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**LIBRARY RESOURCES ACCESSIBILITY AND ICT ADEPTNESS: CASE STUDY OF
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OTUOKE LIBRARY.**

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Abstract

Information needs arise when an individual finds himself in a problem situation, when he or she no longer can manage with the knowledge that he or she possess. Library patrons repeatedly find themselves in situations where information is needed, sought and gathered, organized, retrieved, processed, evaluated, and used. The objectives of this study are to examine the information requirements of students and researchers in Federal University Otuoke, to asses both human and material resources in the library; to determine the level at which the library satisfies the information needs of the users; and to find out best way(s) to meet these information needs of patrons in this ICT age. A Total of (250) library users from different departments and faculties were used as sample. Data were collected through a 20 item questionnaire which was developed based on objectives adopted. 220 dully completed questionnaires were returned in good condition. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and percentages of responses. The findings revealed that the library patrons are more interested in the information related to, teaching, learning and research activities. The outcome of the research also revealed that the attitudes of the respondents were favorable in the use of library resources but there is the need

for improvement in such areas as library services and provision of adequate space for readers. It was found out that majority of the respondents sought information from journals, textbooks, reference books than other library materials. Major obstacles faced by patrons while seeking information included lack of resource sharing facilities and equipments, lack/inadequate ICT skills.

Keywords: Information Needs, Information Resources, Library Resources Accessibility, Library Services, Students, Federal University, Otuoke.

Introduction

Academic libraries and information professionals are in an ongoing effort to understand the evolving factors in information needs and seeking behaviours of students in higher institution of learning. Academic libraries foster information literacy and provide resources to students, researchers and staff. According to Mason (2010), an academic library has the mission to build and maintain a collection that will support and enhance the instructional needs of the institution. Apart from building and maintaining information resources, accessibility and use are also important factors in knowledge acquisition, learning and research. Accessibility of information resources is very important recurring theme in the literature. According to Aguolu (2002), resources may be available in the library and identified bibliographically as relevant to ones' subject of interest, but the user may not be able to lay hands on them.

Aina (2011), stated that accessibility determines the speed at which an information output in any format is obtained.

Qamar (2002) defined accessibility of information sources as the increase and provision of information resources to clientele in order to increase their knowledge base.

A “digital library” is fundamentally a resource that reconstructs the intellectual substance and services of a traditional library in digital form. Digital libraries consist of digital contents (which are sometimes but not necessarily text-based), interconnections (which may be simple links or complex metadata or query-based relationships), and software (which may be simple pages in HTML or complex database management systems). A single, simple, stand-alone web page is

probably not a digital library in any meaningful sense, any more than a single page or a single book is a traditional library. A mass of raw data such as comes from the Hubble telescope is probably also not a digital library, though its contents arguably belongs in one. Digital libraries are not replacements for traditional libraries. They are rather the future of traditional libraries, much as medieval manuscript libraries simply became a specialized and much revered part of the larger print-based libraries that we have today (Seadle, 2006). The library, as a conduit for information, serving a wide spectrum of information seekers, has a critical role to play in the facilitation of library services at this century; hence, an unhindered access to knowledge is essential in a development process. It serves as a liberator from poverty and deprivation and as a springboard in the quest for innovation and change. Drake (1984) in Tise, Raju and Masango, (2008) says that access to information is a complex concept. Libraries have the mandate to drive access to information to alleviate poverty and deprivation due to paradoxical situation of a scarcity of information in an era of information explosion.

Background of the Study

For a library to be functional, it has to meet its user's needs and ensuring that users make functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. In the past three decades, a considerable body of literature has been produced dealing with the information needs and seeking behavior of both individuals and groups in a variety of contexts. Taja, (1992). It is understood that information needs arise when an individual finds himself in situation, when he or she no longer can manage with the knowledge that him or her possess. Solomon, (1996) said it is the information need that triggers information seeking which is caused by uncertainty due to a lack of understanding, gap in meaning, or a limited construct.

Accessibility of Library Information Resources

The objective of the library is to maximize the exposure of the user to resources. Brown (1979), remarks that the library should be organized to maximize the effort required by the users to access the needed information materials as soon as possible when the need arises. While libraries have previously functioned as repositories for collections, the collection is already moving well beyond the boundaries of library walls. The digitization of statistical data sources and the production of electronic journals are precursors to new and rapidly developing forms of scholarly communication. Initiatives at scores of other academic institutions point the way to increased

reliance on computers and networks for storage, access and manipulation of both primary and secondary sources of research.

