



UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES: A CASE STUDY OF FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES AT EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI

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Abstract

This study investigated utilization of library resources by undergraduate students for academic purposes: A case study of faculty of social sciences and humanities at Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The population of the study is 431, while the sample size is 84 which were used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on the utilization of library resources by undergraduates of 5 selected departments in Social Sciences and Humanities at EBSU. With the significant mean of 2.8, respondents affirmed that library resources are utilized for research purposes, assignment writing, browsing the internet, among others while recreation, consult newspapers and institutional databases were not significant with the mean values of 2.0 and 2.4 respectively. More so, with the significant mean of 2.9, respondents confirmed the extent of use of library resources: it helps them pass exam, give them access to more resources, achieve academic success, obtain research skills, and develop reading culture. While to develop research skills, familiarize with the classification scheme, read and identify needed materials on the shelves were insignificant with a mean values of 2.4 and 2.5 respectively. It was concluded that the collections in the library are not adequate which have been identified as a factor undermining academic performance of students in these faculties. The researchers, among others, recommend that the management of EBSU library should ensure that information resources are adequate and also be acquired based on the curricula of programs run in the institution, while librarians and lecturers should actively promote and facilitate student utilization of available library resources to foster academic excellence.

Keywords: *Library resources, University library, Undergraduates, Utilization, Research Output*

Introduction

University libraries serve as vital hubs for academic success, particularly for undergraduates navigating rigorous course work and research demands. In other words, users are perceived as the life wire of any library as their roles cannot be over emphasized. Most of the duties performed in the library are influenced by the feedback gotten from users which include queries that will spur the librarian to explore alternatives in satisfying users, suggestion of needed books for acquisition, usage of library materials to avoid damage, among others. In higher institutions of learning, users consist of undergraduate, post-graduate, staff (teaching and non teaching), members of governing council, etc., and these categories of readers influence chiefly the composition of acquired information materials in the library. Consequently, the vast information resources in the library will have no significant value without being put to use by patrons. Effective utilization of these resources directly correlates with improved performance, skill development, and scholarly output.

According to Yusuf and Iwu (2010), the university library is situated within a higher education institution and funded through public allocations, donor contributions, and philanthropy, which offers vital student textbooks, scholarly literature, internet access, and diverse services. A university library should be dynamic in providing services and staffed by qualified personnel, who has relevant qualification, proper professional education and knowledge, and good disposition toward meeting the challenges of 21st century university academic environment. The main objective of founding university libraries is to readily make available appropriate library materials that are adequate, which should be in non-print and print formats. These resources are to help the undergraduates in completing their project, term papers, class assignments and seminar presentation by making provision for adequate and appropriate information and services, which could enhance good academic achievements.

Yusuf and Iwu (2010) further explained that university libraries are regarded as the nerve centre around which scholarship activities such as teaching, learning and research revolves. It is an indispensable instrument for intellectual development, being a store house of information for all categories of users. University library provide essential infrastructure largely in the form of reliable and well-documented access to recorded knowledge, data, the cultural records and other research materials necessary for teaching, learning and research processes. Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) explained that university libraries provide both resources and services for their clientele. The services provided by university libraries include: reference services, lending services, referral services, selective dissemination of information services (SDI), photocopy services and library instruction services.

Library resources encompass a wide variety of materials, physical and digital, used for information access and learning. Popoola and Haliso (2009) define library resources as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspaper and magazine, reports, CD-ROM databases, the internet/e-mail, video tapes/cassettes, diskettes magnetic disk, computers, micro forms, etc. These resources are usually spread across the branch libraries through the purchase of recommended text and subscription of relevant databases for research advancement among undergraduate students. Thus, the quality of information resources in libraries helps to determine the output of research work, student's performance and placed the institution high on global ranking.

Utilization according to Uhegbu (2007) entails putting into appropriate use of acquired information. Hence, all the library and information resources acquired and harnessed within the library are intended for active utilization. In the library context, utilization is the



strategic application and deployment of diverse tools, facilities, and materials to achieve desired goals, thereby ensuring effective service delivery to users. Maduako (2013) explained that library use is the process of checking the library materials, requesting for help from library personnel, locating needed information in different formats, and applying them to solve academic or societal issues. Obi (2023) found that use of library resources positively impacts undergraduate students' patronage of information services in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. Scholarly research in the library requires utilization of other resources such as scholarly articles from science, history, legal or other professional journals, newspaper archives, open access journals, medical research, globally collected post-graduate thesis and dissertation, journal, indexing and abstracts, government publications, electronic books and much more, all available free from the university library.

