Global Scientific JOURNALS

UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Olaniyi Oyeleye Ogundiran[1], Olawale Ogundiran[2], Aliyu Otoayele[3]*

[1]Library Department, Lead British International School, Gwarinpa. Abuja, Nigeria

[2]Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ho, Volta Region, Ghana.

[3]Deptartment of Library and Information Studies, Faculty of Education, Northwest University, kalabaina, Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author

Aliyu Otoayele
Dept. of Library and Information Studies,
Faculty of Education
Northwest University, kalabaina,
Sokoto, Sokoto State.
otoayele.a@gmail.com

Abstract

This study reviews the utilization of library resources among university students, highlighting the patterns, challenges, and factors influencing effective use. Libraries remain central to academic success, providing access to essential resources such as books, journals, digital databases, and study spaces. However, the extent to which students utilize these resources varies significantly due to factors such as awareness, accessibility, digital literacy, and library services. Some university students do not visit their institution library while some had been visiting before but stopped for different reasons. This calls for variety of orientation and assistance that will provide them with information enhancing the maximal utilization of the available resources in the library which will definitely affect their academic performance positively. The paper discusses the utilization of library resources among university students, the types of resources available, the factors influencing library utilization, benefits derived from the utilization of library resources, challenges encountered by students, and the recommendations for improving utilization of library resources.

Keywords: Library, Academic Library, Library Resources, Utilization, University Students.
Words count: 158

Introduction

Libraries have historically been considered the intellectual hubs of academic institutions, offering diverse resources essential for teaching, learning, and research. In the digital age, university libraries are increasingly providing both physical and electronic resources to meet the needs of modern students. Despite this evolution, the degree to which students utilize these resources varies significantly, raising questions about awareness, accessibility, and the influence of library use on academic success. This paper explores the patterns of library resource utilization among university students, highlights key challenges they face, and examines the implications for academic performance and institutional development.

A library is an institution that provides access to information, knowledge, and educational resources to support learning, research and personal development. Academic libraries are a key part of higher education institutions. They house extensive collections of books, academic journals, periodicals, electronic resources and other materials that are relevant to the subjects and disciplines taught and studied at the institutions. Importance of libraries in academic institutions cannot be over-emphasized; making available resources needed by the students with conducive environment for learning, researches and personal growth. The value of library cannot be overemphasized considering that any students no matter how brilliant cannot ignore the library (Onye, 2016).

The utilization of library resources effectively and efficiently by the university students is a very vital factor influencing their academic performance and intellectual development. So, university students cannot do without library resources if they really want good grades. Ali (2020) affirms that utilization of library resources is a critical factor in determining the academic performance of students. Students that want to be academically successful must take advantage of resources available in the library. The effective utilization of library resources can enhance research productivity, improve academic performance and foster lifelong learning (Oyewole, 2019).

University students utilize library resources in varied ways, depending on factors such as academic level, discipline, and personal preferences. For instance, a study by Aina et al. (2019) revealed that undergraduate students primarily use library spaces for studying and accessing textbooks, while postgraduate students often rely on digital databases for research purposes.

Similarly, courses in the humanities and social sciences tend to require more engagement with library materials compared to disciplines like engineering and medicine, where students might depend more on laboratory work (Khan & Bhatti, 2020).

Moreover, the advent of digital libraries has revolutionized access to information. Students now have round-the-clock access to e-books, journals, and other online materials, enabling them to engage with academic content beyond traditional library hours. However, studies show that while digital resources are popular, many students remain unaware of the full range of services provided by their university libraries (Ekpenyong & Edem, 2021).

Types of Library Resources

1. **Books and e-books**: These are long format resources that provide comprehensive information on a topic

2. **Reference works**: These can be general of focused on a single topic. Examples are: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Atlases, Handbooks and Diagnostic manuals.

3. **Special collections, manuscripts and archives**: These are used as a research resource.