According to Aina, Tayewo, and Ogundipe (2011) Libraries as constituents of their larger parent organizations are rethinking and exploring new ways to reposition themselves in the campus environment in view of higher expectations of their various stakeholders, pervasiveness of information technology, increased availability and focus on electronic resources and services, and the need to become learning and research centers to support a wide range of educational initiatives. The traditional services rendered by the library includes, readers' services, reference services, reprographic services, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information etc. However, the advent of ICT has expanded the scope of these services and tools of information delivery. Historically, library has had a long tradition of resources sharing and networking with ICT.

According to Lee (2005), while the business world is changing in the new knowledge economy and digital age, libraries of all types are undergoing drastic changes also. The new role of libraries in the 21st century is to be a learning and knowledge center for their users as well as the intellectual commons for their respective communities where, to borrow the phrase from the Keystone Principles, people and ideas interact in both the real and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge. As knowledge institutions, libraries provide spaces for information-sharing and learning for all ages, genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups regardless of their needs. Libraries provide the means through which new knowledge is developed and made available to all. Some of the key enablers for access to knowledge through libraries and librarians are according to Tise, (2009):

- Libraries and librarians must become more user-oriented by bringing libraries and their resources to the user; empower users through information literacy, social networking, enabling access to information and facilitating the full participation of all citizens in societal activities;
- Become active in advocacy by actively promoting libraries through effective communications with stakeholders on library and society matters, facilitating and supporting open access to all, becoming innovative information agent;

- Create partnerships and foster opportunities for convergence with commercial / private enterprises, cultural institution, societal stakeholders such as health workers, teachers;
- Library as a space and place should foster information for all; community knowledge space; gate-openers to information, safe and trusted public space, content in formats that appeal to young and other discrete library user groups.

Anaeme (2008) states that ICTs and their application in library and information services have continued to change the scope and patterns of library services. This development has forced libraries to provide new formats. Many libraries especially in developed countries now provide a computerized catalogue of materials, automated patron registration and checkout services, Internet access round the clock, websites, e-mail notification service that allows a user to place holds on materials and subscriptions to online databases. The Internet represents the most important medium for the 21st century library transactions. Many libraries, according to Klaus (2008), are digitizing their important holdings as fast as possible to make them accessible, as far as possible under the legal and technological conditions. Akintunde (2004) asserts that libraries have taken on a new paradigm of service. There has been a shift from being documentalist or archivist to being a gateway to knowledge. The librarian guides clients on how to navigate effectively. Corroborating this, Anyakoha (2005) says that the information available on the Web is vast and continues to proliferate. Many individual users are still not able to use the Web efficiently.

Finally, the use of interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing via networking further provides access to library resources. In the words of Agbaje (2002) library cooperation now takes the form of library technology consortia. Libraries now operate automated library systems through which they share facilities and resources. This has increased reliance on interlibrary loan supported by electronic communication and delivery systems.

ICT Skill and Adeptness by Library Professionals

Libraries are not immune to the societal forces re-shaping other institutions brought about by technology. Social institutions today look vastly different than they did twenty years ago. A variety of forces, most especially economic changes and technological developments, have reshaped and redefined our notions of what constitute a library (Besser, 1998). He further

submits that technology has made libraries to become less important for the materials they collect or house, and more important for the kind of materials they can obtain in response to user requests. This movement from collecting material just in case someone will need it, to delivering material from elsewhere just in time to answer a user's needs, is a profound shift for the library as an institution. This shift is a direct result of the recent proliferation of digital networking in an environment where standards for description were already well established. The information technology revolution therefore no longer encompasses only the applications of computer but also the access to and the sharing of huge amounts of information. The term 'information and communication technology' (ICT) is used to refer to all of these developments (Plomp, 1999)

Then, why the emphasis on 21st century? Why is the 21st century different from past centuries? The truth is that, the 21st century is revolutionized by advances in computing and telecommunication technology. According to Salami (2007), the 21st century has witnessed a great increase in information management and transmission. The new information age has brought about improved knowledge delivery, processing of information, precision, good time management and improved network system. Furthermore, information is also called data and databases are created and made accessible online via the Internet and other machine readable formats. Search engines are made accessible to the public. In view of this, conventional libraries seem to be giving way to hybrid and virtual libraries. (Otherwise called libraries without walls or paperless libraries) accessing or developing digital collections alongside print-based collections.

