RU) (%)	Not Used (NU) (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
1	textbooks to complement my class notes	111(41.57)	113(42.32)	31(11.61)	12(4.49)	3.21
2	encyclopedias to check topics of subjects	112(41.95)	99(37.08)	33(12.36)	23(8.61)	3.12
3	dictionaries to check the spellings and meaning of words	115(43.07)	97(36.33)	41(15.36)	14(5.24)	3.17
4	journals for my research and class assignments	113(42.32)	101(37.83)	40(14.98)	13(4.87)	3.18
5	newspapers/Magazines to update and	112(41.95)	113(42.32)	29(10.86)	13(4.87)	3.21

	entertain myself					
6	computer to type my documents and assignments	119(44.57)	93(34.83)	28(10.49)	17(6.37)	3.10
7	e- resources like e-books, e-encyclopedias, e-journals, etc., to complement the print resources	117(43.82)	105(39.33)	27(10.11)	18(6.74)	3.20
8	internet to check and download materials	119(44.57)	94(35.21)	27(10.11)	14(5.24)	3.09
9	databases to get materials for my assignments	111(41.57)	109(40.82)	29(10.86)	18(6.74)	3.17
10	Assistive technologies like Braille, Large Print Materials, Talking Books, DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) Books, Electronic text, Voice Recognition Software, etc., to aid readings, comprehension and communication	121(45.32)	102(38.20)	32(11.99)	12(4.49)	3.24

**Aggregate mean =  $31.69/10 = 3.17$**

Table 1 indicates the available types of library information resources used by the students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo state, Nigeria. From the table, it shows that Assistive technologies like Braille, Large Print Materials, Talking Books, DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) Books, Electronic text, Voice Recognition Software, etc., to aid readings, comprehension and communication (3.24), textbooks to complement my class notes (3.21), newspapers/Magazines to update and entertain myself (3.21), e- resources like: e-books, e-encyclopedias, e-journals, etc., to complement the print resources (3.20), journals for my research and class assignments (3.18), dictionaries to check the spellings and meaning of words (3.17), and databases to get materials for my assignments (3.17) are the available types of information resources used according to their significance.

This is supported by Ternege and Kashimama (2019), who found out that the library is central to the provision of relevant information resources and services for adequate support of teaching, learning and research in any academic environment. Also Kutu and Olabode (2020)



pointed out that, available information resources in libraries are mostly print information resources such as newspapers, textbooks, maps, dictionaries, directories, and journal collections.

**Research question two:** What is the frequency of use of library information resources by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Analysis on the frequency of use of library information resources by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Frequency of Use of Library Information Resources. I use:	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Fortnightly (%)	Monthly (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
1	Textbooks to complement my class notes	111(41.57)	107(40.07)	29(10.86)	20(7.49)	3.16
2	Encyclopedias to check topics of subjects	119(44.57)	102(38.20)	27(10.11)	19(7.11)	3.20
3	Dictionaries to check the spellings and meaning of words	113(42.32)	106(39.70)	32(11.99)	16(5.99)	3.18
4	Journals for my research and class assignments	112(41.95)	99(37.08)	32(11.99)	24(8.99)	3.12
5	Newspapers/Magazines to update and entertain myself	117(43.82)	93(34.83)	38(14.23)	19(7.11)	3.15
6	Computer to type my documents and assignments	116(43.45)	101(37.82)	29(10.86)	23(8.61)	3.18
7	E- resources like e-books, e-encyclopedias, ejournals, etc., to complement the print resources	116(43.45)	103(38.58)	29(10.86)	19(7.12)	3.18
8	Internet to check and download materials	111(41.57)	101(37.83)	31(11.61)	24(8.99)	3.11
9	Databases to get materials for my assignments	110(41.20)	97(36.33)	38(14.23)	22(8.24)	3.10
10	Assistive technologies like Braille, Large Print Materials, Talking Books, DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) Books, Electronic text, Voice Recognition Software, etc., to aid readings, comprehension and communication	113(42.32)	103(38.58)	31(11.61)	20(7.49)	3.16

**Aggregate mean =  $31.54/10 = 3.15$**

Table 2 shows the frequency of use of library information resources by the students with special needs in the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. From the

table, it shows that Encyclopedias to check topics of subjects (3.20), E- resources like e-books, e-encyclopedias, ejournals, etc., to complement the print resources (3.18), Computer to type my documents and assignments (3.18), Dictionaries to check the spellings and meaning of words (3.18) Assistive technologies like Braille, Large Print Materials, Talking Books, DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) Books, Electronic text, Voice Recognition Software, etc., to aid readings, comprehension and communication (3.16), Textbooks to complement my class notes (3.16), and Newspapers/Magazines to update and entertain myself (3.15) are frequently used according to their respective needs and access by students with special needs in the college.

This finding also supported by Biradar et al., (2009) survey of 101(84.16%) students belonging to Agricultural Science College, Shimoga was conducted to know the frequency and purpose of library visits and usefulness of agricultural science journals. The study reveals that 77.22% of the respondents visit the library daily. About eighty-eight percent of students visit the library to read magazines. Regarding the usefulness of journals, the most useful journals were considered by users to be Indian Agricultural Science Magazine (62.92%) and Karnataka Journal of Agriculture Science (60.67%). While documentary and non-documentary sources are plentiful, the frequency of use of these sources are very low. Also, the result of this study disagreed with Chaputula and Mapulanga (2017) findings which revealed that the availability of essential information resources for the visually impaired was lacking and those that were available were not well utilized.

