



Access and Use of Information Resources for Learning and Research by Undergraduates Students of Federal Universities in Katsina State

Hajara Sani Ahmed, Muhammad Tukur Tokawa, Lawal Iro Sani

Department of Library and Information Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina

ABSTRACT

This study investigated access and use of information resources for learning by the undergraduate students of Federal Universities in Katsina State. The objectives of the study are to examine the extent of students' access to the information resources as well as investigating the frequency of use of the information resources by the undergraduate students in the Federal universities' libraries in Katsina State. The study was underpinned by information seeking professional model developed by Leckie 1996. Survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study comprised 10,591 of the federal universities involved in the study. A sample of 370 respondents was drawn based on Krejcie and Morgan's Table of sample size determination. Questionnaire was the research instrument used for the collection of data. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS statistical tool/software. The study found out that most information resources are not easily accessible to undergraduate students of the universities involved in the study. The study further found out that most of the undergraduate students used printed information resources frequently other than non-print resources. The study therefore, recommends that there is need to provide adequate accessibility tools such as catalogue, abstract, indexing, classification among others to promote easy access to the available information resources among undergraduate students. The universities' libraries should provide different information resources such as databases, internet, e-books among others for frequent use to foster learning and research.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries as service oriented are established to aid and meet the information needs of their users, which include students, academics, and other members of the community. One of the major aim of setting up libraries in tertiary institutions is to encourage and promote readership as well as scholarship among staff and students of the institutions. These libraries design their programs of services and provides the needed information resources to meet the information needs of the clients. It is in light of this, Chima (2019) posits that academic libraries endeavor to provide different types of information

resources to meet the information needs of students. These information resources could be in digital and physical forms. The users meant to serve by library must have access to its resources for the promotion of learning and research in their day-to-day activities.

Access refers to the opportunity to use or retrieve information resources. As such, Ezema (2018) noted that information resources and services may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically, as relevant to ones' subject of interest, but may not be able to use them. Undergraduate students of universities probably know about information resources of

Corresponding author: Hajara Sani Ahmed

hajosani100@gmail.com

Department of Library and Information Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

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library, but may not have access to them. Access to information resources services is what attracts undergraduate students of universities to make good use of the resources services. The more the students have access to resources and services, the more these resources and services are likely to be used, especially when the students have adequate information searching skills to select relevant information. Information searching skills are the abilities used to identify information needs, locate relevant information, evaluate its quality and use it effectively for learning, research or decision-making.

Use refers to the process of accessing, selecting, evaluating and applying available information resources to satisfy educational, research, professional or personal information needs. These resources may include textbooks, journals, newspapers, government publications, encyclopedias among others that are used by students to support learning and research. As such, Arora (2023) observes that students in some universities possess information skills to operate internet to download information, but they do not have adequate skills to refine or filter the needed information for learning and research. Undergraduate students of universities today have ability to search information from the internet, but they are unable to select, evaluate and use the information. Therefore, these students need information skills to make adequate use of relevant information resources, services frequently or in some other pattern that will enable them to use resources effectively.

However, Lawal & Kannan, (2021) stressed that information resources available in most of the tertiary institutions' libraries in North-West Nigeria are insufficient. They state that the challenges faced by students in accessing and utilizing information resources of libraries are inadequate skills, poor Internet connectivity, power failure and inadequate current information resources particularly e-resources. Similarly, Prema (2022) stresses that there is under-use of information resources in university libraries particularly online resources. These resources are not effectively use by the undergraduate students of most universities in Nigeria.

The issues surrounding access and use of information resources among undergraduate students of universities have been discussed and debated by a number of scholars in not only Nigeria, but also world over. In Ireland, for example, Brown (2017) observes that undergraduate students of universities were aware of the availability of information resources services in universities libraries. These students have access to the information resources and services for academic activities. William (2018) also reported a similar scenario in Scotland where he opines that students level of awareness about the availability of information resources in their institutions' libraries were high, and they were accessing and utilizing information resources and library materials for learning and research.

In the Nigerian context, it is clear that in some academic libraries information resources and services are not effectively use by undergraduate students of universities. For example, Okojie (2019) lamented the under-use of information resources among undergraduate students of higher institutions of learning due to the inadequacy of information resources available in the institutions' libraries. This according to Okojie has adverse effect on learning and other academic activities of the students. Similarly, James (2020) identified the inadequacy of information resources as one of the major problems that library users faced in accessing and utilizing library resources. This consequently led to under-use of information resources and services in the libraries.