Technology application to library services has brought a lot of changes to library operations there by making access to knowledge more convenient to user. Some of the fastest growing trends are noticed in the area of networking; file storage, graphic user interface. They have also been enabled by agreements on standards and protocols (such as Z39.50) which permit the linking together of resources from disparate sources.

- **From multiple locations:** From anywhere, users can consult all library holdings from workstation throughout the systematic catalog, indexing, and abstracting services. Divorcing library services from a physical location provokes a profound difference in what a library service is.

- **Availability of more resources:** Technology now allow users to have access to diverse resources i.e. from pure bibliographical records (online catalog) now to delivery of indexing and abstracting services, course descriptions, class schedule.
- **Making information available in raw form:** Types of information available to users in digital form has continued to grow. In indexing and abstracting; search has moved from providing searchable index terms/descriptors to searchable abstracts, to more recently full-text of articles and books. In the library catalog, we have moved from bibliographic description and subject headings to providing tables of contents information, to full text and page images. Technology has moved patrons to rawer information or more detailed representation often called enhanced records and has been a key element for those studying information retrieval.
- **Diminishing roles for intermediaries:** Increase interaction with online system means patron less reliance upon library staff. Patrons can check circulation information without ever contacting the circulation department. Many inter library loan experiments let users request a work without ever interacting with a library staff member. And we are seeing an increase in experiments using strategies from Artificial Intelligence community to help aid user searching (Besser,1998)

Significance of the Study

Each user is pursuing a specific goal when using library resources in the library, whatever he does with such information and how the library assists him depends on the person and his goals. Therefore, the result obtained from this study could be useful in assessing the degree to which the academic staff and students use the resources in Nimbe Adedipe library. It is hoped that this study will throw more light on the roles of the library services and resources in meeting the needs of its clientele. Furthermore, the study will be useful to researchers, since there are indications that each research achievement provides avenue for further research study.

Statement of the Problem

This study attempts to investigate four (4) problems areas:

- (a) The information requirement of the academic staff and students of Federal University Otuoke as regards achieving the goals and objectives of the University.

- (b) The information requirement of the academic staff in the performance of their daily activities
- (c) The availability of resources in the library and their organization for effective accessibility and utilization by the academic staff, students and researchers.
- (d) The adequacy of human and material resources in meeting the needs of the academic staff, students and researchers.

Objective of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

- (a) To determine the information requirements of academic staff and students of Federal University Otuoke
- (b) To find out the category of library resources in meeting the information needs of academic staff and students of Federal University Otuoke
- (c) To determine the degree to which the library satisfies the information needs of the academic staff and students.
- (d) To find out how to meet this information needs of academic staff and students of Federal University Otuoke

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design which involved the collection of data using well-constructed structured questionnaire. The Target Population Employed in This Study Consists of all students in all the faculties that visit the library. A Total of (250) library user (students) from different departments and faculties were used as sample. Data were collected through a 20-item questionnaire which was developed based on objectives adopted. 220 dully completed questionnaires were returned in good condition. Validation and reliability of the instrument was achieved by expert examination, criticism and correction. Simple frequency counts and chi-square statistical tool was used for data analysis.

Results

The data collected were analyzed on the following variables of interest;

- 1) The demographic characteristics e.g. age, sex, marital status, academic qualification etc.;

- 2) Their number of years of studying as students;
- 3) The information needs of respondents;
- 4) Type of resources available in the library; and
- 5) Sources consulted for information.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Parameters	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-25	155	70.45
	26-35	35	15.90
	36-45	20	9.10
	46-55	10	4.55
	Total	220	100.00
Gender	Male	125	56.81
	Female	95	43.19
	Total	220	100.00

Table 1 gives details on age distribution of respondents by sex. Out of the 220 respondents, 95 (43.19%) were female while 125 (56.81%) were male. This shows that the greater number of learner in the institution are male. Also, the research shows that 155 (70.45%) of the respondents were between the age of 15-25 years. This shows that the greatest number of these respondents were in the age group that are economically productive.

