

Relevance of Library Catalogue and Usage of Resources among Library and Information Science Undergraduates Students at the University of Benin, Nigeria

IGERE, A. Mercy PhD

Department of Library and Information Science,
Faculty of Education, Delta State University Abraka.

mesonia1@yahoo.com, +2348032320517

Abstract

The study explored the relevance of library catalogue on the usage of library resources among undergraduate students of library and information science in University of Benin. It examined the use of library catalogue in accessing information resources. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out how often students use the library catalogue, how students access information materials in the library, forms of catalogue used in the university library, access points to locating information resources in the library and influence of library catalogue on access to information resources. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 250 students of library and information science in the University of Benin. One hundred and thirteen total samples were drawn from the population using simple random sampling technique. Retrieved questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics. It was found in the study that students regularly use the library catalogue, students' access information materials employing the library catalogue, majority of the students' access information resources via the use of card catalogue while some pull down books from the shelf. Students use title catalogue as access point in locating information resources in the library. It was also found that library catalogue positively influence access to information materials in the library. The study therefore recommends that students should be taught the need for the use of library catalogue since it has a positive influence on access to information resources.

Keywords: Relevance of catalogue; Catalogue; Library Catalogue; Library Resources; usage of library

Introduction

A hall filled with information resources cannot be regarded as a library except the information resources are properly organized for easy accessibility and retrieval. Dwawan, (nd) stated that in academic libraries, all information resources should be planned, developed and organized for access and retrieval. The real value of library is determined neither by its large collection nor by its magnificent building but by its usefulness to clientele. That is to say, it is not good enough for information resources to be available but its usefulness is most important and this can be done through organisation of the resources, that is, library catalogue and classification. Organization of information materials in the library has to do with cataloguing and classification

of resources. Cataloguing means the description of information resources for the resources to be easily identified, while classification means assigning call numbers to information materials according to subject areas (Oghenekaro, 2018). Oghenekaro further stated that a library catalogue is an important tool that could be regarded as a key or an index to the entries of each resource in the library. It provides access to all learning resources to patrons. In other words, library catalogue aims to ensure that information resources in the library are organized to support users' need or for easy accessibility and retrieval of information resources because nonaccessibility to information resources renders the resources useless in the library (Aju & Tofi 2020). When libraries acquire information resources and fail to organise for users to access, no matter how relevant those information resources may be, libraries aim of meeting users' need may be jeopardized. The aim of academic library arising from the parent institution of providing information resources to both the university environment must be actualized.

According to Oghenekaro (2018), the goal of the library to provide bibliographic information resources to the university community (both staff and students) is the reason the library exists and the aim has to be fulfilled through organisation of information resources for easy accessibility and usage. When information resources are finally organized, the easiest way to access these resources is to use the library catalogue. Though, with the benefit accrued to the use of catalogue, research according to Oghenekaro (2018) has shown that there is still poor usage of catalogue in Nigeria universities. There is therefore need to ascertain if the library catalogue, which serves as the main access point to the resources in the library is relevant and useful to the students. This could be ascertained through the various ways students' access information resources in the library. In other words, proper organisation of the resources which could be done either through a dictionary or classified methods is to create access for usage.

Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) stated that the orders of organizing information resources which are dictionary and classified are to create easy access to resources. Furthermore, the dictionary entries consist of author, title and subject arrangement in alphabetical order while the classified entry has to do with the classification number representing the subject area. There are also various forms of library catalogue such as the cards, books, sheaf, machine-readable catalogue and online public access catalogue which are also various ways of creating easy retrieval and usage of the resources in the library thereby also revealing the access point to the use of resources in the library. Despite the various ways of accessing the catalogue before retrieving information resources from the shelves, research and observation has shown that students preferred browsing through the shelves to use information resources rather than going through the library catalogue. According to Oghenekaro (2018), most undergraduate students find it difficult using the catalogue before retrieving information resources from the shelves because they lack the required skills to access the catalogue. Though, it ought to be different with library and information science students who are taught the necessary skills on the use of library catalogue. Hence the study tends to find out the relevance of library catalogue on the usage of library

resources among undergraduates students of library and information science in the University of Benin.