4. **Databases**: These are organized collection of data that allow users to search for articles by author, publication, time period or keywords. Examples are JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, ERIC etc.

5. **Journals and newspapers**: These are printed media that can be used as a research resource.

6. **Theses and dissertations:** These are research papers that students write to support their academic degrees or professional qualifications. They can also be used as research resource.

7. **Internet Access:** Reliable internet connectivity is very important for students working on assignments or conducting online research.

8. **Librarian Assistance**- Librarians are there to assists students in locating the credible resources.

9. **Study Groups**: Some libraries provide designated spaces for groups study sessions, allowing you to collaborate with course mates on difficult topics.

Usage Pattern of Library Resources among University Students

This can vary depending on the type of resource available, the purpose of use and the discipline/course of the student.

1. **Coursework/Assignment:** Large percentage of students relies on library resources to complete their assignments. They make use of books, e-books, journals, reference materials, etc.
2. **Studying for exams**: This is beneficial to students because of quiet, distraction –free environment and access to a wide range of relevant resources it offers.
3. **Project/Research:** This can be done by using the library's catalog and database to find relevant information.
4. **Personal development:** Academic libraries provide resources and services that support students' personal development, research and learning. Examples of these resources are journals, databases and electronic resources.
5. **Recreational reading**: Some students go to the library to read for pleasure in order to relax and manage stress. This improves cognitive development, concentration, memory and vocabulary.

Factors Influencing Library Utilization

These are the factors that influence how often library resources are used by the students:

1. **Awareness**: This is how well students are aware of the library's resources and **services.**
2. **Information literacy**: This is how well students can identify, find and use information resources.
3. **Accessibility:** This is how easy it is for students to access the library and its resources. Is the location of the library within the academic building?
4. **Atmosphere**: This is how conducive the library environment is to studying. Is the seating arrangement comfortable? Is the library well lit and well ventilated?
5. **Availability**: How many relevant resources to students' academic and personal needs are available and at the same time, how many available resources are relevant?
6. **Organization**: How well the library resources are organized for the students to be able to locate them on time without wasting their time.
7. **ICT skills**: How good the students are in using information and technologies (ICT).
8. Internet connection: How reliable the library's internet connection is?
9. **E-resources**: How accessible the library's electronic resources are to students.

Benefits Derived from the Utilization of Library Resources

Research consistently underscores the positive correlation between library use and academic performance. According to Ojo and Olaniyan (2018), students who frequently use library resources perform better academically due to access to credible and diverse learning materials. Libraries also foster independent learning, critical thinking, and research skills, which are crucial for academic excellence. Conversely, inadequate utilization of library resources can hinder

students' ability to complete assignments, prepare for examinations, and engage in meaningful research. They need motivation, encouragement and the will to use the information resources in the library especially with students with physical or emotional challenges. Ogundiran and Olaosun (2013) stated that among students with deafness, whether congenital or acquired, students must be motivated, encouraged and assisted to exert a great deal of effort to read and write with acceptable form and meaning. This motivation and encouragement will help in the following ways:

1. It improves academic performance of students by having better grades, increasing knowledge, and enhancing their critical thinking skills.
2. Constant use of library's resources enhances research skills which help to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information effectively.
3. It makes students to be more effective in time management and more organized in their educational activities thereby making them to be more productive.
4. It gives students the opportunity to access and evaluate credible information leading to better decision making.
5. It helps to develop skills essential for career success that prepares one for professional life.

Challenges to Effective Library Resource Utilization

Despite the wealth of resources available, several barriers hinder students from fully utilizing library services.

1. **Lack of awareness**: Many students are not adequately informed about the resources and services offered by their libraries. This gap often stems from insufficient library orientation programs during students' induction (Osuagwu et al., 2020). Students may not be aware of the library's resources or how to use them. They may even not consider the resources important for their studies.

2. **Inadequate resources**: There may not be enough relevant materials, photocopying services or functional ICT facilities for the students to make use of. There may be lack of expert librarian to help students find information, limited seating and poor lighting.