From the foregoing therefore, access and use of information resources by the undergraduate students in universities is fraught with a number of issues such as inadequate information resources available in the universities libraries and under-use of them among undergraduate students. These issues need to be investigated empirically by adopting relevant theory or model which previous studies have not been grounded on. This study therefore will use Information Seeking Professional Model developed by Leckie 1996 in order to have a theoretical background, or a basis for analysis and



interpretation of the research data to reach to a conclusion.

In addition, the study intends to assess accessibility of information resources, determine the extent to which undergraduate students can easily access and use information resources available in university libraries. The resources including print and digital materials, identifying any barriers that may limit access, such as infrastructure or policy constraints, evaluate the use of library information resources, services and facilities, analyze how frequently and effectively undergraduate students utilize the various services provided by Federal university libraries and identify challenges affecting utilization

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Library resources services are provided to support students' learning and research activities in tertiary institutions. Thus, undergraduate students are expected to access and use the library resources and services as their main source of information to support such activities. Therefore, there is ineffective learning and research when students are not effectively accessing and utilizing relevant information resources and services available in the libraries (Chima, 2019). As such, Federal universities and other relevant regulating agencies like TETFUND strive as much as possible to spend huge amount of money by granting yearly intervention to the beneficiary universities aimed at assisting academic libraries to acquire information resources for effective services delivery to students and other users. This is done because what libraries earn from the school authority or government is not sufficient to continuously acquire current and relevant resources for use among undergraduate students (Chima, 2019).

However, Statistical data of the university libraries under study which showed evidence of access and use of the information resources for teaching and learning such as frequency of using the resources and charging and discharging records were made available to researcher. During preliminary, it was observed that, undergraduate students do not frequently use information resources. Despite registration of

students with libraries, there is limited borrowing and frequent use of information resources available in the university libraries. This may result to low level of access and under-use of information resources among undergraduate students. This may lead to poor academic performance of the students. Limited access to adequate and up-to-date information resources and their under-utilized can restrict students' learning opportunities, influencing their ability to complete assignments, conduct research and succeed academically.

Therefore, this study investigated these issues, examined why undergraduate students could not access and use information resources, their extent of using the library facilities, and identified barriers they faced in Federal university libraries in Katsina State. Addressing these problems is essential for optimizing library services and aligning them more closely with students' academic needs.

Research Objectives

The study is specifically designed to achieve the following main objectives:

1. To examine the extent of students' access to the information resources for learning in Federal Universities in Katsina State
2. To find out the challenges faced by students in accessing and utilizing information resources, facilities and services in the libraries under study.

Research Questions

The study is design specifically to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do the students of Federal Universities in Katsina State under access information resources available in universities for learning?
2. What are the challenges faced by students in accessing and utilizing information resources available in the libraries under study?



Extent of Students' Access to Information Resources available in universities' Libraries

Kumar (2021) posited that academic libraries must offer relevant and high-quality information resources in both print and electronic formats in order to deliver adequate and qualitative services. The library can best fulfill its duty by implementing a policy of regular self-evaluation in order to be aware of its users' changing demands. Students' academic work suffers because of an inability to fully access and utilize information resources and facilities. According to Ugah (2018) access to information resources is of paramount concern and relevant to library users, particularly students of higher institutions. Similarly, Aniebiet (2015) stressed that access to information resources is essential to users in any institution of learning for effective use to promote learning and research

Challenges of Accessing and Utilizing of Information Resources in Institutions' Libraries

In most tertiary institutions, students face numerous hurdles when it comes to using library to access and use its resources and services. The hurdles provide opportunity for libraries to increase service quality and provide relevant resources in order to better support academic and research activity (Khan, Bhatti, Khan and Ismail, 2018). Many patrons are unaware of the different services and resources provided by libraries, as well as the comfort and convenience they provide. According to Tella and Ojo (2012), one of the purpose of academic libraries is to please their users. To reach this goal, academic libraries must understand their users' needs and how address those needs.

