ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES: A CASE STUDY OF KANO STATE POLYTECHNIC

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Abstract

This study investigated the accessibility and utilization of library resources among users at Kano State Polytechnic, Kano. The purpose was to identify the types of information resources available, the extent to which they are utilized, and the relationship between their availability and usage. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire administered to a sample of 88 respondents drawn from a population of 2,266 registered library users, including students and academic staff. The sample was selected using simple random sampling techniques to ensure representativeness. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and Pearson correlation analysis. Findings revealed that textbooks were the most available (59.0%) and utilized (72.7%) resources, while other materials such as journals, encyclopedias, and digital resources were underutilized. A statistically significant positive correlation (r = 0.742, p < 0.01) was found between the availability and utilization of resources, suggesting that increased availability enhances usage. The study concludes that despite the central role of the library in academic support, its current holdings are heavily print-based and under-diversified. Recommendations include expanding digital resource access, improving infrastructure, and implementing comprehensive user education programmes to foster greater engagement with a wider range of academic materials.

Introduction

Academic libraries are central to knowledge generation and serve a wide range of users. Often described as the 'heart' of polytechnics, they support students and departments in conducting research and advancing knowledge. Their core functions include collecting, processing,

storing, disseminating, and utilizing information to meet academic and research needs. Librarians play a vital role in addressing users' information needs, enabling both students and faculty to achieve their educational and professional goals.

Libraries act as reservoirs of carefully selected and organized resources, facilitating easy access to information (Dahiru, 2018). They support users who may lack the means to acquire personal resources or need academic assistance (Lionel, 2012). Modern academic libraries, particularly hybrid ones, provide access to both print and electronic materials, extending their relevance within and beyond physical walls. They are vital to the mission of higher education institutions, fostering teaching, learning, and research (Bassey et al., 2007).

The rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the 21st century transformed library operations, enabling automation and digital access. This shift has influenced how users engage with library resources, improving information retrieval and productivity (Ahmad & Ishaq, 2009; Ekwelem & Okafor, 2009). Kano State Polytechnic libraries reflect this evolution, with various constituent schools benefiting from the integration of ICT in service delivery.

Despite these advancements, many academic libraries in Nigeria still face challenges that hinder effective ICT utilization. These include poor funding, high equipment costs, unreliable infrastructure, and low user engagement (Fatoki, 2007; Adeoti, 2007). While libraries remain vital to educational and national development, many students do not fully utilize available resources—often due to limited orientation or awareness. This underutilization highlights a pressing need to empirically examine students' accessibility and use of library information resources.

Research Questions

1. What types of information resources are available to users in Kano State Polytechnic Kano library?

2. To what extent are the resources utilized by users of the Polytechnic?

3. What is the relationship between the availability and utilization of resources in Kano State Polytechnic Kano library?

Literature

Libraries and information centers play valuable roles in meeting societal information needs ,facilitating and making access to such information

possible (David-West 2019).The concept of information has been defined in various ways, reflecting its broad and multifaceted nature. Folorunsho (2009) observed that many definitions tend to serve the narrow interests of those providing them, attributing this to semantic and conceptual difficulties. Sada (2012) emphasized that information means different things to different people depending on context, time, and purpose. Olabode (2008) described information as knowledge communicated or received in relation to a particular subject. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines information as any entity or form that provides the answer to a question or resolves uncertainty. In a similar perspective, Lali (2013) noted that information is a well-organized, processed, and meaningful form of data generated from raw facts, which users can easily apply in decision-making.

In the academic context, particularly in libraries, information resources play a central role in supporting learning, teaching, and research. With the advancement of technology, the nature of information resources has evolved significantly. Vatsha (2010) stated that the rapid development in technology has not only transformed the way information is delivered but also redefined the very concept of information resources. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) affirmed that information resources in libraries exist in both print and electronic formats. These include textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers, magazines, reports, CD-ROMs, internet sources, email communications, video tapes, diskettes, computers, and microforms. Ezeala and Yusuf (2011) added that electronic resources encompass functional computers, photocopying machines, local area networks, internet access points, fax machines, microform readers, and computer workstations. They further emphasized the importance of periodically measuring these resources to ensure they align with library objectives and user needs.

The Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science defines information resources as the total collection of materials in a library, including books, manuscripts, government publications, catalogs, recordings, microforms, and computer tapes. Usman (2004) viewed information resources as those materials owned by a library that provide related knowledge in both print and non-print formats. These resources are vital in meeting the dynamic information needs of users efficiently and reliably. Pearlson and Saunders (2005) highlighted that electronic materials, in particular, are dynamic and support current research efforts, especially in areas like current affairs. This is further supported by Swan (2009), who observed that information resources have revolutionized knowledge acquisition,

offering unprecedented opportunities for students in higher education institutions. Through online tools such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN Search, users can now explore databases and download vast amounts of information in seconds. However, Swan cautioned that effective utilization of these resources still depends significantly on students' attitudes and familiarity with the tools.

Information resources in libraries are generally categorized into two broad types: print and non-print resources. Print resources consist of those materials physically printed on paper, such as books, serials, encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, almanacs, yearbooks, manuals, abstracts, indexes, gazettes, government publications, maps, atlases, pamphlets, clippings, and manuscripts. Books, for example, are commonly divided into reference and non-reference types. Reference books, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, are not meant to be read cover-to-cover but are consulted for specific information. Non-reference books include textbooks and novels that serve broader reading and instructional purposes. Popoola (2011) emphasized the importance of such reference materials in facilitating background research and supporting academic work across disciplines.

Non-print resources, on the other hand, are library materials not printed on paper. Also known as non-book or audio-visual resources, they require specific equipment for use. Nwogwugwu (1994) categorized these into three groups. Audio resources include items such as audio tapes and phonodiscs, which can only be listened to. These require radio cassette players or similar devices. Visual materials, such as transparencies and microforms, are designed to be viewed and necessitate tools like microform readers. Audio-visual resources combine both sound and visual elements; examples include television programs, video films, and computer-aided CDs and VCDs. The full benefit of these materials is realized when users engage both their auditory and visual faculties. However, access to such resources in many libraries, especially in developing countries, is limited due to the high cost of required equipment and infrastructure. Their proper organization, accessibility, and relevance directly influence the academic success of the institutions they serve.

Accessibility and utilization of information resources are essential to achieving academic success in higher education. In Nigerian polytechnic libraries, a number of studies have highlighted persistent barriers to effective access and use of these resources. For example, research conducted in the North-East zone of Nigeria revealed that library users

face major obstacles such as erratic electricity supply, the absence of relevant electronic resources for some disciplines, and inadequate user training and staff support (Research Publish, 2020). These challenges hinder the optimal use of library facilities and subsequently affect the academic performance of students and research productivity of staff.

A similar study at the Bayelsa State College of Health Technology confirmed these issues, reporting that while some resources like books were relatively accessible, others such as journals, handbooks, and dictionaries were not as available. The absence of internet connectivity, insufficient library materials, and low awareness among users were identified as key challenges (International Journal of Knowledge and Development, 2021). These findings suggest the need for improved infrastructure and more robust user orientation to facilitate better access and usage of information resources.

The issue of digital divide continues to exacerbate the challenges of accessibility in Nigeria. High costs of computer equipment, poor ICT skills, and limited knowledge of online databases and search engines contribute to a gap between those who can effectively use digital resources and those who cannot (Wikipedia, 2024). As academic libraries increasingly shift toward digital collections and electronic access, students without digital literacy or access to ICT tools are at a distinct disadvantage.

In efforts to bridge this gap, some institutions have developed initiatives to promote better ICT usage. The University of Lagos, for instance, implemented an information support system that enhanced the accessibility of electronic resources for distance learners. This initiative provided training on how to effectively use digital materials and search tools, resulting in improved student engagement and academic outcomes (Arxiv, 2014). While these developments show promise, they are not yet widespread across Nigerian polytechnics.

Despite these efforts, underutilization of library resources remains a significant problem. Studies indicate that many students rely more on personal lecture notes or social media than library holdings. This is often attributed to unfamiliarity with library systems, perceived difficulty in navigating them, and lack of user-friendly interfaces (Academia.edu, 2019). This trend underlines the importance of introducing more intuitive digital tools in libraries and ensuring that students receive comprehensive orientation and user training at the start of their academic programs. While polytechnic libraries in Nigeria are equipped

with a wide array of information resources, their effective use is constrained by infrastructural limitations, inadequate digital literacy, and lack of awareness.

