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Factors influencing Utilization of John Harris Library, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the level of utilization and factors influencing utilization of John Harris Library, University of Benin by undergraduate students. A four point likert scale instrument with 35 questions was adopted. Seven questions were on demographics, ten questions on utilization of the library while 18 questions were on factors influencing utilization of the library. Undergraduate students comprising different levels of studies were used in the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Results indicate that there is high and significant level of utilization of the library among the undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Nigeria. Sixteen major factors influenced utilization of the library by the students. Such factors include: human, institutional, environmental factors and information literacy skills. Efforts should be put in place to sustain this result and to use it as a benchmark for providing quality resources, facilities and services that will encourage adequate utilization of any university library.

Keywords: Library utilization, Undergraduates, John Harris Library, Human factor, institutional factor, environmental factor, information literacy skill.

Introduction

Utilization of academic libraries is still an issue in many campuses and it is the expectation of University Librarians the world over that their libraries are adequately utilized by its numerous clientele. To this end, efforts are being made by university libraries to provide educational resources and services targeted at meeting the academic, social and recreational needs to the expected users. This is against the background that the Library as the academic nerve center of the universities should be able to meet up with its mandate in supporting the academic, social, innovative and learning processes in the university. University libraries play crucial roles to support educational activities of undergraduates in the university. Therefore, there is need to develop effective strategies for attracting the students to use the library.

Utilization of the library is one way the library can demonstrate its usefulness and relevance in our campuses. Utilization of the Library will influence undergraduate students' academic performances and achievements if adequate resources and services are provided (Gbemi-Ogunleye, 2016). Therefore, library use by students is a sine qua non. Utilization of the library and its' resources has been a consequence of several factors. Some factors are users based; some are institutional, environmental, and technological while some are library centered. These factors are expected to be factored in by the Management of any library when developing their products and services.

The mandate of UNIBEN Library is to provide adequate learning resources and services to satisfy the information requirements of staff and students in line with the mandate of the University. The University Library system consists of the main library, and 16 faculties, branch and college libraries with over 200 professional and non-professional staff. To support student's education, the library developed two e-libraries with 228 computers with fast Internet connectivity, e-databases like EBSCOHOST, e-Granary, Wiley online, The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL), Research4life, Gale reference, JSTOR, Science Direct, Law pavilion, Legalpedia, and a host of other subject online full-text databases. The Library has over 100 computers in the various faculty libraries, with a total seating capacity of 4700, 500KVA stand-by generator; air-condition facilities and a clean environment. The library has over 211,000 current books, 344 titles of journals and subscribed to over 172 titles of local journals in different subjects, including pamphlets and audio visual materials (Students Affairs Division, 2019).

Several millions of Naira has been spent in purchasing books and equipment for the library through the university Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) and TetFund Library Development Intervention. The library personnel participates in information literacy training such as orientation lectures, orientation exercises, teaching use of library as part of GST 111 courses all geared towards user education. The library provides current awareness, reference, photocopying, Internet, bindery

services, and literacy training workshops. Based on the facilities, resources and services provided, the onus is on students to use the library to enhance their educational pursuit.

Statement of the Problem

There is a general notion that students no longer use the library in this technological age. It therefore becomes imperative that the university library investigate the level of utilization of the library and what factors influenced its' utilization periodically to justify the investment made in terms of human, financial and economic capital in the library.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How many UNIBEN students are using the Library
2. What is the level and percentage of utilization of UNIBEN library?
3. What factors influenced utilization of UNIBEN library.

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was proposed for the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of utilization and factors influencing utilization of the library.

Scope of the Study

This study covered level of utilization and the factors influencing utilization of the Library by undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria

Literature Review

Research into utilization of academic libraries has a long history. Emerole and Ogugua (2007) investigated library utilization pattern at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri and the finding indicated low patronage of the Library. In academic libraries in South-Western Nigeria, Ishola and Obadare (2014) result revealed that majority of the respondents used library information sources daily. Usoro, Umoren and Akwang (2018) survey at the University of Uyo concluded that students of all ages and gender utilize the Library to access available information resources. At the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Olajide and Adio (2017) findings indicated that about 53% of the respondents were occasional and monthly users of the library.

At the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anyaoku (2015) found that 84.8% of undergraduate students in the University use their Medical Library reading personal textbooks, newspaper, research project and class assignment. Similarly, Shehu, Shehu and Gana (2016) investigated Medical students,

Bingham University and findings indicated moderate students visit to the Library to consult textbooks. Aladeniyi and Owokole (2018) studied undergraduate medical students' utilization of library and found that majority of the students are occasional users of the library for reading textbooks.