**Research question 3:** What are the purposes of use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Analysis on the purposes of use of library information resources by persons with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria

S/N	Purpose of use of library information resources.	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
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1	For assignment	111(41.57)	109(40.82)	34(12.73)	13(4.87)	3.19
2	To pass examination	119(44.57)	101(37.83)	32(11.99)	15(5.62)	3.21
3	For current awareness/information	117(43.82)	108(40.45)	33(12.36)	9(3.37)	3.25
4	For leisure and recreation	118(44.19)	109(40.82)	25(9.36)	15(5.62)	3.24
5	For research findings	119(44.57)	92(34.46)	48(17.98)	8(3.00)	3.21
6	For writing project	129(48.31)	99(37.08)	27(10.11)	12(4.49)	3.29
7	To increase general knowledge	122(45.69)	99(37.08)	25(9.36)	21(7.87)	3.21
8	For academic advancement	123(46.07)	99(37.08)	24(8.99)	21(7.87)	3.21
9	To improve medical/health awareness	87(32.58)	64(23.97)	59(25.84)	57(25.09)	2.68
10	For religious purposes	57(21.35)	52(19.48)	98(36.70)	60(22.47)	2.39
11	For employment searching purposes	111(41.57)	98(36.70)	31(11.61)	27(10.11)	3.10
12	For lesson notes	111(41.57)	108(40.45)	29(10.86)	19(7.12)	3.16
13	For other purposes	99(37.08)	89(33.33)	41(15.36)	38(14.23)	2.93

**Aggregate mean =  $37.68/13 = 2.90$**

Table 3 reveals the purpose of use of library information resources by students with special needs in the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. It reveals that for writing project (3.29), for current awareness/information (3.25), for leisure and recreation (3.24), to pass examination (3.21), for research findings (3.21), for assignment (3.19), and for lesson notes (3.16) are the purposes of use of library information resources by students with special needs in the college.

This is corroborated, according to Agboola, Idayat, and Odunola (2009), who discovered that majority of their respondents indicated that they used library information resources for research activities and for the purposes of lectures.

**Research question 4:** What are the factors hindering the use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 4:** Analysis on the factors hindering the use of library information resources by students with special needs in Federal College of Education (Special) Library, Oyo State, Nigeria.

S/N	Factors that hinder the use of library information resources	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )
1	Physical accessibility	122(45.69)	98(36.70)	32(11.99)	15(5.62)	3.22
2	Lack of assistive technologies	121(45.32)	89(33.33)	39(14.61)	18(6.74)	3.17
3	Limited collection of accessible materials	119(44.57)	82(30.71)	42(15.73)	24(8.99)	3.11
4	Digital accessibility issues	118(44.19)	84(31.46)	38(14.23)	27(10.11)	3.10
5	Inadequate staff training	121(45.56)	89(33.33)	31(11.61)	26(9.74)	3.20
6	Social stigma	122(45.69)	82(30.71)	39(14.61)	24(8.99)	3.13
7	Financial constraints	125(48.31)	98(34.83)	28(10.49)	17(6.37)	3.19
8	Communication barriers	119(44.57)	99(37.08)	31(11.61)	18(6.74)	3.19
9	Erratic power supply	121(45.32)	91(34.08)	34(12.73)	21(7.87)	3.17
10	Inadequate skills by users	123(46.07)	97(36.33)	31(11.61)	16(6.00)	3.22

**Aggregate mean =  $31.7/10 = 3.17$**

Table 4 above indicates the factors that hinder the use of library information resources by students with special needs in the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. It reveals from the table that Physical accessibility (3.22), Inadequate skills by users (3.22), Inadequate staff training (3.20), Financial constraints (3.19), Communication barriers (3.19), Lack of assistive technologies (3.17), Erratic power supply (3.17), Social stigma (3.13), Limited collection of accessible materials (3.11) and Digital accessibility issues (3.10) are major factors that hinder the use of library information resources by students with special needs in the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria.

This finding agreed with the results of Eze (2014) that problems of availability and utilization of information resource to physically challenged students were outdated resources, and poor funding amongst others. He also agreed that there are inadequately skilled librarians.

## Conclusion

The study investigated the use of inclusive library information resources by students with special needs in Southwestern Nigeria: A case study of Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. Among the available types of library information resources for students with special needs are assistive technologies like Braille, Large Print Materials, Talking Books, DAISY (Digital Audio Based Information System) Books, Electronic text, Voice Recognition Software, etc., textbooks, newspapers/Magazines, e- resources like e-books, e-encyclopedias, e-journals, etc., journals, dictionaries, databases, encyclopedias. However, the major findings reveal that students with special needs use library information resources for the purpose of writing project, current awareness/information, leisure, and recreation, to pass examination, research findings, assignment, lesson notes, employment searching purposes, to improve medical/health awareness and for other purposes. Also, factors hindering the use of library information resources include physical accessibility, inadequate skills by users, inadequate staff training, financial constraints, communication barriers, lack of assistive technologies, etc.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. College administration and library are encouraged to acquire up-to-date library information resources for all categories of students with special needs to ensure inclusivity among the college library users.
2. College administration and library management should intensify efforts towards the library literacy awareness on the use of library information resources to increase the frequency of use by students with special needs in the college.

3. The use of library information resources by student with special needs should not only be limited to achieve academic purposes alone but also to increase knowledge and awareness in religious purpose and other leisure activities.
4. Government should increase the funds available to the College and the library to ensure the inclusivity of service provision to the students with special needs.
5. Library management should implement policies that encourage staff trainings/workshops and conferences both within and outside the library to keep them abreast, enable better communication and approach and for skills acquisition for better service delivery.

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