Empirical studies have been conducted to assess the accessibility and utilization of information resources in Nigerian polytechnic libraries. A study by Mukhtar and Aliyu (2023) investigated the utilization of information resources by academic staff in selected tertiary institutions in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The research revealed that while there was an adequate availability of library resources, the extent of their utilization by academic staff was moderate. Factors such as lack of awareness, inadequate training, and limited access to electronic resources were identified as barriers to effective utilization.

Terlanga et al. (2019) conducted a study on the availability and accessibility of information resources by students in Gboko Polytechnic, Benue State. The findings indicated that the library resources were grossly inadequate and not easily accessible to students. Challenges such as lack of internet facilities, absence of library catalogues, and insufficient qualified library staff were highlighted as impediments to effective access and utilization of information resources.

Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) examined the accessibility and use of library resources by undergraduates in a Nigerian State University of Technology. The study found that students had limited access to electronic resources compared to printed materials. The lack of adequate electronic resources and insufficient user education were identified as significant factors affecting the utilization of library resources. Adeleke and Makinde (2021) investigated the accessibility and utilization of electronic information resources by undergraduate students of Lagos State University. The study revealed that while students acknowledged the importance of electronic resources for academic purposes, their utilization was hindered by factors such as erratic power supply, limited internet access, and lack of awareness about available resources.

These empirical studies underscore the persistent challenges faced by Nigerian polytechnic libraries in providing accessible and effectively utilized information resources. Common issues identified include inadequate infrastructure, limited electronic resources, insufficient user education, and lack of qualified library personnel. While several empirical studies have examined the accessibility and utilization of information resources in various Nigerian polytechnics and universities, there is a noticeable lack of

specific, comprehensive research focused on Kano State Polytechnic. Most of the existing studies are generalized across regions or focus on other institutions, often without addressing the unique structural, infrastructural, and user-related factors that may influence access and utilization in Kano State Polytechnic libraries. Some of the previous research highlights challenges such as inadequate ICT facilities, poor user orientation, and limited access to electronic resources, but there is little to no localized empirical evidence on how these challenges manifest specifically in Kano State Polytechnic an institution with multiple campuses and diverse student demographics. This gap in localized research justifies the need for a study that focuses directly on Kano State Polytechnic to generate institution-specific data and recommendations.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed to guide the investigation. This design is suitable for obtaining factual information and understanding the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of a defined population. As noted by Aina (2008), the descriptive survey approach involves the systematic collection of data from a relatively large population using tools such as questionnaires. This design was appropriate for examining students' perceptions regarding the accessibility and utilization of information resources in the School of Technology (SOT) Library at Kano State Polytechnic. The research was conducted within the SOT Library of Kano State Polytechnic. This setting was selected due to its relevance as a key academic and information resource centre within the institution. The population for the study comprised all registered users of the library, including students and academic staff. According to institutional records (Kano State Polytechnic, 2018), the total population stood at 2,266, consisting of 2,137 students and 129 academic staff.

A sample of 88 respondents was selected using the simple random sampling technique to ensure representativeness and to minimize bias. This included 81 students and 7 academic staff members. The proportional allocation ensured that the sample reflected the structure of the larger population. The use of random sampling provided each library user with an equal chance of being selected, thus enhancing the reliability of the findings. Data were collected using an open-ended questionnaire titled *"Accessibility and Utilization of Information Resources Scale."* The instrument was designed to elicit detailed responses, allowing participants to freely express their views and experiences. The data obtained through this method were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentages and correlation to draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Information resources are available to users in Kano State Polytechnic Kano library

SN	Materials	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Textbooks	52	59.0%
2	Journals	10	11.3%
3	Dictionary	08	9.0%
4	Encyclopedias	02	2.2%
5	Newspapers	10	11.3%
6	Magazines	06	6.8%
7	Others materials	-	-
	Total	**88**	**100%**

The study examined the types of information resources available to users at the School of Technology (SOT) Library of Kano State Polytechnic. Findings from the survey indicate that textbooks are the most frequently accessed materials, with 59.0% (n=52) of respondents reporting their availability and usage. This aligns with the traditional role of academic libraries in supporting instructional delivery, as textbooks are typically prescribed by lecturers and serve as foundational reading materials across disciplines. The predominance of textbook usage highlights the library's role in directly supporting curriculum needs and learning outcomes.