The study generally examined the relevance of library catalogue in accessing library resources among undergraduate library and information science students in University of Benin. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine how often students use the library catalogue
2. ascertain how students access information resources in the library
3. find out forms of catalogue used in the university library
4. determine the access points students used in locating information resources in the library.
5. examine the influence of library catalogue on access to information resources

Literature review

Library catalogue stands as a key to ascertaining the books or information resources needed and are available in a library collection with an indication of the physical location of the information resource in the stacks. In other words, library catalogue is a vital link between the reader and the book (Dhawan, nd). Introduction to Library catalogue (nd) noted that library catalogue are products of cataloguing and further define cataloguing as the act of listing information in an information center. Cataloguing is also the process of creating bibliographic records of information resources according to accepted rules. Eiriemiokhale and Oladimeji (2020) define cataloguing as the process of writing descriptive information of book and non book resources in the library. Cataloguing therefore has to do with the process of describing the physical content (such as authors name, title, publisher, place of publication, year, etc) of an information material in acceptable rules. The outcome of the process of cataloguing is regarded as library catalogue which consist of the list of all described information resources that are available in the library. Library catalogue is also defined as records of books, non book resources and other information resources of a library, or group of libraries (union catalogue), or private collection with specific items of bibliographic information (such as author, title, edition, imprint, collation etc) that appear in various forms (such as in card, automated, microfiche etc) and are arranged in alphabetical or classified order according to any standard code or rules of catalogue (like AACR, ALA, LC etc) (Library catalogue, 2021). Amune cited in Chollom and Abubakar (2013) define library catalogue as a tool that help users to update records, access documents and help users to determine the relevance of the materials. In every library, information resources are to be properly organized through cataloguing and classification to create easy access to the resources for clientele. Observation has shown that most clientele finds it difficult using the library catalogue in accessing information resources. When difficulty in accessibility to information resources through the catalogue occurs, it usually reflects in the frequency of usage of the catalogue while searching for information resources.

Most clientele do not often use the library catalogue as access point to retrieving information resources. This could be as a result of the difficulty experienced in accessibility or lack of knowledge to the catalogue usage. Mohammed and Temboge (2019) stated that access to

information resources in the library through catalogue is poor because majority of clientele lack the knowledge to use the catalogue in accessing information resources in the library. But it was later found by Mohammed and Temboge that most of the students 158(60%) make use of the library catalogue to search for information resources regularly, 24 (9%) of the respondents do not frequently use the catalogue. In the case of other libraries, the number of students who use the catalogue might be low. Oghenekaro (2018), also noted that the usage of catalogue by students is poor in Nigeria libraries. Most students see the use of catalogue as time wastage and some do not have the knowledge on how to use the catalogue and as a result they prefer direct use of the shelves to search for information resources. The study of Oggunniyi and Efosa cited in Onuoha and Sabir (2013) on the use of catalogue by the students of Adeyemi College of Education in Ondo revealed that majority of the respondents with 211(52.7%) indicated that they do not use the catalogue because they lack knowledge on how to use the library catalogue. The study of Asokan, and Dhanavandan (2015) also revealed that 88(51.16%) of the students in India strongly agreed that they search for required information through the library catalogue. In a study carried out by Oluwadare cited by Onuoha and Sabir (2013), it shows that 49 (25.7%) of the respondents claimed they hardly use the library catalogue because there are no information resources to meet their needs. Clifford and Zaccus (2015) study on the frequency of use of the catalogue also found that (39%) of the respondents use the catalogue occasionally while (20%) use the catalogue regularly. Use of Library Catalogue (2020) has also noted that there has been low use of catalogue in accessing information resources indicating irregular usage of the catalogue. It could be concluded that the mindset of the users on library catalogue as well as not been knowledgeable on the use of catalogue can lead to irregularity in the use of catalogue even when accessibility and retrieval of information resources is still of paramount importance in the library.

Accessibility to information resources in the library can only be easy to patrons when they are able to go through the library catalogue as an access point to the entire information resources in the library. Nnadozie cited by Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) stated that the utilization of library catalogue to gaining access to information resources on the shelves save the time of the user than going through the shelf directly to search for information resources. Furthermore, students who are knowledgeable in the use of the catalogue prefer using it than going through the shelf. It has been observed that most users prefer to surf the internet than to visit the library to use the catalogue to search for information resources. Clifford and Zaccus (2015) study on method used by students to access materials in the library revealed that most students (61%) browse through card catalogue, (19%) browse through the shelf to retrieve information resources, (11%) seek staff assistance to access information resources. It is therefore of importance that organized resources which could appear in various catalogue forms in the library be accessed by users to enable quick accessibility to retrieval of information resource from the shelf.

The tools used in cataloguing information resources in the library appear in various forms such as card, book, sheaf, microform, OPAC etc. Introduction to Library catalogue (nd).outlined the various forms of library catalogue to be, book catalogue, card catalogue, microform catalogue and online catalogue. When a library can adopt a particular form of catalogue suitable for its

collections, it will create easy access and usage of the information resources in the library. In order words, creating easy access to collections as one of the advantages and other numerous advantages found in a particular form of catalogue will determine its adoption by a library. According to Types and forms of catalogue (nd) any good form of catalogue should be flexible and be easy to update, it should not be too expensive to create, it should not occupy too much space, it should be easy to replicate and it should be easy to access. Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) also stated that any form of catalogue (card, book, OPAC, etc) that is able to reveal the library holdings through various access points (such as author, title, subject etc) is easily adopted by libraries. Mohammed and Temboge (2019) study on the various forms of catalogue used by students revealed that 46(18%) of respondents agreed to using card catalogue when accessing the catalogue for resources while 12(5%) use OPAC. In this case, the library that is in a process of digitizing its information resources would apply both card and OPAC hence, students that are used to card catalogue would prefer the use of card catalogue because the use of OPAC attracts skill acquisition before usage. In order words, access to resource in the library could be actualized using the catalogue with the knowledge of the forms of catalogue as well as the various access points.

