
Academic libraries use patterns in selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Academic libraries provide vital information resources for students to develop and sustain good study habits for academic excellence. However, lack of skills and ability to source information resources are factors that affect library use by undergraduates. The study investigated undergraduate students' purpose of visit to the library; methods for locating books, strategies for determining the relevance of library materials and the resources mostly consulted by the students in three selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The study used a descriptive survey research design. Three hundred questionnaires were administered to students using the convenience-sampling technique. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected. The findings show that most of the student's visit to the library was to prepare for the examination. They mostly used Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) to locate books in the library, followed by seeking the Librarian's help and using of Card catalogue. Also, students used illustrations and the preface in the book to determine the relevance of library materials. Furthermore, textbooks were the most consulted materials by the students. The study has established that students in the three institutions visit the library mostly to prepare for examinations. The study recommended regular information literacy programs for library users to promote the effective use of the resources to enhance students' performance. Students should acquire more skills, especially in determining the relevance of information resources in the library.

Keywords: Academic libraries, Lagos, Nigeria, Students, Tertiary institutions, Undergraduates

Introduction

Tertiary institutions provide learning opportunities for students in Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. Martha (2011) pointed out that the library is one of the facilities needed for the teaching and learning process in higher education institutions. The library as an integral part of the institution has an important role to play in supporting teaching, learning and research (Aina, 2004; Mohammed, 2016). While the goals of tertiary institutions as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) are to ensure a high level of manpower training to acquire physical and intellectual skills for self-reliance. Library's contributions to higher education in ensuring the development of human resources in all capacities in Nigeria have become an essential component of the institution that is recognised as a major requirement for accreditation of academic programmes. Mabawonku (2017) refers to libraries as the third tripod of information and knowledge while libraries in tertiary institutions are called academic libraries. Over time, academic libraries have become the heart or nerve centres of institutions of higher learning where all academic activities revolved (Singh & Kaur, 2009).

Akporhonor (2005) in Mohammed (2016) addresses academic libraries as libraries attached to universities, polytechnic institutions, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and also research institutes. Academic libraries are responsible for the provision of information services to their communities, that is, students, lecturers, and researchers. Therefore, the mandate of academic libraries is to support the mission of their parent institutions in teaching and research (Mohammed, 2016; Olutoki & Osoba, 2017). The role of academic libraries in research and scholarship is to ensure the preservation of resources and access to knowledge and information. Academic libraries provide knowledge in the form of textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, manuals, government gazettes, magazines, films, the Internet, recording microforms, CD-ROMs and other related media that have been collected over time (Moruf and Muhammed, 2015).

The library makes the collections of information resources available through the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) as well as provides digital access for library users. Kathryn (2017) pointed out that libraries in tertiary institutions are tasked with the effective retrieval and utilization of information resources. Students' use of the library largely determines the accomplishment of the goals of tertiary institutions. The essence of the use of libraries is to provide an ideal environment and vital information resources for students to develop and sustain good study habits that are necessary for outstanding academic performance (Jato, Ogunniyi & Olubiyo, 2014). Hence, the importance of being conversant with the library and the all-out use of its resources cannot be overstated. Library users must interact easily with the collections and make effective use of the available resources. Library use pattern in some

Nigerian universities was low due to some factors like a lack of awareness of available information resources (Agboola & Bamigboye, 2011).

For the library resources to become useful, the library has the responsibility of thoughtfully handling each student to provide the resources and design learning experiences compatible with the needs of the student. Users must conveniently interact with the library collections and be able to make use of the resources. This will help the library management ensure proper planning of the library. In light of this, this study is carried out to compare the library use pattern among the undergraduates in the three different tertiary institutions in Lagos metropolis, that is, College of Education, Polytechnic and University.

Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka was established for the dire need to educate and produce technical teachers in Nigeria for the training of Technical/Vocational educators; for effective manpower development of technical education in Nigeria. The Federal government established the National Technical Teachers' College (NTTC) in Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, as the first Technical Teacher Education Institution in the country to award Technical Teachers Certificates (TTC) for professionals in commercial and technical education. In 1982, the name of the College was changed to Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, due to the expansion in curricula and courses being offered. Yaba College of Technology, known as the cradle of higher learning in Nigeria started as Yaba Technical Institute in 1947 but changed to Yaba College of Technology in 1963. It offers National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Post-HND courses. University of Lagos, Akoka was founded in 1962 to provide qualitative and research-oriented education to Nigerians and all those who have entered its domain in search of knowledge. The University was established by the need to intensify the training of the professional workforce for the country. It offers diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the library use patterns of undergraduate students in three different tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine students' purpose of visit the library in the selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State.
2. find out the methods students use for locating books in the selected institutions in Lagos State.
3. ascertain strategies students use for determining the relevance of library materials in the tertiary institutions in Lagos State.
4. investigate resources mostly consulted by students in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