Journals and newspapers were reported as the next most consulted resources, each accounting for 11.3% (n=10) of the responses. This suggests a moderate level of engagement with current and scholarly publications, though the figure may indicate a limited subscription base or access challenges. Dictionaries were accessed by 9.0% (n=8) of the users, reflecting their role in supporting language development and academic writing.

Magazines (6.8%, n=6) and encyclopedias (2.2%, n=2) were among the least consulted resources. The low usage of encyclopedias may reflect a shift toward digital sources for general reference information or possibly limited availability within the library. Notably, no respondents indicated access to "other materials," which may include audiovisual resources or electronic databases. This absence suggests significant gaps in the diversity of the library's holdings and may point to limited access to non-print or digital resources, which are increasingly essential in modern academic environments. The findings reveal a traditional print-heavy collection, with textbooks dominating user engagement. The relatively

low consultation of scholarly journals and electronic resources highlights the need for resource diversification and improved access to current academic publications and digital materials. These limitations may impact students' research capacities and exposure to contemporary knowledge across fields.

The finding that textbooks are the most available and consulted materials in the Kano State Polytechnic SOT Library aligns with earlier assertions in the literature that print resources particularly textbooks remain the core of library collections in many Nigerian academic institutions. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) noted that academic libraries predominantly house traditional print materials such as textbooks, journals, and newspapers, which are essential to teaching and learning. The dominance of textbooks in this study supports this claim, highlighting the continued reliance of students on these foundational resources, particularly in contexts where electronic alternatives are limited or inaccessible. Similarly, Popoola (2011) emphasized the importance of textbooks in academic libraries, classifying them as key non-reference materials essential for continuous study and curriculum alignment.

However, the relatively low accessibility and use of other resources such as encyclopedias, magazines, and especially non-indicated digital or other materials reflect the broader challenges discussed in the literature concerning the underdevelopment of electronic and diversified resource collections. As observed by Swan (2009), the advent of information technology has created new opportunities for student access to diverse resources, yet the full benefits of these innovations remain underutilized due to infrastructural and technological barriers. This is consistent with findings from empirical studies (e.g., Terlanga et al., 2019; Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009), which indicated that limited availability of electronic and reference resources hampers comprehensive research engagement. The absence of other materials in the findings may indicate gaps in library modernization and digitization issues previously highlighted in the literature as barriers to effective resource utilization in Nigerian polytechnics.

Table 2. The extent available resources are utilized by users of the Polytechnic.

SN	Materials	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Textbooks	64	72.7%
2	Journals	4	4.5%
3	Dictionary	11	12.5%

4	Encyclopedias	2	2.3%
5	Newspapers	6	6.8%
6	Magazines	1	1.1%
7	Others materials	0	0
	Total	**88**	**100%**

The data in Table 2 indicates that textbooks are the most utilized information resources by users of the Kano State Polytechnic SOT Library, accounting for 72.7% (n=64) of the responses. This confirms the centrality of textbooks in students' academic activities. Dictionaries were the second most utilized resource, reported by 12.5% (n=11) of respondents, followed by newspapers at 6.8% (n=6). Journals and encyclopedias had lower usage rates, reported at 4.5% (n=4) and 2.3% (n=2), respectively. Magazines were scarcely used, with only 1.1% (n=1), and no respondents reported using other materials.

This pattern suggests a heavy reliance on core academic materials especially textbooks while more specialized and reference-based materials such as journals and encyclopedias are underutilized. It also indicates that non-print or digital resources, categorized here as other materials, are either unavailable or not accessed by users.

The heavy utilization of textbooks in the polytechnic library corroborates earlier findings in the literature that identify them as the primary information resource in Nigerian academic libraries. Popoola (2011) observed that textbooks are fundamental to students' academic work and are frequently recommended by lecturers for use throughout the semester. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) also emphasized that textbooks form a significant portion of academic library collections, especially in environments where access to online academic databases is limited. The high rate of textbook use, therefore, reflects both the users' familiarity with these materials and their critical role in supporting formal instruction.

