LIBRARIES AND ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION RESOURCES AMONGST STUDENTS AND STAFF OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL), OMOKU.

BY

Carson, Joy Anthony
Hamidu Alkali Library
Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State.
Joycarson2748@gmail.com
08067920352
and

Carson, Anthony Emuregba
Teachers Registration Council on Nigeria (TRCN)
Rivers State.
Tonycarson006@gmail.com
0803552202

Abstract
The study examines libraries and accessibility to Information Resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was (296), comprising students (187) and staff (109). A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used for the study. In which the entire population was also used as the sample size. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Libraries and Accessibility to Information Resources (LAIR)". The instrument was validated by an expert who affirmed its validity. The reliability of the instruments was established through test re-test. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings reveal that: there are different types of information resources available, there is also a high level of accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff while there are high negative factors affecting the accessibility of information resources. Based on the findings the study recommended among others that: there should be an upgrade from the traditional method to the automated or digitized method of rendering services in the library. Seminars should be made available and accessible; librarians and library officers should endeavor to organize information resources for easy accessibility and utilization.

Keywords: Libraries, Accessibility and Information Resources.

Introduction

Libraries play a critical role in supporting research in all subject areas within universities or colleges. Libraries are concerned with providing access to accurate, timely and accessible information to their users. The library services are aimed at knowledge acquisition, preservation, organization, dissemination and utilization of information, and therefore are the custodians of information. From time immemorial, there has been a constant search for

knowledge to attain developmental goals, mankind has found information as a vital tool for finding solutions to problems (Emasealu, 2019).

A library is a repository of various forms of recorded information which may be in print formats such as books, serials materials, reference materials etc. or non-print formats such as microforms, films, magnetic tapes, slides, videotapes and data stored in electronic media like discs, CD-ROM (Clifford & Olurotin 2014). The academic libraries have a major role to play, which is to provide access to knowledge (David-West, 2019). The academic library aims to support parents' institution's teaching, learning and research activities. Academic libraries must therefore make sure that their resources are well utilized as this is essential for the educational development of the students. However, the library is the totality of human and organized material resources available in both books and non-book formats for providing and obtaining needed information. The effectiveness of any academic library is the quality of services rendered to its users, that is how available and accessible are the information resources. Therefore, proper organization of available information resources will ensure or lead to its accessibility and utilization by users and thereby ensure users' satisfaction. Accessibility of information resources depends on the availability of that information. Accessing the physical resources of the Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Library relies on the availability of the resources. Abdul Salami (2013) remarks that availability requires a workable performance and measures to back it up even if the ultimate benefit to the individual user and the community is difficult to assess. The access to library resources of the library is also a factor of availability for without the physical presence of a document a user cannot access anything. Therefore, librarianship places more emphasis on the provision of effective information retrieval strategies to meet the growing demand for easy accessibility of information resources by users. Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami and Lucky (2014) opined that the effectiveness of any library is a measure of how available, accessible and useable are the information resources to users. The availability and accessibility of information resources are indispensable factors in acquiring knowledge, learning and research; hence every academic library regardless of size should have adequate information resources available and accessible by its users for reading, learning and research, as it is inevitable for institutions of higher learning to succeed without libraries. The availability of information resources and services does not automatically translate or assure information accessibility (Odunlade, 2017). Therefore, libraries should note that information resources available in the library alone cannot fulfil the objectives of the library without the resources being accessible.

Accessibility here depicts the speed at which an information output in any format is obtained by Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku students and staff. Information resources may be available in the library and one may even find an identified bibliography as relevant to one's need, but the user may not be able to use it or lay hands on them or even identify citations in indexes, and may not have access to the services containing the relevant articles. Clifford & Olurotin (2014). Information resources and systems might be available, the information centers may have acquired them but may be inaccessible to those who need them for various reasons (uncatalogued, mis-catalogued, mis-shelved etc.). The more accessible information resources are, the more likely they are to be used. Users tend to use information that requires the least effort to access which implies one of the laws of Ranganatha that says "save the time of the user". Therefore, good information resources should be received and retrieved to meet the desired need of educating Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku students and staff.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine libraries and accessibility to information Resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State. The specific purposes of this study are:

1. Examine the types of information resources available to students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Library.

2. Determine the level of accessibility of information resources by students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku.

3. Identify factors affecting the accessibility of information resources in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Library.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of information resources available to students & staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State?

2. What is the level of accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State?

3. What are the factors affecting the accessibility of Information in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State?