Literature Review

The processes and practice of librarianship revolve around library users. The library has different categories of users that visit the library for different reasons equally every user visits a specific library based on their information needs. The students' visit to the library allows them to network in the library. The more library users visit the library, the more it helps to promote the use of the information resources, which makes it possible for users to have more interactions with the library. The five laws of library science formulated by Ranganathan (1931) are designed to provide the right materials to meet the information needs of library users. It is important to find out how library users access the library services provided to improve their input within the academic community. The purpose of the parent institution can only be achieved when library services and resources are fully utilised, the size of the library notwithstanding. However, Ladipo and Aramide (2017) posited that the disposition of library staff coupled with a better environment prompts students to use the library.

Arthur, Brafi and Kuranche (2013) carried out a study on academic library use by students in tertiary institutions in Ghana. The findings revealed the majority of tertiary students use the library to study and prepare for examinations and to do course assignments. It was also revealed that textbooks, reference materials and past examination question papers were the most frequently used library resources by the students. The student's ability to locate materials in the library was also investigated; they found out that the majority of the students found it easy to locate materials and asked for the assistance of library staff, while some made use of shelf guides. This brought about effective use of the library resources as students were able to retrieve materials with ease. Osedumme and Okuonghae (2020) carried out a study on undergraduates' self-efficacy and self-esteem as predictors of the use of library information resources in Nigeria. The study found that the most frequently used library resources were textbooks and students used the library resources to prepare for examinations.

Research plays a central role in the academic work of students and faculty in higher education institutions. The academic library is an important resource which serves as a central hub for students to access online materials, personal help, and other resources that guide their academic work (Sadler, 2007). Omosekejimi, Nweke, James, and Uwandi (2020) carried out a study on availability and ICT skills as catalysts to the use of OPAC among undergraduates in federal universities in South West, Nigeria. It was revealed that there was a high level of OPAC availability in federal university libraries; the students used OPAC to locate the position of a particular material on the shelf and to ascertain its availability in the library. The study by Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) on the use of the academic library that the students used the library mostly during examinations and to do class assignments and further revealed that 84.3% of users were not trained in information retrieval which asserted the findings of this study. Olorunfemi (2021) found the purpose of using the library to include

studying for an examination, updating knowledge, and borrowing books. The most consulted material by the students was found to be textbooks. Yusuf and Iwu (2010) studied academic library use at Covenant University. It was discovered that the students' reasons for using the library were to make photocopies, to read for examinations and to read newspapers. They found that the students used OPAC to locate materials in the library; the most consulted materials were newspapers.

The student's use of the library to a greater extent determines the quality of the educational status of the higher institution. Researchers have asserted that library user studies as a vital tool for ensuring effective planning and management of academic libraries. All tertiary institutions ensure the acquisition of relevant resources to meet the needs of all categories of library users. The relevant stock in the library is to facilitate teaching, learning, research and knowledge dissemination in the parent institution. As a result, the library has put in place several services in reference, reading and journal sections with resources to make their services available to students use. Kumah (2015) comparative study of the use of the library and the internet as sources of information by the graduate students of the University of Ghana revealed that 17% of the respondents made use of literature to supplement lecture notes, 6.7% to keep abreast with studies, 7.3% to read notes, 0.6% to borrow books.

According to Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017), library catalogues are access points through which library users gain access to available library materials. They are the interface of an information retrieval system, helping users to search and access library resources. Atanda and Ugwulebo (2017) found that awareness and access points influence the utilization of library catalogues. The challenge in meeting the 21st Century's information demand due to advanced ICT development has brought about library users' expectation of more efficient library services. Opoku (2011) opined that academic libraries need to promote and provide quality information services that meet the needs of students and faculty to motivate them to effectively use library services. Libraries need to enhance the interfaces of all the components that make up the service to ensure that the library objectives are achieved and to develop user relations over time. Eserada and Okolo (2019) studied the use of OPAC in selected university libraries in South-South Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that the students' use of OPAC was low due to a lack of OPAC knowledge and unfamiliarity with the OPAC system.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) policy emphasized the need for university libraries to bring library services closer to the students and staff, therefore, making academic library service a complex and dynamic collaboration between the library staff and the users. Library users can successfully achieve their purpose of visit to the library if they are aware of the resources available in the library. In line with the objective of the university library, the availability of information resources in the libraries for immediate and effective use provides opportunities for people to work as individuals and collaborators. For any library user to

maximise the benefit of the library, there is a need to find out the materials that are available there, in what format, where the materials are held in the library, how to use library tools to access them and how to utilize the materials effectively.

