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# **LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION LIBRARY, WARRI.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study set out to ascertain the perception of the lecturers of the College of Education Warri Library, Delta State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 100 lecturers drawn from the five Schools of the college. The survey research design was adopted using the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data generated. Findings revealed that (36%) of respondents were dissatisfied with the library resources, (21%) of respondents are moderately satisfied while (26%) were satisfied with the use of the resources; and (17%) were undecided about library resources. But most of the lecturers have an unsatisfactory perception of library resources. The study recommended that the library management should make efforts to acquire current textbooks and journals and organize in-house training programmes geared towards assisting library staff to improve their service attitudes. Also, efforts should be made by library management to organize user education programme for lecturers to enable them to become aware of the available library resources and service and use them effectively.*

## **Introduction**

A library has been variously viewed as the intellectual powerhouse of the school, the pivot on which all the academic programmes of the institution revolve, the live wire of the college, but more succinctly as the academic heartbeat of the school system, (Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). This implies therefore that the academic library has a significant contribution to the success of academics in the institution. The school has the mandate to produce highly skilled manpower for the economic and national development through teaching, research and community services (Popoola, 2008).

In order for the institutions to be able to achieve these objectives, the information needs of the academic community have to be satisfactorily met through the provision of adequate library resources, facilities, and services. In recognition of this obligation, academic libraries make it a point of duty to select, acquire, process and make available the needed information resources to the academic community their teaching, learning research and other needs. The extent to which a college library is able to meet the information needs of its users determines its relevance in the system and consequently the users' perception of it.

A study of user perception is actually a performance appraisal of the library's effectiveness. Nisonger (2003) reiterates that in the past, inputs were used as performance measures to the effect that it was widely assumed that a library with more volumes would be more effective in meeting information needs than one with fewer collections. He observed, however, that in the 21 century, outcomes would become the ultimate test of library effectiveness even though inputs, outputs and outcome measures could also be considered.

Onwubiko (2007) asserts that academic libraries should move with time and be influenced by what happens around them. Against this backdrop, therefore, they should, like and private, profit and non-profit oriented, evolve and put measures in place to assess and reassess existence, activities, programmes, and operations. Okiy (2006) observes quite pointedly that even though librarianship is one of the key professions which shape societal life in most parts of the world including Nigeria, it is not accorded the recognition it deserves.

She explains the proliferation of academic, public, school and special library in various parts of the country and in various spheres of the economy are inevitable for development but notes with sadness that the government and many people in Nigeria still appreciate the role of libraries and librarians enough to accord them due regard and recognition. Lawal (2002) views the non-recognition of the status and contribution of libraries and librarians as a grievous misconception of the profession. Studies by Oberg, Schleiter and Van Houten (1989), and Ajidahun (1997) as reviewed by Okiy (2006) all point to the immeasurable contributions of libraries and librarians to the development of man and the society in general from their lowest state of nature to what they are now, and what they will be in future. An institution is often said to be only as good as the quality of its library.

This is probably both the lecturers and students depend on the resources and services of the library for their teaching, learning and research needs. The unique position of the library in the

college system, therefore, makes it mandatory for librarians and library administrators to constantly assess, review and evaluate not only resources and services but also its performance to ensure that it continues to be relevant in the institution: particularly to the academic community. Academic libraries are expected to support the programmes of the institutions that establish through selection, acquisition, processing, presenting and dissemination of adequate library information materials that are not only relevant but also current. There has been strong reservation about the quality of services provided by libraries to their user communities, (Ochogwu, 2009). The advent of ICT in the learning environment enhances information retrieval and offers librarian a new personality and position of importance in the teaching and learning process by taking beyond the "storehouse" concept of traditional librarianship.

The librarian now suggests resources faculty, locates and acquires needed materials, recommends strategies, facilitates the use of technologies provides instruction to users in information seeking and retrieval methods. In some cases, the librarian, after obtaining the information, critically evaluates it and synthesizes the findings into new knowledge before presenting it to the users, (Brown, 1990). This is what differentiates the new librarian from the traditional one. However, mere recognition or identification of the roles of the librarian is not enough to provide the real value of the library to users.

Their performance and resourcefulness must be constantly evaluated to see how far they are meeting the needs of users, and by extension, fulfilling the purpose for which they were established. The most reliable resources for this evaluation are the users; in this case, the lecturers that are directly affected by what goes on in the library, what happens or fails to happen.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study set out to:

1. Find out the extent of availability, accessibility, and utilization of library resources and services by the lecturers of the College of Education Warri
2. Explore the academic staff level of satisfaction with the resources and services of the library.
3. Determine the perception of lecturers on the resources and services of the college
4. Find out the problems encountered by lecturers in accessing and utilization of the resources in the college library.