An undergraduate student is a college or university student who is pursuing their first degree, typically a bachelor's degree. They are not yet a graduate student, meaning they have not completed a bachelor's degree or earned any higher-level degree like a master's or doctorate. In Nigeria, undergraduate degrees are generally four-year courses, though some programs like Medicine, Engineering, and Law may take longer (Ojedokun, & Ayoka, 2015). Undergraduates are admitted into the university because there is a need to increase, advance in knowledge and be vast in their course of study. However, undergraduates are known for their diverse academic pursuits, vibrant campus energy, and rapid personal growth during early higher education.

The academic output of undergraduate students is tied to effective utilization of robust and resourceful collections in the university library. Location of use or point of access to information resources in university libraries is not only by physical access. The undergraduates can use the library resources remotely, may not necessarily need to visit the university library physically. Most university libraries in Nigeria now have hybrid resources, that is, print and electronic resources. In the digital age, university library should not only be preoccupied with their traditional roles of making books and other print resources available but provide access to the electronic resources remotely. Yusuf & Iwu (2010) investigated the extent of use of academic library resources at Covenant University, Nigeria. The findings revealed that 88% of the students visited the library to read for examination purposes, while most of the faculty visited the library to read electronic journals or print resources. The expectation of the undergraduates from any university library is making needed information available without wasting time directly or remotely in any format (Anunobi and Edoka, 2020).

However, in spite of the perceived roles of university libraries and the enormous library resources available, undergraduate students still find it difficult to find, identify, access and utilize needed resources for academic purposes. Moreover, most of the research works conducted by scholars in the profession did not pay particular attention to utilization of library resources by undergraduate students for academic purposes. It is for this reason that this research became imperative.

Statement of the Problem

The university library occupies a central role in the academic development of the undergraduate students. The library is established to support teaching, learning and research as such it is a tool readily available for the undergraduate students to freely make use of in order to boost his or her academic purposes. The university library is expected to provide library resources to support teaching and encourage undergraduate students to find out things for themselves. Government and agencies have also sunk large sum of money into the

provision of library material resources for both staff and students. Regrettably, observation indicates that such efforts have not led to effective utilization of information resources by undergraduate students in Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, EBSU.

However, it has been revealed by Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor, (2013) that most undergraduate students probably do not use the library regularly. This finding is in line with the view of Yusuf & Iwu (2010) whose study established that undergraduate students rarely use library resources including journal articles and databases for their research purposes. This poor use of library resources by undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University has created a gap in the literature. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no studies have addressed undergraduates' use of library resources in 5 selected departments in faculty of social sciences and humanities at Ebonyi State University, hence the need to fill the gap through this present study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research work is to **investigate utilization of library resources** by undergraduate students for academic purposes: A case study of selected departments at Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. Specifically, the research work tends to:

1. Find out the purpose for using library resources among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki
2. Examine the extent to which use of library resources contribute to undergraduate students academic work in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Research Questions

1. What is the purpose for using library resources among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki?
2. To what extent does use of library resources contribute to undergraduate student's academic work in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki?

Literature Review

A study on use of library resources for effective academic performance of undergraduates in Nigerian universities was conducted by Olanike & Furfuri (2021) to examine the use of library resources for effective academic performance of undergraduates in selected universities in South-East, Nigeria. Descriptive survey was adopted for the study, specifically, four objectives guided the study. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 universities in South-East, Nigeria. Data collected using the instruments were analyzed using mean and standard deviation (SD). Thus, the findings of the study showed respondents agreement that library resources can be accessed through various means, also it was revealed that undergraduates are satisfied with using their lecture notes as such a major reason they do not adequately utilize library resources. The study recommends that university library should acquire relevant resources to meet the needs of undergraduates. University library staff should be more approachable and disposed to helping undergraduates meet their information needs. Implication- The use of library resources is highly needed and required for effective academic performance and there is no gainsaying that this calls for urgent attention of library management to create awareness of the importance of library to students through library orientation to newly admitted students. This study encourages undergraduate students to



make effective use of the wealth information resources available in the library for efficient academic performance.

Yusuf & Iwu (2010) conducted a study on Use of Academic Library: A Case Study of Covenant University, Nigeria. This study examines the extent of use of library resources in Covenant University, Nigeria. Two separate questionnaires were used to gather data. 400 registered library users were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The findings revealed that 88% of the students sampled visited the library to read for examination while most faculties visited the library to read journals, electronic or print. Also, students used OPAC more than faculty. It is recommended that faculty give reading assignments that will require students to consult journals and other resources in the library, not just for examination purposes. And the library should organize a “library week” each semester to showcase the various resources available in the library.