A case study of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nwezeh and Shabi (2011) found that most of the students spent one to four hours daily in the library reading their own books, lecture notes, magazines and newspapers. A comparative study of three Universities in Nigeria (University of Ibadan, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye) by Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) revealed that students visited the library daily to use the information materials. The level of library use increased as students get to higher level of study. In two South African Universities, Salubi, Ondari-Okemwa and Nekhwavha (2018) found that majority of generation Z undergraduates are occasional users of the library and they prefer print materials to e-resources and databases. Investigation to ascertain whether library resources and services are adequately utilized, Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) revealed that majority of postgraduate students in Babcock University do not use the library regularly.

At the University of Benin, previous attempts to investigate library use by Obasuyi and Otabor (2012) showed that 56% of the physical science students in the university use the library in the course of their study. Similarly, Obasuyi and Idiodi (2016) study of library value and use by undergraduate students in the 2013/2014 academic session found that the university Library was of great value and highly used by majority (83%) of the students for their academic pursuits in the university. The foregoing literature revealed different levels and forms of utilization of university libraries by undergraduate students. Therefore, it becomes necessary to find out the factors that influenced these usage behaviours.

Factors influencing utilization of academic and university libraries are many and diverse. Some are country specific; some are human, institutional, environmental and demographic as seen from the following literature. At Karanatak University, Gurika and Gurika (2015) revealed that availability of Internet access points facilitated visit and use of the library by research scholars. Pembee (2014) examined the factors influencing the use of library information systems by staff and students for teaching, learning and research. The result showed that availability of resources influenced increased information systems' usage. The study further found that information and system quality contributed to increased library information system usage. Based on the findings, the study concluded that demographic background, resources availability, and user satisfaction influenced the use of the library.

In Africa, Mwatela (2013) investigation of individual and organizational characteristics as factors influencing optimal utilization of integrated library resources to support students' process of learning and knowledge acquisition at the University of Nairobi, Mombasa Library, Kenya identified four influential factors enhancing utilization of library and information services and resources: awareness and familiarity with the library and resources, organization and retrieval tools, as well as library and information literacy skills. He established a strong relationship between utilization of library resources and efficient and effective use of ICT lab. At the University of Eldoret, Koechi, Kurui, Korir, Mutai, Kimeli, Rutto and Arisei (2015) found that year of study and type of sponsorship significantly influenced library use while age, gender, type of department and distance to student residence did not. They opined that there is need to identify factors associated with Library use among undergraduate students in both Public and Private Universities in Kenya.

In Nigeria, Idiedo and Fyneman (2014) investigated factors affecting the use of library resources and services by undergraduate students in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State and findings revealed that poor quality of services, inadequate space in the library and lack of orientation/user education are major factors affecting the use of the library. The paper recommends that the university management should provide the university with a purpose-built library to enhance adequate space for the teeming population of students. Investigating human, physical and environmental factors affecting students' use of library and information services on Colleges of Education in Nigeria, Gojeh, Dutse and Daudu (2013) found attendance at library user education programme, proper organization of library materials, shelf guidance and arrangement, positive staff attitude, security of students' properties, favourable rules and regulations, adequate reading space, encouragement by lecturers were human factors while adequate books loaned out, adequate facilities and equipment, tidy environment were physical environmental factors that influenced the use of their libraries by students.

On strategies that can influence the use of academic libraries by distant learning students, Igwebuike and Agbo (2017) revealed that organizing seminar, conferences, workshops for users, provision of adequate power supply, expansion of the library for more space, provision of sufficient and up-to-date textbooks and journals, employment of more library staff, introduction of modern means of cataloguing and classification method and introduction of library orientation for users are measures to be taken to enhance students utilization of library resources. In South East Nigeria, Iroeze (2020) found that examination, conducive environment, awareness of resources in the library, Internet connectivity; induction course for new students has significant influence on library usage while factors like gender, educational background of parents did not. Assessing the relative effect and contribution of environmental factors, information literacy, course of study and resources

availability that enhance undergraduate students' use of university libraries in Nigeria, Oyedum (2012) found that provision of current/adequate library materials, ICT facilities and conducive atmosphere attract students to visit and use university libraries.