## Methods

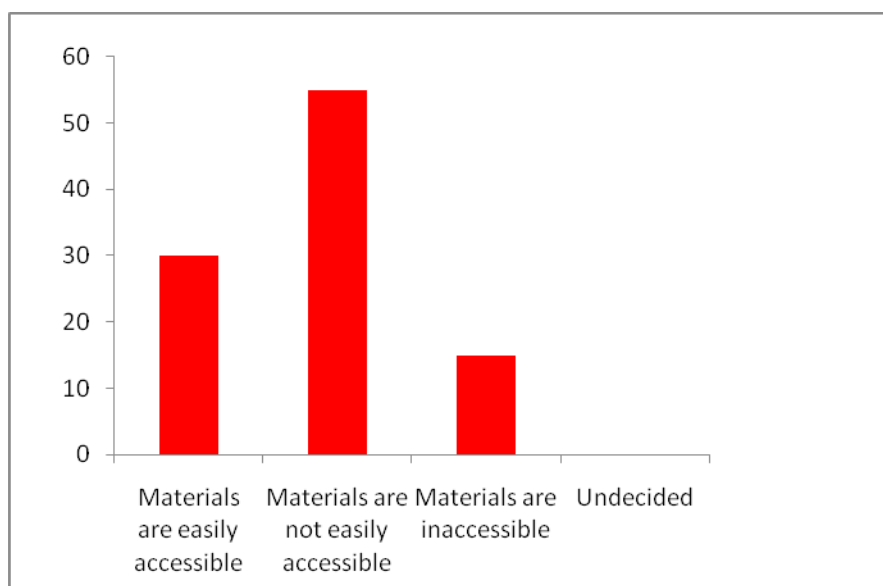
The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The sample of the study consisted of 100 lecturers drawn from the five schools in the college. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data generated. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents who are lecturers of the college.

## Findings and discussion

The analyzed data are presented in tables, followed by presentation and discussion.

Table 1: Accessibility of resources

Items	Freq.	%
Materials are easily accessible	30	30
Materials are not easily accessible	55	55
Materials are inaccessible	15	15
Undecided	-	-
Total	100	100

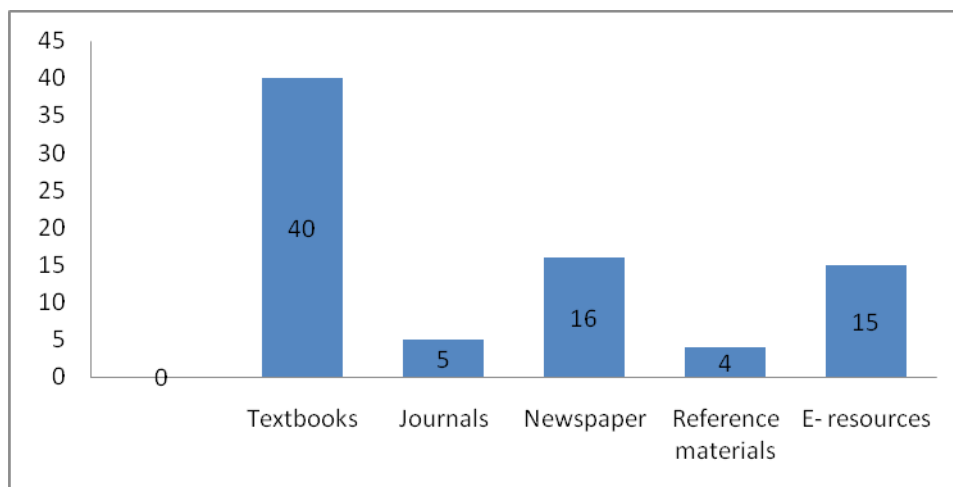


Effective retrieval devices are a critical factor in accessing and utilizing information resources. This is because information resources have to be accessed before they can be located and utilized. It is an important duty of any library to provide easy and effective access to its collection. Table 1 above reveals that 55(55%) of the respondents indicated difficult accessibility to materials with only 30(30%) indicating easy accessibility. This could be accounted for by the search strategies adopted by users as well as insufficient or inadequate bibliographic description by the library staff.