However, the limited utilization of journals, encyclopedias, and magazines as seen in this study mirrors concern raised in earlier empirical reviews about the underutilization of diversified library resources in polytechnics. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) noted that despite the presence of these materials, students often lack the training or motivation to use them effectively. This may be linked to inadequate orientation, poor indexing and retrieval systems, or the perception that these materials are not immediately useful for examination preparation. The complete absence of usage under other materials highlights a persistent gap in the

availability or awareness of digital and non-print resources. Swan (2009) and Adeleke and Makinde (2021) both emphasized that the integration of electronic resources in academic libraries offers new opportunities for students to access up-to-date information. However, such benefits are often undercut by infrastructural limitations, digital illiteracy, or lack of awareness, which may explain why no respondents indicated the use of alternative resources in this study.

The findings suggest that while traditional print resources like textbooks are well-utilized, there is a need for more proactive strategies to promote awareness and accessibility of other academic resources especially journals and digital materials. Enhancing user orientation programs and expanding digital access could significantly improve the depth and breadth of information utilization among polytechnic students.

Table 3. The relationship between the availability and utilization of resources in Kano State Polytechnic Kano library

Variables	Availability of Information Resources	Accessibility of Information Resources
Availability of Information Resources	1.000	0.742
	.000	.000
	88	88
Accessibility of Information Resource	0.742	1.000
	.000	.000
	88	88

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between the availability and accessibility (interpreted here as utilization) of information resources in the Kano State Polytechnic Library. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) value is **0.742**, indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that as the availability of information resources increases, the likelihood of their accessibility and utilization by users also increases. The significance value (p = .000) indicates that the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, affirming that the observed association did not occur by chance. This result quantitatively confirms that there is a significant link between what is available in the library and how much users engage with those resources. A well-stocked

library with relevant materials, therefore, is more likely to be effectively used by its patrons.

The significant positive correlation observed between resource availability and utilization directly addresses the central concern of this research the underutilization of library resources in Kano State Polytechnic. Earlier discussions and empirical studies have consistently pointed out that the lack of availability, especially of diverse and digital resources, contributes to poor utilization (Mukhtar & Aliyu, 2023; Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). This study provides statistical support for that assertion: when information materials are adequately provided, students and staff are more likely to access and use them.

The finding reinforces the conceptual foundation that access and use are interdependent. As Swan (2009) and Adeleke and Makinde (2021) argued, enhancing the quantity and quality of available resources particularly modern, electronic, and specialized ones can stimulate greater user engagement. The correlation of 0.742 aligns with this perspective and suggests that strategic investment in library holdings is not merely about quantity but directly influences actual utilization patterns.

This relationship further highlights the need to address systemic barriers such as funding constraints, lack of current materials, and insufficient ICT infrastructure, all of which were noted in both the literature and the problem statement of this study. If availability remains limited to traditional print formats like textbooks as earlier tables revealed then the scope of utilization will also remain narrow. Therefore, solving the problem of underutilization requires not only promoting awareness and orientation but also ensuring the library's collections reflect current academic and technological demands. The strong correlation identified in this study affirms that improving availability is a key pathway to improving utilization. For Kano State Polytechnic Library to fully support academic productivity, efforts must be focused on expanding both the breadth of resources and the ease of their access by user.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight a significant reliance on textbooks by users at Kano State Polytechnic, underscoring their continued importance as foundational academic resources. Despite the availability of other materials such as journals, dictionaries, newspapers, and encyclopedias, these were markedly underutilized. The absence of engagement with non-print or digital resources further illustrates the limited diversification of the library's holdings and possible challenges

related to infrastructure, awareness, or digital literacy.

These findings are consistent with broader trends identified in the literature on Nigerian academic libraries, which often struggle with inadequate funding, limited ICT infrastructure, and poor user training all of which hinder the effective utilization of library resources. The study also found a direct relationship between the availability and usage of resources: materials that were more readily available were also more widely used. This correlation suggests that improving resource provision particularly in terms of digital content and access to current scholarly materials may positively impact usage patterns.

The study concludes that while Kano State Polytechnic Library plays a crucial role in supporting academic activities, its current resources are skewed towards traditional print formats, limiting users' exposure to a broader spectrum of academic information. To enhance the accessibility and utilization of library resources, the institution must invest in modernizing its collections, expanding electronic resource access, and offering robust user education programmes. Such initiatives will ensure the library evolves in tandem with global information trends and effectively meets the dynamic academic needs of its diverse user population.

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