In North-Central zone in Nigeria, Musa (2016) revealed that final year undergraduate students' use of the library is influenced by personal, environmental, professional, social and technological factors such as conducive atmosphere, favourable condition, adequate equipment, and technical training. Aladeniyi and Owokole (2018) recommended that library should address the issue of noise, inadequate library personnel to enhance library use at the University of Medical Science, Ondo. Similarly, Odu and Edam-Agbor (2018) showed that high level of patronage of University of Calabar library was influenced by library use instruction programme. In six South-West Universities, library environment, library instruction, and user-librarian collaboration, individually and collectively influence library use by undergraduates (Amusa and Iyoro, 2013). Literature reviewed above showed that library users, environmental, library staff service delivery, and technological factors influenced undergraduates use of university libraries.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design of the correlational type. The questionnaire was used to elicit information from students. A four point likert scale instrument with 35 questions was adopted. Seven questions were on demographics, ten questions on utilization of the library while 18 questions were on factors influencing utilization of library. Students in 13 various faculties, University of Benin were covered in the study because they were perceived to appreciate the importance of the library resources, and the services provided for them to support their academic pursuits in the university. Convenience sampling method was adopted in this study due to lack of time, funding and ease of access to students. The questionnaire was administered on the undergraduate students coming into the main library, University of Benin during the 2018/2019 academic session for a period of one week. This is because not all students that visit the library have the purpose of using it. For instance, students who visit the library with a purpose to use the services and resources account for 77.55%, drawn from all levels of study at Mombasa Campus Library, University of Nairobi, Kenya (Mwatela, 2013). Data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results and Discussion

Demographic data

Demographic data in Table 1 shows that 25(10.3%) of the respondents were students from the Faculty of Education , 24(9.9%) were from the Faculty of Arts, 20(8.2%) were from the Faculty of

Engineering, 35(14.4%) were from the Faculty of Physical science, 10(4.1%) were from the Faculty of Social science, 29(11.9%) were from the Faculty of Management science, 50(20.6%) were from the Faculty of Life science, 12(4.9%) were from the Faculty of Agriculture, 30(12.3%) were from the Faculty of Pharmacy. Faculties of Medicine, Basic Medical Sciences, Environmental and Law had 1(0.4%), 5(2.1%), 1(0.4%) and 1(0.4%) respectively. It shows that the Library is used by students in all faculties. Faculties of Medicine, Basic Medical Sciences, Environmental and Law recorded low values because their collections are domiciled in their faculty libraries.

Result further indicated that students in 100 – 600 levels used the library. Sixty four (26.3%) were 100 level students, 50(20.6%) were 200 level students, 53(21.8%) were 300 level students, 50(20.6%) were 400 level students, 20(8.2%) were 500 level students and 6(2.5%) were 600 level students. On gender and age, 139(57.2%) were males and 104(42.8%) were females while 226(93.0%) were aged 18-35 years. These data show that the students whether male or female of various ages used the Library. Therefore, John Harris Library, University of Benin is well patronized by undergraduate students of the University.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic variable		Frequency	Percentage
Faculty	Education	25	10.3
	Arts	24	9.9
	Engineering	20	8.2
	Physical science	35	14.4
	Social science	10	4.1
	Management science	29	11.9
	Life science	50	20.6
	Agriculture	12	4.9
	Pharmacy	30	12.3
	Medicine	1	0.4
	Basic Medical science	5	2.1
	Environmental science	1	0.4
	Law	1	0.4
Level of study	100 level	64	26.3
	200 level	50	20.6
	300 level	53	21.8
	400 level	50	20.6
	500 level	20	8.2
	600 level	6	2.5
Gender	Male	139	57.2
	Female	104	42.8
Age	18-25 years	226	93.0
	26-30 years	14	5.8
	31-35 years	3	1.2

Research question one: How many students use the library?

To answer question one, data in Table 2 shows that majority 238(97.9%) of the respondents use the library while 5(2.1%) do not use the library. This finding shows that majority of the students actually visit the library with the intention to use it for their academic pursuit depicting the fact that the library is a place for study.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of students on the Use of Library

Do you use the library	Frequency	Percent
No	5	2.1
Yes	238	97.9
Total	243	100.0

Research question two: What is the level and percentage of utilization of the library?