Ojo, Subair & Olajide (2015) conducted a study on Assessment of Undergraduates' Usage of Academic Library for Learning and Research in Afe Babalola University, Nigeria. This study examines the usage of academic library by undergraduates of Afe Babalola University, Nigeria. Four research questions were considered to gather data. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain data from 500 students of the university who participated in the study. The findings revealed that 56% of the students visited the library daily. 99.6% of the students sampled only visited the library to read for test and examination while 96.8% visited the library to browse the internet. Also, 79.4% were not satisfied with the seating capacity and availability of computers in the library. The study recommended that lecturers should give reading assignments to students that will require that they visit the library to read even before test and examinations. Also, the library should organize a “library week” every session to sensitize students on the available resources in the library. In addition to college libraries, a more spacious central library should be made available to serve the teaming population of the users.

Ameyaw (2025) conducted a study on Academic Libraries Never Die: Undergraduate Students' Use of the Walton Whaley Library at Valley View University Oyibi Campus, Ghana. This study examined the use of Walton Whaley Library by undergraduate students at Valley View University, Oyibi Campus, Ghana. This study used a descriptive survey design. The population comprised undergraduate students. The population of the study was one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-four (1994) students. Yamane's (1967) method was used to determine a sample size of 332 respondents from a population of 1994 undergraduate students at the university. The researcher employed a questionnaire to collect data. Three hundred and thirty-two (332) copies of questionnaire were administered. However, 326 copies of the questionnaire were filled out correctly and deemed valid for analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0) was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that students were highly dissatisfied with the number of computers available in the library. Regarding the seating capacity, students were highly dissatisfied with the insufficient seats. Students were also dissatisfied with the poor internet services in the library. Based on the findings, suggestions were made to library management and university authorities to improve the library's resources and facilities to meet user needs. The study recommends that management should increase the number of computers, seats, and internet bandwidth in the library. The study concluded that management should address all the challenges associated with library use.

Anyanko and Ndu (2021) conducted a study on utilization of library resources by LIS students of MOUAU. The study was guided by four specific objectives and four research

questions. The study employed descriptive survey research design, while the population of the study is two hundred and fifty two (252), comprising of 100 level students (110), 300 level students (2), and 400 level students (140). The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used as the sampling technique. Only one instrument (questionnaire) was used. The questionnaire was validated by professionals from LIS Department, MOUAU. Mean was used in analyzing data for the study. The study identified that books, journals, reference materials and Indexes/abstracts are the information needs of undergraduate students of LIS in MOUAU library, The study also determined a positive perception of LIS students, of the information resources in the library, Indicated that the major challenge faced by undergraduate students of LIS in the use of library resources in MOUAU library is inconsistent power supply, and identified maintenance of constant supply of power as the main solution to the challenges of utilizing library resources in MOUAU library. The study therefore recommended that: The management of the university should ensure that library resources identified to be utilized to a low extent should be improved upon, to encourage their utilization. The university should ensure encourage higher extent of utilization of library resources by undergraduates in order to achieve user satisfaction. The universities authority should ensure that current library materials are provided maintain early opening of the library, constant power supply, library should be courteous, and facilities in the library should be maintained.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The sample size of this study is 84 and was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations. Given a population of 431 undergraduate students across five departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, a precision level of approximately 10% was adopted due to time, financial, and accessibility constraints associated with data collection. See Table 1 below:

Table 1: Proportional allocation of samples to 5 departments in Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities

S/N	Department	Population	Proportion of Population	Allocated Sample
1	Library & Information Science	27	0.063	5
2	Economics	87	0.202	17
3	Psychology	110	0.255	21
4	Political Science	101	0.234	20
5	Philosophy	106	0.246	21
Total =		431	1.000	84

Source: Admission Unit, EBSU

Research Instrument

The instruments used for this study was questionnaire. The questionnaire covers the purposes and extent to which use of library resources contribute to undergraduate students' academic work in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The data obtained from the respondents was carefully tabulated and analyzed, using simple



percentage, and mean. The data collected was analyzed and presented with frequencies distribution and percentages. The decision rule for the research questions is an average mean score which was used to explain the contents of each table and its finding(s). Findings are equally discussion.

Analysis of Data Based on Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the purpose for using library resources among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki?

Table 2: Reasons for using library resources among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

S/N	Research Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1	For research	40	20	10	10	250	3.0	S. Agree
2	To prepare note	60	10	5	5	285	3.4	S. Agree
3	To write assignments	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	S. Agree
4	To consult textbooks	30	10	20	20	210	2.5	Agree
5	To borrow books	20	10	40	10	200	2.4	Disagree
6	To read for test and examination	40	20	10	10	250	3.0	S. Agree
7	To browse through the internet	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	S. Agree
8	To consult reference materials	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	S. Agree
9	To read newspapers and magazines	10	10	40	20	170	2.0	Disagree
10	To consult institutions database	10	10	40	20	170	2.0	Disagree
11	To duplicate physical materials	20	10	40	10	200	2.4	Disagree
12	To access unlimited WIFI	60	10	5	5	285	3.4	S. Agree
13	To use computer	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	S. Agree
14	For skill acquisition	20	10	40	10	200	2.4	Disagree
15	For recreation	10	10	40	20	170	2.0	Disagree
Grand mean value = 2.8								