Table 2: Status of Respondents by Level of Study

Parameter	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Level	100 level	105	47.72
	200 level	83	37.72
	300 level	16	7.30

	400 level	13	5.90
	500 level	3	1.36
Total	Total	220	100

In table 2 above, 105 (47.72%) are in 100 level, this indicates that the majority of students that use the library are 100 level students followed by 83 (37.72%) who are in 200 level, followed by 16 (7.30%) 300 level students, 13 (5.90%) in 400 level, and 3 (1.36%) in 500 level

Table 3: the respondents Purpose of Using the Library

S/No.	Purpose of Library Use	Frequency	Percentage
1	General Information	75	34.09
2	Reading for Official Work	35	15.91
3	Study for Academic & Examination	100	45.45
4	Recreational Reading	10	4.55

In table 3 above, 45.45% of the library users (as revealed by the questionnaire) are only interested in using the library for academics and examinations, while 34.09% are more interested in utilizing the library for general information. Also, the table shows that 15.91% use the library because of the availability of necessary background reading for further reading and assignment, (teaching & research), while 4.55% use the library for recreational reading.

Information Needs of Students of the Institution

Table 4: Clienteles Priority Sources of Information

S/No	Source of Information	Frequency	Percentage
1	Journal	190	86.36
2	Newspapers & Magazines	160	72.72
3	Personal Contact with colleagues	200	90.90
4	Textbooks & Other Library Materials	220	100
5	Research Reports	189	85.90

6	Monographs	215	97.72
7	Newsletters	195	88.63
8	Computer Database	125	56.81
9	The CD-ROM	25	11.36
10	Internet	40	18.18

As clearly shown in table 4, textbooks and other library materials and personal contact with colleagues constitute the priority sources of information which satisfy the information requirements of trainees/students in the institution under study. It is not surprising that students make up the bulk of the 100% of the respondents who have their information requirements satisfied by textbooks and other library materials/personal contact with colleagues. The library has taken steps to satisfy this category of users by providing basic textbooks which make up 95% of the total collection.

Table 5: Accessibility of Library Resources

Library Resources	Very Accessible	Accessible	Fairly Accessible	Never Accessible	Don't Know
Journal	35(15.90%)	52(23.63%)	48(21.81%)	22(10.00%)	45(20.45%)
Newspapers & Magazines	55(25.00%)	60(27.27%)	36(16.36%)	30(13.63%)	39(17.72%)
Textbooks	105(47.72%)	100(45.45%)	10(4.54%)	-	5(2.27%)
Research Report/Project	40(18.18%)	52(23.63%)	75(34.09%)	53(24.09%)	-
Newsletter/Magazines	70(31.81%)	110(50.00%)	15(6.81%)	18(8.18%)	7(3.18%)
Monograph	25(11.36%)	63(28.63%)	18(8.18%)	92(41.81%)	22(10.00%)
Electronic Online Resources	60(27.27%)	91(41.36%)	45(20.45%)	16(7.27%)	8(3.63%)

As shown in Table, the most accessible materials were textbooks and research project, followed by Newsletter/Magazines, Electronic resources and Monograph.

Table 6: Clientele rating of Library Services

S/No	Library Users' Satisfaction	Frequency		Total	%
		Yes	No		
1	The staff supply you with necessary information	70	150	220	100
2	The library's collection of journals & newspaper is good	92	128	220	100
3	You borrow books regularly	105	115	220	100
4	You find the library ideal for preparing for lectures and exams	120	100	220	100

Table 6 above illustrates that the library services do not satisfactorily satisfy all its clientele. While 70 out of the 220 respondents indicated that 'the staffs supply you with necessary information' the remaining 150 respondents indicated "no" to this option. In their response to 'the library's collection of journals and newspaper', 128 respondents indicated 'no' while 92 respondents indicated 'yes'. On how respondents 'borrow books regularly' 105 respondents indicated 'yes' while 115 respondents indicated 'no'. 100 respondents indicated 'no' on whether 'they find the library ideal for preparing for lectures and examination' while 120 respondents indicated 'yes'. On the whole, 493 respondents indicated 'no', while 387 respondents indicated 'yes'.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn; the study shows that the attitudinal pattern of students to the use of the library was pleasant but there is need for attitude change in some areas like attitude of library staffs to users, provision of information resources and creating a conducive environment for students reading, and online resources

among others. The student's reaction to the library resources and services was generally fair and their satisfaction level was also fair.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the findings of the results that:

- i. Library orientation programmes should be organized for the students to pave way for access to library resources.
- ii. The library materials should be well and properly organized both print and non-print materials and made accessible to users with ease.
- iii. There is the need for the provision of more furniture and adequate lightning's and ventilation; this would motivate the students using the library the more.
- iv. Electronic resources should be acquired since the library users were eager to use internet

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