Access points such as author, title and subject are the common and available catalogue access point to accessing information materials in the library. The ability and knowledge to search for information through the various access points in the library catalogue shows that students can access the catalogue dependently to retrieve information resources for usage in the library. Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) stated that the various access points such as the author, title, subject and classified catalogue are used to facilitate retrieval of information resources. The study of Atanda and Ugwulebo on use of catalogue by law students in Osun state university, Oshogbo revealed that 21 (47%) of the respondents agreed they retrieve information through the author catalogue, 13(29%) respondents access information resources through the title catalogue, 11(24%) use subject catalogue and the classified catalogue was not used by the students. A study conducted by Umar, Abareh and Basaka (2017) as cited by Itsifanus, Usman and Amkpa (2019) also shows that the card catalogue holds information that can create several access points to users in the library. Retrieving information resources through various access points enable quick and easy access and usage of information resources hence, the need to checkmate the influence of catalogue on retrieval of information resources.

Library catalogue is not only meant to organize information resource but also to ease and facilitate access to information materials thereby influencing the usage of information resources as a result of it pointing the user to where the information resources is located on the shelf. Clifford and Zaccus (2015) stated that library catalogue is a relevant tool to accessing information resources in the library. In order words, it has a way of promoting access to resources in the library. Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) averred that there are a lot of benefits accrued to the usage of library catalogue that will determine its usage by clientele. The problem of going through the shelf to search for resources thereby causing delay in retrieval is addressed by the use of catalogue. Hence libraries cannot do away with catalogue considering its relevance

and influence on access to information resources. Clifford and Zaccus (2015) study on the influence of organisation of information resources on access to resources by users revealed that (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed that organisation of resources positively influence access to resources while (12%) disagreed that library organisation has impact on access to resources.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 250 students of Library and Information Science in University of Benin. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 113 students of library and information science in University of Benin. Questionnaire was the instrument used in collecting data. A total number of 113 questionnaires were administered to the respondents and the entire questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics which includes simple percentage, frequency count and mean.

Results

Table 1. How often students use library catalogue.

S/N	Frequency of use	Number	%
1	Occasionally once daily	10	8.85
2	Occasionally once in three days	25	22.12
3	Regularly whenever they need information resources in the library	51	45.13
4	Occasionally Once in a week	12	10.62
5	Occasionally once in a month	15	13.27
6	Not at all	-	-

Table 1 shows that 51(45.13%) of the respondents used the library catalogue to access information resources regularly whenever the need arises. 25(22.12%) used the library catalogue occasionally once in three days, 15(13.27%) of the respondents used the library catalogue occasionally once in a month, 12(10.62%) of the respondents used the catalogue occasionally once in a week and 10(6.65%) used the catalogue occasionally once daily. Findings therefore revealed that majority of the respondents regularly use the library catalogue whenever the need arises.

Table 2. How students access information resources in the library.

S/N	Ways of accessing information resources	SA	A	D	SD
1	Through the use of catalogue	75(66.37%)	20(17.70%)	13(11.50%)	5(4.42%)
2	By browsing through the shelves to get books	- (0%)	35(30.97%)	58(51.33%)	20(17.70%)

3	By pulling down the books from the shelve to search for books	45(39.82%)	60(53.09%)	5(4.42%)	3(2.63%)
4	By asking library staff for assistance	20(17.70%)	56(49.56%)	30(26.55%)	7(6.19%)

Table 2 showed that 75(66.37) strongly agreed that they access information resources in the library through the use of catalogue, 45(39.82) strongly agreed and 60 (53.09) agreed that they do not use the catalogue but pull down books from the shelf to search for books, 56(49.56)agreed that they seek for assistance from library staff to accessing information resources in the library 30 (26.55) disagreed that they do not ask library staff for assistance. It was found in the study that majority of the respondents agreed to the accessibility of information through the use of catalogue.

Table 3. Forms of library catalogue used in the library

S/N	Forms of library catalogue	Number	%
1.	Card catalogue	80	70.8
2.	Book catalogue	22	19.47
3.	Microform catalogue	-	-
4.	Online catalogue	11	9.7

Table 3 revealed that 80(70.8%) of the students agreed they use card catalogue, 22(19.47%) agreed that they use book catalogue, 11(9.7%) agreed to using online catalogue and none of the students agreed on the use of microform catalogue. It was found that card catalogue was majorly used by the respondents.