Result in Table 3 revealed significant level of utilization of the library having scored a mean of 2.72. Seven of the questions raised “I spend at least one hour anytime I use the library” ($\bar{x} = 3.58$) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by “The library is very useful for my academic pursuits” ($\bar{x} = 3.56$), “Library resources and services are very useful to me” ($\bar{x} = 3.08$), “I use the library regularly for my study” ($\bar{x} = 3.07$), “My intensity of using the library is high” ($\bar{x} = 3.01$), “I use the library on a daily basis to read my books only” ($\bar{x} = 2.66$), “Library materials help me in my assignment and course work” ($\bar{x} = 2.50$) were significant. “I read mainly books in the library for my academic work” ($\bar{x} = 2.49$), “I borrow books in the library for my course work” ($\bar{x} = 1.70$) and “I use mainly e-resources and databases in the library” ($\bar{x} = 1.54$) were not significant. These results portend serious consequences for the library as the students do not read library books, borrow library books or use e-resources adequately. Therefore, the Library should encourage students to read library books, borrow them for further consultation and use the electronic resources provided for meaningful impact on their academic pursuit in the University.

On the percentage level of utilization of the library presented in Table 4, result shows that 1.6% (n=4) had low level of utilization of the library, 42.8% (n=104) had moderate level of utilization of the library while 55.6% (n=135) had a high level of utilization of the library. However, it could be deduced generally from the test of norm above that the level of utilization of the library is high. Therefore, this result should be sustained and improved upon. Similar result at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University by Anyaoku in 2015 indicated that 84.8% of undergraduate students use their library. At the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Olajide and Adio (2017) obtained 53% usage of the library while Aladeniyi and Owokole (2018) found majority usage of their library by undergraduate students in the university. Therefore, there is the propensity to use university libraries in Nigeria by undergraduate students.

Table 3: Level of Utilization of the Library

S/N	Utilization of the library	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}	SD
1	I spend at least one hour anytime I use the library	15 6.2%	10 4.1%	36 14.8%	182 74.9%	3.58	0.84
2	The library is very useful for my academic pursuits	7 2.9%	15 6.2%	57 23.5%	164 67.5%	3.56	0.74
3	Library resources and services are very useful to me	25 10.3%	30 12.3%	89 36.6%	99 40.7%	3.08	0.97
4	I use the library regularly for my study	16 6.6%	38 15.6%	101 41.6%	88 36.2%	3.07	0.88
5	My intensity of using the library is high	19 7.8%	46 18.9%	91 37.4%	87 35.8%	3.01	0.93
6	I use the library on a daily basis to read my books only	4 18.1%	53 21.8%	88 36.2%	58 23.9%	2.66	1.03
7	Library materials help me in my assignment and course work	62 25.5%	49 20.2%	81 33.3%	51 21.0%	2.50	1.09
8	I read mainly books in the library for my academic work	74 30.5%	40 16.5%	64 26.3%	65 26.7%	2.49	1.18
9	I borrow books in the library for my course work	141 58.0%	54 22.2%	28 11.5%	20 8.2%	1.70	0.97
10	I use mainly electronic resources and databases in the library	151 62.1%	62 25.5%	21 8.6%	9 3.7%	1.54	0.80
Weighted Mean = 2.72							

Table 4: Test of Norm showing the level of utilization of the library

Interval	Mean index	Level of utilization	Frequency	Percentage
1-13		Low	4	1.6
14-26		Moderate	104	42.8
27-40	27.19	High	135	55.6

Research question three: What are the factors influencing utilization of the library?

Table 5 presents results on the 18 factors influencing utilization of the library. Of the 18 question raised, 16 of them “I believe the library is useful for my academic pursuit” ($\bar{x} = 3.67$) ranked highest followed by “The environment is conducive for reading and study” ($\bar{x} = 3.60$), The library opening hours are convenient for me” ($\bar{x} = 3.40$), “The proximity and location of the library is adequate” ($\bar{x} = 3.35$), “The library facilities (light, air conditioners (etc.) are adequate” ($\bar{x} = 3.33$), “I have the knowledge and skills to use the library” ($\bar{x} = 3.31$), “My lecturers encourage me to use the library” ($\bar{x} = 3.00$), etc. were significant. Overall, the factors influencing utilization were significant having scored a mean of 3.02. The significant factors revealed in this study are categorized as human, institutional, environmental and information literacy and can be used to develop a benchmark to

make students use academic library. The two factors that were not significant should be worked on to achieve significant levels for increased utilization of the library.