Odunlade and Onaade (2017) referred to information as a public good that none should be denied regardless of users' socioeconomic and political status. There are three types of resources: primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information. An information source is defined as a person, thing or place from which information is obtained. Information resources are processed, shelved and stored in different formats, such as print and non-print materials. As a result, college and university libraries are regarded as the most important resource of an institution of higher education since students and lecturers in these institutions are meant to conduct research within their academic discipline.

Newspapers are news sources that provide very current information about events, people, or places at the time they are published. This is to ensure the information on current events is open. Magazines are articles on diverse topics of popular interest and current events written by journalists or professional writers geared toward the public, such as Oil and Gas. Books cover virtually any topic, fact or fiction useful for the complete background on an issue with an in-depth analysis of a theory without the most current information. Academic journals which are referred to as peer-reviewed or scholarly journals are articles written by specialists and experts in a field of study.

Information sources are available in various forms, such as journals journal articles, research papers, books, magazines films and audio/video recordings plus the data stored in the computer and compact disks. The growths in literature volume, variety and complexity have put severe constraints on the users' search strategy for their needed information. The complexity of electronic resources has also led to an unsatisfactory search for information, which further discouraged the student's usage of library resources. The material in printed form such as books and journals in the libraries can also be made available in digital form as well as conference proceedings, reports, statistics, images, audiovisual, maps and more recently electronic resources such as CD-ROM and Internet-based databases have been introduced into the library. Books are usually shelved in specific areas from other library resources.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos and Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. A sample of 300 participants was drawn from the population of undergraduate students in the three institutions, comprising 100 respondents each, using the convenience-sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, 300 copies were distributed to the

respondents physically in their respective libraries. The response rate was 76%. The questionnaire was made up of 5 sections and 35 items using a five-point Likert scale. Section A focused on the students’ demographic; Section B consisted of the students’ purpose of visit to the library, Section C featured items on methods for locating books in the library. Section D seeks information on strategies used for determining the relevance of library materials and Section E focused on resources mostly consulted by students in the selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

RESULTS

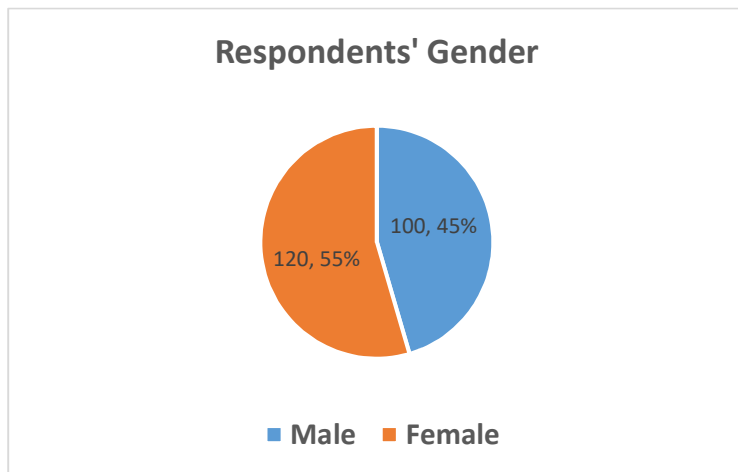


Figure 1: Respondents’ Gender

Figure 1 shows that 45% of the respondents were male while the female constituted 55%