3. **Lack of skills**: Students may not have the skills to use information retrieval tools. They may not also have the skills to use computers or ICT.

4. **Physical challenges can also hinder students from using the library resources**.

5. **Technological Barriers:** While digital resources are accessible, not all students possess the requisite digital literacy skills to navigate complex databases and e-library platforms effectively (Ajayi & Ogunyemi, 2022).

6. **Overcrowding:** During peak times, such as exams, libraries may struggle to accommodate all users, leading to frustration and reduced efficiency.

7. **Information Overload:** The vast array of resources available can overwhelm students, making it difficult for them to identify the most relevant materials.

8. Library's condition: The library may be in an unconducive state.

9. **Infrastructure and Space Constraints:** Overcrowded library spaces and limited study areas often discourage students from utilizing library facilities. For instance, a survey by Musa and Umar (2021) highlighted that 65% of students in Nigerian universities reported inadequate seating arrangements as a significant challenge.

10. **Resource Availability:** In some cases, library resources are outdated or insufficient to meet the growing demands of students, particularly in underfunded institutions (Idowu & Bamidele, 2019).
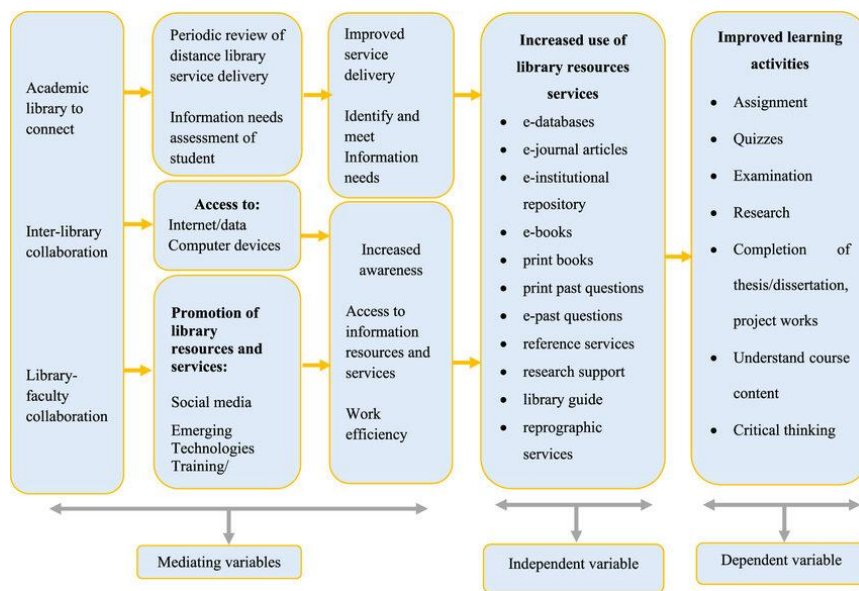

Figure 1: Model for Effective Use of Library Resources and Services by Distance Learners (De Gruyter, 2024)

This describes how students interact with and access library resources and services. It emphasizes key factors like students' needs, information seeking behavior, accessibility, and the role of the librarian in facilitating effective utilization of resources. So, basically, it gives a structured way to understand how students navigate and benefit from library's resources and services.

Key elements of a conceptual model for utilization of library resources

- **User-centered approach:**

This is the core principle that emphasizes the understanding of the individual needs, goals, and information-seeking behaviors of library users to tailor services accordingly.

- **Information needs assessment:**

   This identifies the specific information requirements of different user groups, such as students, researchers, or community members, to guide resource selection and service design.

- **Resource accessibility:**

   This ensures that library materials and services are readily available through diverse formats (print, digital), user-friendly interfaces, and appropriate technology.

- **Navigation and search mechanisms:**

   This provides effective tools like library catalogs, databases, and search functions to help users locate relevant information efficiently.

- **Librarian as information facilitator:** This recognizes the crucial role of librarians in guiding users through the information landscape, offering research assistance, and promoting effective resource utilization.

Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of library resources, institutions must adopt proactive strategies to address the challenges identified:

1. **Enhanced Library Orientation Programs:** Universities should introduce comprehensive orientation sessions to familiarize students with available resources and services.

2. **Investments in Digital Infrastructure:** Improving digital platforms and providing training in digital literacy can help students navigate e-resources more effectively.

3. **Upgrading Physical Facilities:** Expanding library spaces and ensuring conducive environments for study can encourage more frequent usage.

4. **Regular Resource Updates:** Libraries should prioritize updating their collections to align with current academic curricula and research trends.

5. Libraries should have regular orientation programs like workshops and training sessions for students on information literacy skills and ICT.

6. Library should be adequately funded.

7. Library education should be part of the university curriculum.

8. There should be regular updates of hardware, software, and digital resources.

9. There should be provision of stable power supply.

10. Libraries should partner with government and non-governmental organization to improve library resources.

11. There should be regular assessment and evaluation of the library's services, resources and facilities to identify areas where improvement will be needed.

Conclusion

The utilization of library resources among university students plays a pivotal role in shaping their academic success. While libraries continue to adapt to technological advancements, challenges such as lack of awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and limited digital skills persist. By addressing these issues, universities can enhance the role of libraries as critical enablers of learning and research. Future studies could further explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, on library services to ensure their relevance in the evolving educational landscape.

The universities must take it upon themselves to equip libraries and give orientation programmes to support students' academic pursuits. By providing equal opportunity to library resources and introducing new strategies for increasing their utilization, university can boost students' interest and definitely promote academic excellence.

References

Abayomi, O. (2020) Utilization of library resources by undergraduate students in a Nigeria University. Journal of Library and Information Science 18(1),1-12.

Aina, R., Adewale, O., & Ajibola, S. (2019). Patterns of Library Use among University Students in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-15.

Ajayi, T., & Ogunyemi, M. (2022). Digital Literacy and Access to E-Library Resources in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Academic Libraries*, 34(2), 45-59.

Ali, A. (2020) Utilization of library resources by University students: A case study of a Pakistani University. Journal of Academic librarianship, 46(4), 102914.

De Gruyter, S. (2024) in Atuase, D. , Maluleka, J. and Ayensu, E. Towards Equitable Access: Improving Library Services for Distance Learning Students. Libri, vol.74,https://doi.org/10.1515/libri-2023-0094.

Ekpenyong, E., & Edem, E. (2021). Awareness and Utilization of Digital Resources in Academic Libraries. *International Journal of Information Science*, 10(3), 121-133.

Idowu, B., & Bamidele, T. (2019). Challenges of Library Services in Nigerian Higher Education. *African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(1), 22-34.

Iwhiwhu, E. (2018) Information literacy skill and utilization of library resources by undergraduate students in a Nigerian University. Journal of Information Literacy, 12(10, 1-5.

Khan, A., & Bhatti, R. (2020). Academic Library Usage Trends in South Asia. *Library Management*, 41(6), 23-38.

Musa, A., & Umar, Z. (2021). Infrastructure Constraints in Nigerian University Libraries. *Information and Knowledge Management*, 12(4), 34-45.

Olawale Ogundiran and Adedayo O. Olaosun (2013). Comparison of Academic Achievement between Students with Congenital and Acquired Deafness in a Nigerian College. Journal of Education and Practice. Vol. 4, No. 23 pp 42-47. www.iiste.org

Ojo, T., & Olaniyan, K. (2018). Library Resource Utilization and Academic Performance in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 9(3), 45-58.

Onye, U. U. (2016). Availability, Accessibility and Utilization of Library Information

Osuagwu, C., Nwosu, J., & Eze, F. (2020). Enhancing Library Orientation Programs in Nigerian Universities. *Library Progress International*, 40(2), 87-101.

Resources by Student of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), Information & Knowledge Management, 6(10).