Literature Review

A library can be described as a place where information resources of different formats are systematically acquired, organized, stored, preserved and disseminated to users at the needed time to meet their information needs. Hammed (2010) defines a library as a "collection of records of human culture in diverse formats and languages preserved, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of the individual for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment". According to Ode and Omokaro (2010), a library is a designated building where information in print and in other formats are collected, organized, carefully prepared according to some specific or definite plan, and made accessible for reading and consultation by all ages and interests. The library refers to any room, corner, or place where various information materials of different kinds are stored for easy access and retrieval for the users, aiding them to find the needed information material that is available for research or any other purpose. Information and knowledge are very important to all sorts of people irrespective of their discipline or state in life. The most important objective of any library is to provide or offer the best possible services to its users. The supply and demand for knowledge to meet the various and complex needs of the world is of great importance. Ashikuzzaman (2016) states that the library is divided into four different types according to the mode of services rendered, but beyond this, there are different types of library which is above four each rendering services according to its mode of operation. One of the main issues in libraries is for the librarian to always ensure the availability and accessibility of needed information materials which will consequently lead to user satisfaction. This was observed by Onifada et al (2013), and Aken et al, (2019) in their study that the availability of information resources does not mean accessibility and utilization; hence libraries have to market their resources and services to invite users. Similarly, Gohain, Saikia and Anjan (2013) asserted that ICT applications in library services also provide opportunities for users to access and utilize both library online resources and services efficiently.

Accessibility of information resources is an important recurring theme in literature. According to Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), resources may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one subject of interest, but the users may not be able to lay hands on them.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population comprises one hundred and eighty-

seven (187) registered students and one hundred and nine (109) registered staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Library. A purposive sampling technique was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Libraries and Accessibility to Information Resources (LAIR)". The instrument was designed on a Likert four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A) = 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2, Disagree = (1). The instrument used was face validation and was validated by experts who affirmed its validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Thus $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$

Therefore, the 2.5 was referred to as mean criteria (mean cut-off point: decision point to accept or reject).

Results

Table 1: what are the types of information resources available to students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State?

S/N	Items	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	N	Total	Mean	Std	Remark
1.	Textbooks	196	50	30	20	296	1,014	3.43	46.4	Accepted
2.	News Paper & Journals	156	70	40	30	296	944	3.2	38.4	Accepted
3.	Magazines	90	70	80	56	296	786	2.7	25.9	Accepted
4.	Research Report	190	60	26	20	296	1, 012	3.4	45.3	Accepted
5.	Seminars	50	60	130	56	296	696	2.4	21.8	Rejected
6.	Encyclopedia	150	76	40	30	296	938	3.2	37.4	Accepted
7.	Government Publication	120	80	76	20	296	892	3.0	30.9	Accepted
8.	OPAC	10	16	80	190	296	438	1.5	14.8	Rejected
9.	Catalogue cards	195	51	28	22	296	1, 011	3.42	27.1	Accepted
10.	Library Staff	140	66	60	30	296	908	3.1	35.1	Accepted
	Average mean							2.7		

Table 1 reveals that (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10) were accepted because their criteria mean was above 2.5, the cut-off point for decision, while items (5,8) was rejected because the mean score was below 2.5 of the criteria mean. The table also reveals that item (1) has the highest mean score of (3.43) while item (8) has the lowest mean score of (1.5). Again, an average mean of (2.7) was obtained which indicates the different types of information resources available to students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

Table 2: What is the level of accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State?

S/N	Items	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	N	Total	Mean	Std	Remark
1.	Easily access Textbooks	180	66	25	25	296	993	3.4	43.3	Accepted
2.	Easily access News Paper & Journals	160	76	35	25	296	963	3.3	39.5	Accepted
3.	Easily access Magazines	80	70	96	50	296	772	2.6	24.8	Accepted
4.	Easily access Research Report	110	80	66	40	296	852	2.9	29.9	Accepted
5.	Easily access Seminars	40	70	120	66	296	679	2.3	20.9	Rejected
6.	Easily access Encyclopedia	130	70	76	20	296	902	3.0	34.8	Accepted
7.	Easily access Government Publication	135	75	66	20	296	917	3.1	34.7	Accepted
8.	Easily access OPAC	40	30	130	96	296	606	2.0	19.1	Rejected
9.	Easily access Catalogue cards	120	80	56	40	296	812	2.7	31.8	Accepted
10.	Easily access Library Staff	140	56	60	40	296	888	3.0	34.5	Accepted
	Average mean							2.83		

Table 2 reveals that items (1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10) were accepted because their criteria mean was above 2.5, the cut-off point for decision, while items (5,8) were rejected because the mean score was below 2.5 of the criteria mean. The table also reveals that item (1) has the highest mean score of (43.3) while item (8) has the lowest mean score of (2.0). Again, an average mean of (2.83) was obtained, which indicates that there's some level of accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

Table 3: What are the factors affecting accessibility of Information in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Rivers State?