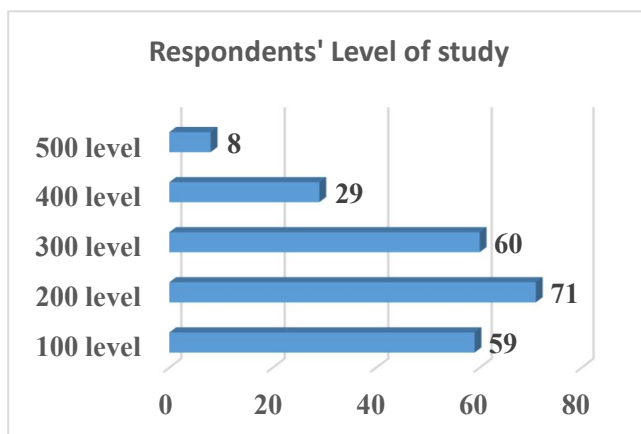


Figure 2: Respondents' Level of Study

Figure 2 shows the level of study of the respondents (59) 26.0% were in the 100 level, (71) 31.3% were in the 200 levels, (60) 26.4% were in the 300 level, 29) 12.8% in 400 level while (8) 3.5% were in 500 level.

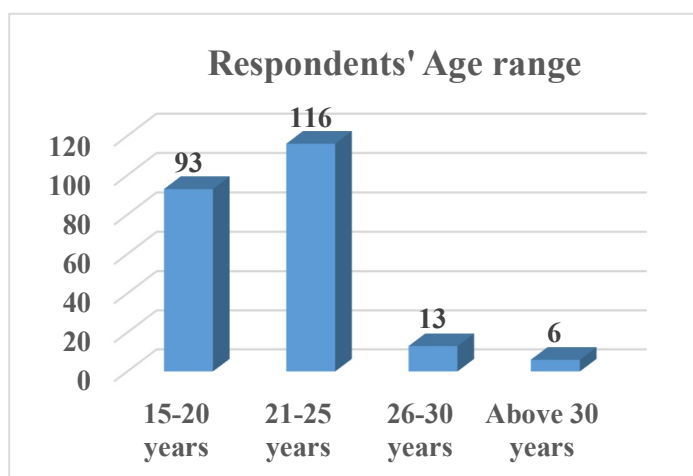


Figure 3: Age range of Respondents

Figure 3 shows that the majority 116 (50.9%) of the respondents were in the age range of 21-25 years, followed by 93 (40.3%) were aged between 15-20 years and only 6 were above 30 years.

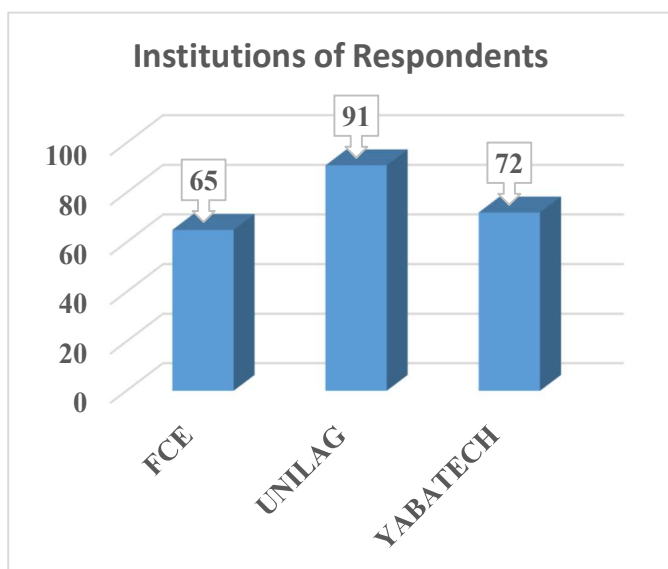


Figure 4: Institutions of Respondents

Key:

FCE(T) - Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Lagos

UNILAG - University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Lagos

YABATECH - Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos

Figure 4 shows that out of the 228 respondents from the three institutions, 65 respondents came from FCE(T), 91 respondents from UNILAG and 72 respondents from YABATECH

Table 1: Students' purpose of visit to the Library

S/N	Purpose	FCE(T)		UNILAG		YABATECH		GROUP	
		X	STD	X	STD	X	STD	X	STD
1.	I visit the library to study and update my knowledge	4.34	1.035	3.90	1.358	4.10	0.906	4.09	1.49
2.	I visit the library to prepare for the examination	4.56	0.814	4.12	1.314	3.77	1.311	4.14	1.226
3.	I visit the library to conduct research	3.29	1.323	3.03	1.465	3.80	1.077	3.35	1.347
4.	I visit the library to make photocopies	1.98	1.334	1.76	1.355	2.70	1.211	1.92	1.305
5.	I visit the library for Relaxation	1.33	0.870	1.48	1.049	1.68	1.168	1.50	1.048
6.	I visit the library to read newspapers	1.54	1.075	1.73	1.302	2.21	1.433	1.83	1.310
7.	I visit the library to use electronic resources	2.32	1.420	2.41	1.543	3.55	1.037	2.74	1.468
8.	To consult journals	1.95	1.170	2.10	1.382	2.71	1.384	2.25	1.357