However, Sagay (2017) stressed that in America, the challenges faced by students in accessing and utilizing information resources and services in academic libraries include unawareness about the availability of the resources and services as well as inadequate marketing of the resources by the institutions' libraries. However, a research was carried out by Johnson (2020) focusing on the challenges associated with the use of information resources

and services by the students of Birmingham university, England. The study reported that the major factors affecting access and use of information resources and services by the most of the students of the university was insufficient relevant resources and commitment of the library staff.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, survey research design was used. This design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect data from a large population in order to describe existing conditions, examine relationships among variables and generalized findings to a wider population. Muncher and Denis (2001) opined that survey design refers to a sample of element or people through polls and questionnaires designed to elicit their opinion, attitude and sentiment about specific topic of study. Survey design was used in this study because it enables specific issues to be investigated through information gathering on the people's opinion and beliefs over a wider population. Kothari (2013) stressed that survey research is one of the research designs in quantitative research method, which involves the act of conducting a study of specific groups.

The population of this study comprised all the undergraduate students of Federal Universities in Katsina State. These universities are Federal University of Transportation Daura and Federal University, Dutsinma. The population of the entire students of the two universities under study stands at 10,591 as shown in table 1 below. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2015) defined population as the study of object, which consists of people or group of people, organizations/institutions, products and social events. The choice of population in research is based on the specific unit of analysis (individuals or institution) in which a researcher wishes to draw his/her specific conclusions.

To what extent do the students of Federal universities under study access information resources and facilities in meeting information needs?

Corresponding author: Hajara Sani Ahmed

 hajosani100@gmail.com

Department of Library and Information Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

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Table 2: Federal universities students' access to information resources and facilities in meeting information needs

Statement	S A		A		U D		S D		D		Mean	STD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Information resources are accessible to students of the universities	48	14.9	88	27.3	39	12.1	57	17.7	90	28	3.16	1.46
Most of the information resources provided by the university's library are not easily accessible to students	48	14.9	174	54	23	7.1	39	12.1	38	11.8	2.51	1.22
Most of the students of the universities have access to print information resources only.	66	20.5	75	23.3	29	9	62	19.3	90	28	3.1	1.53
Access to information resources and in the universities is hampered by lack of commitment of library staff	94	29.2	84	26.1	36	11.2	45	14	63	19.6	2.68	1.5

Table 2 shows that there is consensus agreement among the respondents that most of the information resources and facilities provided by the universities libraries involved in the study are not easily accessible to undergraduate students. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.51 and a standard deviation of 1.22 in Table 6. In view of this, responses from the Table 6 indicate that 48 of the respondents (14.9%) strongly agreed and 88 respondents (27.3%) agreed that information resources and facilities are accessible to students of the universities. In addition, 57 respondents (17.7%) strongly disagreed and 90 respondents (28%) disagreed that information resources are accessible to students of the universities. Only 39 respondents of the study remained undecided.

Next on the hierarchy was opinion of respondents on the statement that most of the information resources and facilities provided by the university's library are not easily accessible to undergraduate students. The responses from Table 6 reveal that 48 respondents (14.9%)

strongly agreed and 174 respondents (54%) agreed that most of the information resources and facilities provided by the university's library are not easily accessible to students. As indicated on the Table 6 above, 23 respondents (7.1%) remained undecided. In addition, 39 respondents (12.1%) strongly disagreed and 38 of them (11.8%) disagreed on the listed item. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 2.51 and standard deviation of 1.22.

Furthermore, the Table shows that 66 respondents (20.5%) strongly agreed and 75 respondents (23.3%) agreed that most of the students of the universities have access to print information resources only. The Table further shows that only 29 respondents (9.0%) remained undecided. Also, 62 respondents (19.3%) strongly disagreed and 90 respondents (28%) disagreed on the listed item. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 3.10 and standard deviation of 2.53.

The next in the hierarchy based on the responses of the respondents was statement on

Corresponding author: Hajara Sani Ahmed

hajosani100@gmail.com

Department of Library and Information Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

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access to information resources and facilities in the universities is hampered by lack of commitment of library staff. Their responses indicate that 94 respondents (29.2%) strongly agreed and 84 respondents (26.1%) agreed that access to information resources and facilities in the universities is hampered by lack of commitment of library staff. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.68 and standard deviation of 1.50. Also 45 respondents (14.0%) strongly disagreed and 63 respondents (19.6%) disagreed on the listed item. Only 36 respondents (11.2%) remained undecided.