Table 5: Factors influencing utilization of the library

S/N	Factors influencing utilization of library	1	2	3	4	\bar{x}	SD
1	I believe the library is useful for my academic pursuit	1 0.4%	5 2.1%	66 27.2%	171 70.4%	3.67	0.54
2	The environment is conducive for reading and study	4 1.6%	9 3.7%	66 27.2%	164 67.5%	3.60	0.64
3	The library opening hours are convenient for me	11 4.5%	16 6.6%	80 32.9%	136 56.0%	3.40	0.80
4	The proximity and location of the library is adequate	13 5.3%	20 8.2%	79 32.5%	131 53.9%	3.35	0.85
5	The library facilities (light, air conditioners (etc) are adequate	14 5.8%	19 7.8%	82 33.7%	128 52.7%	3.33	0.85
6	I have the knowledge and skills to use the library	5 2.1%	25 10.3%	102 42.0%	111 45.7%	3.31	0.74
7	The library can meet my information needs	13 5.3%	32 13.2%	94 38.7%	104 42.8%	3.19	0.86
8	The library staff are cooperative and friendly	16 6.6%	27 11.1%	107 44.0%	93 38.3%	3.14	0.86
9	I need the library to support my lecture notes	20 8.2%	31 12.8%	98 40.3%	94 38.7%	3.09	0.92
10	My lecturers encourage me to use the library	23 9.5%	48 19.8%	79 32.5%	93 38.3%	3.00	0.98
11	I am satisfied with the resources and services of the library	27 11.1%	44 18.1%	93 38.3%	79 32.5%	2.92	0.97
12	I have enough time to use the library	16 6.6%	64 26.3%	93 38.3%	70 28.8%	2.89	0.90
13	I was given appropriate orientation to use the library	33 13.6%	48 19.8%	89 36.8%	73 30.0%	2.83	1.01
14	My lecturers did not teach me all I need to pass my exams	31 12.8%	61 25.1%	73 30.0%	78 32.1%	2.81	1.03
15	I am registered with the library	51 21.0%	41 16.9%	71 29.2%	80 32.9%	2.74	1.13
16	There are adequate and current materials in the library to use	46 18.9%	62 25.5%	85 35.0%	50 20.6%	2.57	1.02
17	I get all the information I need from the library	51 21.0%	98 40.3%	63 25.9%	31 12.8%	2.30	0.94
18	I can access e-resources for my study in the library	66 27.2%	82 33.7%	59 24.3%	36 14.8%	2.27	1.02
Weighted Mean = 3.02							

In similar studies, Oyedum (2012) found that current and adequate library resources, ICT facilities, and conducive atmosphere influenced utilization of the library while Igwebuike and Agbo (2017) revealed that adequate power supply, adequate space, sufficient and up-to-date textbooks and journals, and library staff attract students to utilize university libraries in Nigeria. Gojeh, Dutse and Daudu (2013) also found that human, physical and environmental factors influenced the use of libraries by students. Musa (2016) revealed that personal, environmental, social and technical factors viz conducive atmosphere, favourable condition, adequate equipment, and training influence usage of university libraries. Iroeze (2020) found that examination, conducive environment, awareness of resources, Internet connectivity; induction course has significant influence on library usage.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between level of utilization and factors influencing utilization of the library

To confirm the relationship between the results obtained above, the null hypothesis was proposed that there is no significant relationship between factors influencing utilization and the level of utilization. Result shown in Table 6 indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between level of utilization and factors influencing utilization of the library ($r = .544, n = 243, P(.000) < 0.05$). Hence, factors influencing utilization of the library influenced the level of utilization of library positively in the study. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. Similar findings by Olajide and Omotayo (2016) revealed a significant relationship between knowledge of library services as factor influencing utilization of library and utilization of the library. Similarly, tested hypotheses by Urhibo (2017) showed that there was a positive relationship amongst frequency of use, extent of use and factors influencing use of Internet and a negative relationship for constraints of factors which contributed to a reduction in the extent of use. The positive the factors of utilization are, the higher the level of utilization of the library. Therefore, the level of utilization of the library is influenced by the factors influencing the use of the library.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between level of utilization and factors influencing utilization of the library

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	P-value	Remark
Utilization of library	27.1934	5.3078				
Factors influencing utilization of the library	54.4444	7.7933	243	.544*	.000	Sig.

* Sig. at 0.05 level

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that John Harris Library, University of Benin is significantly utilized by students of the university due to sixteen major factors. Efforts should be made to sustain and improve on the resources and services provided by the library so that the level of utilization will continue to improve. The findings of this study can be used as a model by other university libraries to plan the use of their libraries. The library should indulge in more sensitization campaigns on the availability and accessibility of its resources to make them more attractive to the student to increase their level ease of utilization. Every student should be made to register with the library and encouraged to read library books and not depend on their lecture note alone as many student do.

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