Table 4. Access point used in locating information resources

S/N	Access point	Number	%
1	Author	34	30.09
2	Title	68	60.18
3	Subject	11	9.73

Table 4 revealed that 34(30.09%) of the students use the author catalogue as an access point in locating information resources in the library. 68(60.18%) agreed that they use the title catalogue as an access point while 11(9.73%) use the subject catalogue as an access point in locating information resources in the library. Majorly used access point by the respondents is the author access point.

Table 5. Influence of the library catalogue on usage of information resources

S/N	Influence of Library catalogue	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}
1	Library catalogue helps to locate information resources easily on the shelf	75	38	-	-	3.66
2	Library catalogue reveals the books the library possess to me	46	47	10	10	3.14
3	Library catalogue helps me in the choice of document to read	45	42	16	10	3.08
4	Library catalogue saves my time to search for information	58	43	6	6	3.35
	Aggregate					3.31

Table 5 revealed that the respondents agreed with the items on influence of catalogue on use of information resources with the aggregate mean score of 3.31 for all items which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. Individual analysis of the items revealed that; library catalogue help the respondents to locate information resources on the shelf with the means score of 3.66, the library catalogue saves the respondents time in search for information with the mean score of 3.35, library catalogue reveal the books the library possess with the mean score of 3.14, library catalogue help them in the choice of document to read with the mean score of 3.08. On the aggregate it shows the mean score of 3.31 which is equally greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. It was therefore found in the study that library catalogue positively influenced the use of information resources in the library.

Discussion of findings

The analysis of research question 1 which is on how often do students use the library catalogue?, presented in table I showed that majority of the students use the library catalogue to access information resources in the library regularly whenever the need arise. This contradicted the study of Onuoha and Sabir (2013) that majority of the students with 211(52.7%) agreed they do not use the library catalogue. But this present study corroborate the study of Mohammed and Temboge (2019) that most of the students 158(60%) make use of the library catalogue to search for information resources regularly. It is an indication that the library catalogue is of relevance to the students hence the usage.

Research question 2 addressed how students access information resources in the library. It was found that most of the students access information resources through the use of catalogue while some pull down books from the shelf. Clifford and Zaccus (2015) study on methods used by students to access materials in the library, revealed that most students (61%) browse through card catalogue, (19%) browse through the shelf to retrieve information resources (11%) seek

staff assistance to access information resources. the indication here is that, the respondents though use the catalogue, a good number of the respondents prefer going to the shelf directly.

Research question 3: what are the various forms of catalogue used in the library? The study revealed that card catalogue is used in the library by the students. This therefore concurred with the statement on Introduction to Library catalogue (nd) that there are various forms of catalogue used in the library. Some of them are card catalogue, book catalogue, microform catalogue and online catalogue. The findings of this study is in line with that of Mohammed and Temboge (2019) that (18%) of the respondents agreed to using card catalogue when accessing the catalogue for resources while (5%) use OPAC. It could be stated that the available form of catalogue is used by clientele.

Research question 4: what are the access points students used to locate information resources in the library? The study revealed that majority of the students use title catalogue as access point to locating information resources. This is of a different view from the study of Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) that 21 (47%) of the students agreed they retrieve information through the author catalogue. Though Oghenekaro(2018) has noted that the library catalogue is advantageousto users because of its provision of its various access points such as the author, title, subject etcso that users who are familiar with one of these will be able to access the information resource. The indication here is that student access the catalogue through the various access points.

Research question 5: what is the influence of library catalogue on access to information resources? It was revealed in the study that library catalogue positively influenced the use of information resources in the library. This is in line with Eiriemiokhale and Oladimeji (2020) that the library catalogue is of relevant to library clientele in that it gives detailed information about a resource in a library, revealing the holdings of the library for users to easily access records.

Conclusion

Library catalogue is an important tool which helps users in easy access, retrieval and usage of information resources in the library. Observation has shown that most students do not retrieve resources though the catalogue. Hence the study on relevance of library catalogue on usage of library resources among undergraduate library and information science students in University of Benin. The study has revealed that a good number of the students access information resources through the use of card catalogue while some pull down books from the shelf. Students use title catalogue as access point in locating information resources in the library. It was also found that students use the library catalogue to access information resources in the library regularly whenever the need arise. In essence, library catalogue positively influenced the use of information resources in the library.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that students should be encouraged on the need for the use of library catalogue rather than pulling down information resources from the shelf since the catalogue has a positive influence on access to information resources. It is also necessary for libraries to be digitized to enable the use of OPAC rather than the use of manual catalogue.

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