Key:**FCE(T)** - Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Lagos**UNILAG** - University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Lagos**YABATECH** - Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos

Table 1 shows the purpose of the student's visit to the library. The results revealed that students in the three institutions visit the library mostly to prepare for examinations (\bar{x} =4.56, 4.12 and 3.77) for Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, University of Lagos and Yaba

College of Technology respectively. The purpose of visiting the library to study and update knowledge follows with (Mean=4.34, 4.10, and 3.90) in the order of FCE(T), YabaTech and UNILAG. To conduct research, the results show (Mean= 3.80, 3.29 and 3.03) for YabaTech, FCE(T) and Unilag respectively. In the use of e-resources, the (Mean=3.55, 2.41 and 2.32) for YabaTech, Unilag and FCE(T).

Table 2: Method of locating books in the Library by the students

S/N	Method	FCE(T)		UNILAG		YABATECH		GROUP	
		X	STD	X	STD	X	STDk	X	STD
1	Searching the Shelves	2.28	1.161	2.44	1.36	2.14	1.079	2.30	1.222
2.	Scanning through the books	2.86	1.354	2.48	1.304	2.28	1.003	2.52	1.245
3.	Use of Card Catalogue	3.95	1.281	3.42	1.627	2.70	1.506	3.33	1.570
4.	Search the OPAC	3.97	1.201	3.85	1.410	3.41	1.498	3.74	1.398
5.	Librarians help	3.37	1.473	3.80	1.319	3.54	1.310	3.59	1.368

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the method students use to locate information resources in the library. The result revealed that the use of OPAC (Mean= 3.97, 3.85 and 3.41) for FCE(T), Unilag and YabaTech was top in the list, followed by Librarians' help (Mean= 3.80, 3.54, and 3.37) for Unilag, YabaTech and FCE(T) and the Use of card catalogue (Mean= 3.95, 3.42 and 2.70) for FCE(T), Unilag and YabaTech. The result shows that students rarely used to search the shelves and scan through the books in locating library materials.

Table 3: Strategies students use in determining the relevance of library materials

S/N	Relevance Factors	FCE(T)		UNILAG		YABATECH		GROUP	
		X	STD	X	STD	X	STD	X	STD
1.	Front Cover	2.54	1.298	2.26	1.280	2.27	1.373	2.34	1.316
2.	Index	2.87	0.431	2.61	1.701	2.14	1.052	2.53	1.463
3.	Illustrations	3.67	1.235	3.26	1.257	2.80	1.528	3.23	1.381
4.	Table of content	1.95	1.227	1.89	1.208	1.89	1.181	1.91	1.200
5.	Preface	3.39	1.357	2.98	1.502	3.07	1.676	3.11	1.527

Table 3 revealed the results of the analysis of the strategies students use to determine the relevance of library materials. Using illustrations in the book came first (Mean=3.67, 3.26 and 2.80) for FCE(T), Unilag and YabaTech respectively. Reading through the preface (Mean= 3.39, 3.07 and 2.98) for FCE(T), YABATECH and Unilag happened to be the second option, while checking the Index (Mean= 2.87, 2.61 and 2.14) for FCE(T)(T), Unilag and YabaTech. The results for FCE(T), Unilag and YABATECH showed that illustration and preface were the

methods commonly used for determining the relevance of library materials in the library followed by checking the Index, while the students hardly use the Table of content and Front cover of the material to judge its relevance.

Table 4: Resources students mostly consulted in the Library

S/N	Resources	FCE(T)		UNILAG		YABATECH		Rank
		X	STD	X	STD	X	STD	
1.	Textbooks	5.76	2.347	5.71	2.194	6.22	0.0	1
2.	Reference materials	3.79	2.080	3.53	2.227	3.25	2.181	2
4.	E-Resources	3.20	2.143	3.39	2.450	3.44	2.299	3
3.	Journals	3.14	2.021	2.80	1.196	2.66	2.024	4
5.	Novels/Motivational books	2.93	2.220	3.75	2.388	2.82	1.971	5
6.	Newspapers/Magazines	2.51	2.071	2.83	2.520	2.88	2.147	6
7.	CD ROMs	2.89	2.402	2.57	2.323	2.57	2.053	7