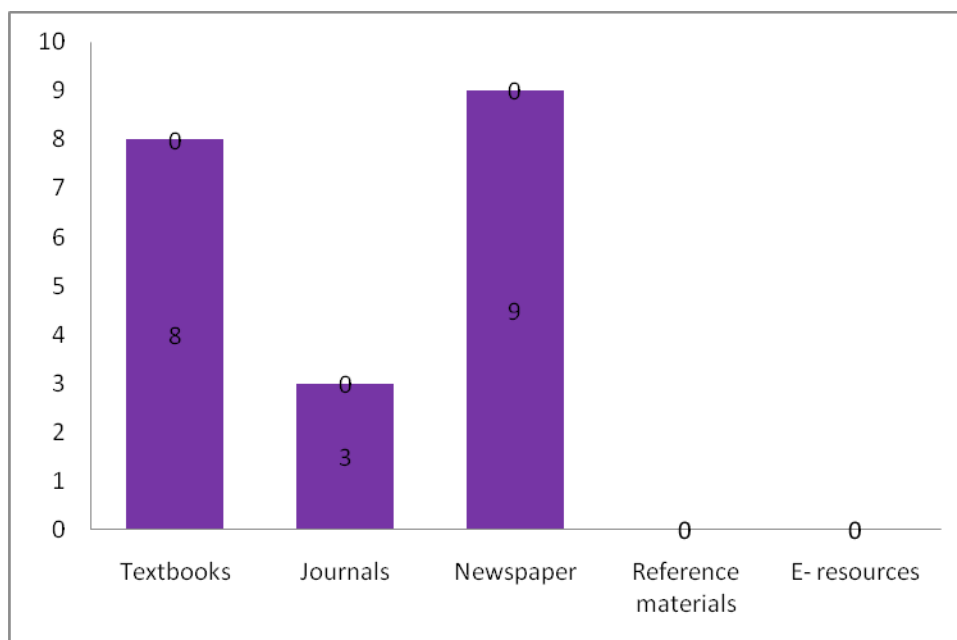
Table 2: Utilization of resources

Library resources	Heavily used		Lightly used	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Textbooks	40	40	8	8
Journals	5	5	3	3
Newspaper	16	16	9	9
Reference materials	4	4	-	-
E-resources	15	15	-	-

Heavily Used library Materials Displayed on the graph below.



Lightly Used library Materials Displayed on the graph below



The relevance of the materials, the ability of the users to exploit the resources independently, the awareness created of the presence of such materials in the library has great roles to play in the utilization of the resources. As can be observed in the Table 2 Books are the most heavily used materials with a frequency of 40(40%), the newspaper is 16 (16%), while E-resources are 15 (15%). The least used resources are reference materials which could be explained by the fact that the part of the library with reference resources does not have significant materials whereas the textbook, networked section of the library provides a reasonable access to e-resources. In the first place, the availability rate is very poor, and this accounts for its very poor extent of utilization. Something drastic needs to be done to reverse the situation.

Table 3: Satisfaction derived from the use of library resources

Type of Materials	Level of Satisfaction derived									
	Very satisfied		Moderately satisfied		dissatisfied		Undecided		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Textbooks	25	25	35	35	35	35	5	5	100	100

Journals	10	10	15	15	40	40	35	35	100	100
Newspaper	60	60	25	25	5	5	10	10	100	100
Reference materials	16	16	20	20	40	40	24	24	100	100
E-resources	45	45	30	30	15	15	10	10	100	100
Reprographic services	-	-	-	-	80	80	20	20	100	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

If the library is to remain relevant in the scheme of events, users must derive a substantial level of satisfaction from the use of its resources. This factor of satisfaction must be glaring for lecturers and students to make the library a reference point in their lives. However, Table 3 shows that only a few users — 26(26%) - feel very satisfied with using library resources, 21(21%) feel moderately satisfied with Library resources while 36% feel dissatisfied with library resources. It is worrisome to note the rate of dissatisfaction with the use of almost all the resources and services with many cases of undecided.

Table 4: Perception of library resources and services

Resources and services	Outstanding		satisfactory		unsatisfactory		Undecided		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Availability of library resources	-	-	30	30	60	60	10	10	100	100
Provision of guides	-	-	70	70	25	25	5	5	100	100
Maintenance of the collection	15	15	54	54	24	24	7	7	100	100
The attitude of Library Staff to Patrons	30	30	50	50	15	15	5	5	100	100
Provision of reference services	10	10	38	38	50	50	2	2	100	100
Dexterity of	10	10	35	35	55	55	5	5	100	100



Library staff										
The sense of duty for library staff	25	25	50	50	20	20	5	5	100	100
Circulation of materials	30	30	42	42	25	25	3	3	100	100
General perception	-	-	30	30	60	60	10	10	100	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that Lecturers of the college of Education perceived availability of resource, dexterity, provision of reference services and the esteem of the library as unsatisfactory. However, they rate the provision of guides, maintenance of the collection and more importantly, the attitude of library staff as satisfactory.

**Table 5: Problems encountered with the use of library resources and services**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>%</b>
Lack of current journals	90	96
Lack of current textbooks	85	85
Insufficient copies of essential textbooks	90	90
Undependable reprographic services	-	-
The poor state of the library catalog	98	98
Location and retrieval of materials	98	98
Unhelpful loan period	80	80
Unavailability of Backset journals	65	65
Few numbers of books allowed on loan	45	45

Table 5 reveals that the problem encountered by a majority of lecturers with the use of the library is lack of current journals and textbooks. The absence of reprographic services also poses a big problem for users. The problem that ranked lowest is a little number of books for lecturers to borrow. This collaborates earlier findings by Rathnakara et al (2011).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that the academic staff perception of

the college library is very low. The library lacks current journals and textbooks to support effective teaching and research. The library does not operate any photocopying services and this creates a problem for users who often need this service. Adequate access is not provided for the available resources.

### **Recommendations**

1. The library management should make efforts to acquire current textbooks and journals.
2. The library management and College authority should organize in-house training programmes geared towards assisting library staff to improve their service attitudes. Also, library staff should be encouraged to attend professional workshops, seminars, workshops and formal library and information science programmes to improve their service delivery skills
3. Efforts should be made by library management to organize user education programme for lecturers and other staff to enable them to become aware of the available library resources and service and use them effectively.

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