With a significant mean value of 2.8 as shown on Table 2, undergraduate students of EBSU reported that they often consult library resources for research with mean value of ($\bar{X} = 3.0$), prepare note ($\bar{X} = 3.4$), write assignment ($\bar{X} = 3.3$), consult textbooks ($\bar{X} = 2.5$), read for test and examination ($\bar{X} = 3.0$), browse internet ($\bar{X} = 3.3$), reference materials ($\bar{X} = 3.3$), WIFI ($\bar{X} = 3.4$), and use computer ($\bar{X} = 3.3$). These were regarded to be significant because their mean values were up to or more than the significant mean value of 2.8. The analysis also showed that students consulted other resources in the library from borrowing books ($\bar{X} = 2.4$), read newspapers ($\bar{X} = 2.0$), consult institutional database ($\bar{X} = 2.0$), duplicate physical materials ($\bar{X} = 2.4$), and for skill acquisition. They were insignificantly consulted because their mean values were less than the significant mean value of 2.8. The implication is that these information resources may not have the desired impact on students. The finding is supported by Yusuf and Iwu (2010) survey on the use of an academic library at Covenant University in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that 88% of the students visited the library to read for examination purposes, while most of the faculty visited the library to read electronic journals or print resources. It is anticipated that academic libraries will facilitate easy access to information by encouraging the standardization of resources to meet the needs of patrons.

Research Question Two: To what extent does use of library resources contribute to undergraduate student's academic work in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki?

Table 3: Extent to which use of library resources contribute to undergraduate students' academic work in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

S/N	RESEARCH ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	NE	Total	Mean	Decision
1	It helps them pass exams	60	10	5	5	285	3.4	VHE
2	It provides them with many resources for research	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	VHE
3	It helps them to develop reading culture	40	20	10	10	250	3.0	HE
4	It helps to achieve academic performance	60	10	5	5	285	3.4	VHE
5	It helps them to learn internet search skills	50	20	5	5	275	3.3	VHE
6	It helps them to develop academic research skills	20	10	40	10	200	2.4	LE
7.	It helps them to learn library etiquette	60	10	5	5	285	3.4	VHE
8	It helps them to familiarize with the classification scheme	10	30	30	10	208	2.5	LE
9	It helps them to understand and utilize filling and retrieval tools	10	10	40	20	170	2.9	HE
10	It helps them to understand the shelve arrangement and identify needed material	10	20	40	10	198	2.4	LE
Grand mean value = 3.0								

With a significant mean of 3.0 from table 3, undergraduate students of EBSU stated that use of library resources contribute to undergraduate students academic work because it helps them to pass exam with the mean value of ($\bar{X} = 3.4$), provide many resources for research ($\bar{X} = 3.3$), develop reading culture ($\bar{X} = 3.0$), improve academic performance ($\bar{X} = 3.4$), utilize filling and retrieval tools ($\bar{X} = 2.9$), learn internet search skills ($\bar{X} = 3.3$), and learn library etiquette ($\bar{X} = 3.4$). These were regarded to be significant because their mean values were up to or more than the significant mean value of 2.9. The analysis also shows that library resources contribute to developing academic research skills of students with the mean value of ($\bar{X} = 2.4$), familiarize with the classification scheme ($\bar{X} = 2.5$), and understand the shelve arrangement and identify needed material ($\bar{X} = 2.4$). They were insignificantly consulted because their mean values were less than the significant mean value of 2.8. The implication is that these information resources may not have the desired impact on students. The finding agrees with Obi (2023) which stated that effective utilization of library resources impacts undergraduate students' academic work positively. Academic libraries are crucial for supporting teaching, learning, and research, providing resources that are essential for students' success.



Conclusion

The researchers concluded that library resources, usually packaged in different formats are vital for undergraduate academic success at EBSU. The collections in the library are not adequate which invariably limit students from using the needed materials for their academic activities. Librarians and lecturers should hold unique position to actively promote students' engagement with available library resources through targeted collaboration. The management should ensure that some of the difficulties encountered by undergraduates while utilizing library materials are taken care of. Such challenges include: lack of awareness on the location of the library, inadequate seating capacity, obsolete resources; inability to access both physical and electronic resources.

Recommendations

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

- 1) The management of EBSU Library should align material acquisitions directly with the curricula of all institutional programs to ensure relevance and support academic goals. The materials procured should be processed and made available for use.
- 2) Librarians and lecturers should actively promote and facilitate student utilization of available library resources to foster academic excellence.
- 3) Library management must prioritize the provision and maintenance of internet and electronic facilities as a core strategy to increase user attraction and patronage.

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