Table 4 reveals that the mostly consulted materials are textbooks (Mean=6.22, 5.76, and 5.71) for YabaTech, FCE(T), and Unilag respectively. Reference materials (Mean= 3.79, 3.53 and 3.25) for FCE(T), Unilag and YabaTech while E-resources use (Mean= 3.44, 3.39 and 3.20) for YabaTech, Unilag and FCE(T). Journals had (mean= 3.14, 2.80 and 2.66) for FCE(T), Unilag and YabaTech. The use of CD-ROMs and Newspapers/Magazines had the lowest Mean.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study on students' visits to the library revealed that in the three institutions, the main purpose was to prepare for the examination, to update knowledge and to conduct research. The results are similar in the three institutions. The students hardly used the library for relaxation. This finding is in agreement with the findings of (Arthur, Brafi & Kuranche, 2013; Osedumme & Okuonghae, 2020 and Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2021) but disagrees with that of Yusuf and Iwu (2010) which found that the students at Covenant University mostly visit the library to make photocopies.

It was revealed in the findings of the study on methods used to locate materials in the library that the students in the selected institutions: FCE(T), UNILAG and YabaTech used the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) to locate materials in the library. This agrees with the studies by (Yusuf & Iwu, 2010; Omoosekejimi, Nweke, James, & Uwandi, 2020). The students also engaged the help of librarians and library personnel when needed to locate materials. Furthermore, the students made use of the card catalogue to locate materials in the library. The results agree with the study of Sadler (2007). This finding affirms that OPAC is very essential in locating materials

in the library and should therefore be the first point of call in retrieving information resources. This contradicts Eserada and Okolo (2019) who found low usage of OPAC by students in universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Findings on strategies to know the relevance of library materials revealed that students mostly used illustrations in the books to determine their relevance. The results are similar in the three institutions. Students reading the preface of the book followed and then checking the index of the book were the strategies used by the students to determine how relevant the material is to their information needs. This concurs with the study by Olorunfemi and Ipadeola (2021). This implies that students need to be taught how to determine the relevance of information resources.

The findings of the study revealed that textbooks were the most consulted information resources in the library with reference materials, and e-resources following; while newspapers and CD-ROMs were less consulted by the students in the three institutions. This is expected as students need to use appropriate text relevant to their subjects or field of study. Books written by experts that are an authority in specific fields would be most relevant to the students. The result is consistent with (Arthur, Brafi & Kuranche, 2013; Osedumme & Okuonghae, 2020 and Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2021) which revealed that textbooks, reference materials, newspapers and online databases were mostly consulted while journals, theses and dissertations, CD-ROM were less consulted. This implies that not all the information resources were put to use by the students. This study has established that undergraduate students in the three different tertiary institutions use the library mostly for academic purposes, and use the right methods in locating materials but need more skills to determine the relevance of the information resources they consult. This, by implication, calls for regular information literacy programs to be organised by the library for all categories of users.

Conclusion

Academic libraries have evolved over the years in their pursuit to play a vital role in ensuring quality education and research in tertiary institutions. The provision of relevant information resources such as textbooks, journals, reference materials and electronic resources were made available to support the teaching, learning and research activities. The study has ascertained the purpose of students' visits to the library, methods used to locate library materials, strategies to ascertain the relevance of library resources and the information resources mostly consulted in the selected tertiary institutions. The study found that the majority of the students visit the library to update their knowledge and prepare for the examination. Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), Librarians' help/guide and card catalogue were the methods used to locate resources in the library for the students. Library management and professionals should ensure maximum use

of OPAC in retrieving library materials. The OPAC should always be made ready for use and be well placed for easy location by the users. Furthermore, the study found that textbooks, reference materials, and e-resources were ranked to be the top resources mostly consulted in the library. The findings of the study are similar across the selected tertiary institutions. The study implies that Library and information professionals should prioritise library user orientation and education, especially for new students in tertiary institutions, as well as improve the information literacy of the students in a bid to meet their information needs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for libraries in academic institutions to organise regular information literacy programs for library users to promote effective use of the resources to enhance students' performance.
2. Library management in tertiary institutions should create relaxation space in the library where students and users can freshen up, as this will attract more users to the library.
3. Library personnel should be friendlier and interact more with the students/users in meeting their information needs.
4. The management in tertiary institutions should create a conducive environment in the library through adequate funding and stable Internet provision.

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