S/N	Items	4 SA	3 A	2 D	1 SD	N	Total	Mean	Std	Remark
1.	Uncatalogued	130	76	60	30	296	898	3.0	32.9	Accepted
2.	Mis-catalogued	110	90	56	40	296	862	2.9	30.6	Accepted
3.	Mis-shelved	150	80	36	30	296	942	3.3	37.6	Accepted
4.	Difficulty in getting	140	86	45	25	296	933	3.2	36.0	Accepted

	Information because of poor retrieval skills									
5.	Non-relevance of information retrieved from the physical library	80	46	90	80	296	718	2.4	23.2	Rejected
6.	Delay in receiving requested materials	100	100	66	30	296	862	2.9	29.9	Accepted
7.	Lack of library orientation	140	66	50	40	296	898	3.0	34.9	Accepted
8.	Low level of staff skills	90	90	66	50	296	812	2.7	27.2	Accepted
9.	Lack of bibliographic information on the resources	120	86	55	35	296	898	3.0	32.2	Accepted
10.	Difficulties in communication	115	91	60	30	296	883	2.10	31.8	Accepted
								2.84		

Table 3 reveals that items (1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10) were accepted because their criteria mean was above 2.5, the cut-off point for decision, while items (5) were rejected because the mean score was below 2.5 of the criteria mean. The table also reveals that item (3) has the highest mean score of (3.3) while item (5) has the lowest mean score of (2.4). Again, an average mean of (2.84) was obtained, which indicates that there are factors affecting the accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

Findings

The study reveals that there are different types of information resources available to students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku also that the information available is higher than some of the information that is not available.

The study reveals that there's a high level of accessibility to information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. Again, it reveals low access to the use of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and seminar.

The study reveals highly negative factors affecting the accessibility of information resources amongst students and staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

Conclusion

The library is the heartbeat, nerve centre, pivot and core of the academic life of the university. A university is as good as its library. A library has the responsibility of selecting, acquiring and organizing relevant information materials that will effectively assist learning, teaching, research and recreational activities of the university. All academic/non-academic activities revolve around the resources that are stocked and exploited by the university community for all academic and administrative purposes within the university. Students' academic work, faculty research and other activities will suffer if library resources are not fully utilized, similarly, the library will be said to have failed if the college community are not able to access and use available resources to carry out its functions. Again, satisfying users' needs in the academic library should be the academic objective of the libraries and librarians. Hence librarians should strive to bring information resources to their users' community no matter the cost and also ensure easy and quick accessibility of the information to provide and sustain quality library and information services to their users because availability, access and use of information resources are the core of the 21st century library services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. There should be an upgrade from the traditional method to the automated or digitized method of rendering services in the library, the use of an Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) should be implemented and

2. Seminars should be made available and accessible, including other relevant information resources that are of benefit to its users.

3. Librarians and library officers should endeavour to organize information resources for easy accessibility and utilization.

References

Abdulsalami, T. L., & Salami, F. P. (2013). Availability, accessibility and use of information among Samaru Traders. *Journal of Education*. ABU Zaria. Kaduna State. http://www.sryahwapublication.com

Agulu, C. C., & Aguolu, I. E. (2002). Libraries and Information management in Nigeria. Maiduguri: EDL inform services. http://www.lisbnet.com

Ashikuzzaman, N. (2016). E-learning and Digital Library. http://www.lisbnet.com learning - digital- library.

Clifford, I. B., & Olurotin, O. S. (2014). Availability, access to and level of use of academic library information resources study of selected academic. Libraries in south western Nigeria. *Journal of Education and practice*, 5(28), 20-23. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac

Emasealu, H. U. (2019). Availability and use of Home-based Library Resources among Adolescents, Tincity *Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science* (T-JOLAIS), 8(1&2), 45-55. http://dx.doi.org/10.5865 KCT

David-West, B. T. (2019). Access and use of electronic information resources among medical students in University of Port Harcourt Library. *Journal* of *Information* and *Knowledge Management,* 9(4), 55-62.

Gohain, S., & Anjani, K. (2013). Use and users' satisfaction in library resources and services. A study in Tezpur University, India. *International Journal of Library and information Science*, 167-175. https://doi.org/10.31871/WJIR

Hammed, A. B. (2010). Use of library: Essential manual for beginners. Akacom Publication Ltd.

Nwachikwu, A. L. (2014). Availability, Accessibility and use of information resources. *Journal of information and knowledge management*, 4-10.

Ode, E.O., & Omokaro, D.A. (2010). Basic principles and practices of librarianship, PSG France Publication.

Odunlade, R. O. (2017). Availability and accessibility of information resources as predictor of leacturer's teaching effectiveness. Library philosophy and practice. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu /libphi/prac/1509.

Onifade, O., & Omeluzoe, G. (2013). Library resources and service utilization by post graduate students in Nigeria private university. International *Journal of Library and information Science*, 289-294.