Mean scores of 2.51 and a standard deviation of 1.22 in Table 6 indicated that there is a consensus agreement among the respondents

because most of them indicated that information resources and facilities provided by the libraries are not easily accessible to undergraduate students of the universities. Therefore, there is need for the universities libraries under study to provide quick and easy access to available information resources and facilities through proper organization, cataloguing, indexing among other means to ensure that the resources are accessible easily

What are the challenges faced by students in accessing and utilizing information resources, facilities and available in the libraries under study?

Table 11: Responses on the Challenges Faced by Students in Accessing and Utilizing Information Resources in the Universities' Libraries

	Yes		No		Mean	STD
	F	%	F	%		
There is lack of relevant information resources	119	37.0	203	63	1.63	1.48
There is inadequate current information resources and facilities	163	50.3	160	49.7	1.49	1.50
There is lack of/poor internet for effective services delivery	251	78	71	22	1.48	1.51
There is inadequate library staff to provide needed resources and services	150	46.6	172	53.4	1.69	1.34
There is poor funding of library to provide resources	121	37.6	201	62.4	1.67	1.30
There is lack of integration of ICTs in the library services	145	45.1	177	54.9	1.67	1.47

From Table 11 above, it can be seen that inadequate current information resources as well as poor internet for effective services delivery were the major challenges faced by the undergraduate students in accessing and utilizing information resources in the universities under study. The Table shows that 119 of the respondents (37.0%) indicated that lack of relevant information was the challenge they faced in accessing and utilizing information resources and facilities, while 203 respondents (63%) indicated that lack of relevant information was not the challenge faced by the respondents. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 2.63 and standard deviation of 1.48. Also 163 respondents (50.3%) showed that inadequate current information resources and facilities was the challenge faced by the respondents, while 160

respondents (49.7%) revealed that inadequate current information resources was not the challenge they faced. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 1.49 and standard deviation of 1.50.

Furthermore, the Table reveals that 251 respondents (78%) showed that they challenge they faced in accessing and utilizing information resources was lack of/poor internet access, whereas 71 respondents (22%) revealed that lack of/poor internet access was not the challenge they faced in utilizing information resources and facilities. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 1.48 and standard deviation of 1.51. Also the Table shows that 150 respondents (46.6%) were of the opinion that inadequate library staff to provide needed resources was the challenge they faced whereas 172 respondents (53.4%)

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hajosani100@gmail.com

Department of Library and Information Science, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

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revealed that inadequate library staff to provide needed resources and facilities was not the challenge they faced. These responses can be seen at a mean score of 3.69 and standard deviation of 1.34.

Likewise, 121 respondents (37.6%) revealed that poor funding of library to provide resources and facilities was the challenge they faced in accessing and utilizing the information resources, services and facilities available in their universities' libraries, while 201 respondents (62.4%) showed that poor funding of library to provide resources and facilities was the challenge they faced. This is reflected in a mean score of 3.67 and standard deviation of 1.30. Also 145 respondents (45.1%) revealed that the challenge they faced in accessing and utilizing information resources, services and facilities in the universities' libraries was lack of integration of ICTs in the libraries, while 177 respondents (54.9%) were not in the opinion that lack of integration of ICTs in the libraries was the challenge they faced. This is reflected in a mean score of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.47.

Based on the data collected and analyzed, the overall result indicated that inadequate current information resources and facilities as well as poor internet for effective services delivery were the major challenges faced by the undergraduate students in accessing and utilizing information resources and facilities in the universities involved in the study. This could perhaps be because of insufficient funding of the universities to acquire relevant and current resources and facilities for effective use among undergraduate students to foster academic activities.

1. The findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that what made the available information resources ineffective was inadequacy.
2. The findings of the study indicated that inadequate current information resources as well as poor internet for effective services delivery were the major challenges faced by the undergraduate students in accessing

and utilizing information resources and facilities in the universities involved in the study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that information resources are provided by the universities' libraries for accessibility and utilization among undergraduate students. However, most of the information resources provided by the libraries are not easily accessible to the undergraduate students. The findings show that undergraduate students of the universities involved in the study literature search, filter and refine some information. Similarly, the findings revealed that most of the undergraduate students do not have sufficient internet searching skills for accessing information resources digitally in the libraries under study. The study also found that respondents of the study use different information resources such as databases, e-books, reading desks, chairs, journals, computers among other. However, most of the undergraduate students tend to use printed information resources other than any resources.

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