

## **CHALLENGES OF UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN SELECTED COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected College of Education Libraries in South East, Nigeria. The study answered two research questions that were derived from the objectives of the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 2817 respondents consisting of 2810 library users and 7 College Librarians. A 10% proportionate sampling technique was used to select a sample of 281 user respondents while all the 7 College librarians of the selected libraries under study were used. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires and checklists. The instruments were administered directly to the students users at the selected libraries. However, 7 checklists for the College librarians were returned in usable form while 281 questionnaires for the student users were returned in usable form. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using simple statistics (means.) The real limit of numbers (means range) of the nominal value assigned to the scale point was used and decision was taken by comparing results with the real limit of numbers. Major findings of the study include that; the College Libraries under study were utilized to a great extent. All the libraries under study revealed lack of online help, non-availability of library resources, unfamiliarity with the search methods, services not satisfactory, staff are not helpful/ librarian not user friendly, time constraint, space constraint, epileptic power supply, lack of knowledge of the existence of the service, browsing cost is high, lack of time required to search for information, and speed of access is low among other challenges facing the utilization of information resources and services in selected College of Education libraries in South East Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

The College of Education is one of the tertiary educations in Nigeria with the primary role of training teachers who are awarded the minimum teaching qualification of Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) on satisfactory completion of three year programme. The obtained certificate enables one to work as a teacher in Nigerian elementary, junior secondary, and technical institutions. The establishments were initially affiliated with various Nigerian universities and were referred to as Advanced Teachers' Colleges.

Later, they changed their name to Colleges of Education, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), established in 1989, was in charge of overseeing them. Based on ownership classification, Nigeria has 163 Colleges of Education, with 27 federal, 54 state,

and 82 private institutions, according to the National Commission of Colleges of Education (2002) and 2024, respectively.

College of Education establishes libraries on inception that caters for the teaching research and learning activities of the institutions. They are called College libraries, found in post-secondary education that offers National Certificate of Education (NCE). It plays an important role in achieving objectives of higher education. College library is a heart and integral part of a college and commands the most significant place in the educational system. The physical, intellectual, and social training provided to the students during this period leads them in the whole life. In developed countries, college libraries have played an important role in the provision of educational facilities resulting in the promotion of civilization and overall, the development of nations.

Services provided by college libraries primarily pertain to collection and access, library personnel, the use of information technology (IT) in libraries, and the physical infrastructure of libraries. The services related to collection and access consist of sufficient library material including book, non-book and digital material, proper classification and cataloguing, library orientation, library instruction and education, book issue and return facility, open access, proper shelf stack maintenance, photocopy and printing services, library book bank, reserve services, reference services, readers advisory services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), interlibrary loan and resource sharing etc.

According to Akpe, Ajay and Ngunna (2018) information resources are equipment and facilities, software and data, which are designed, built, operated and maintained to collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display and transmit information. Idachab (2004) as cited in Akpe, Ajav and Ngunna (2018) observed that information resources include such materials as books, periodicals and audio-visual materials that are provided for use by the people.

The degree to which the library's resources and services are used for research, education, and learning is known as information resource utilization. According to Egwuny (2012), utilization of information resources is making use of the available resources by the students through adequate access where the library ensures that the resources are acquired and processed as well as making them readily available and utilized at the right time through the right medium through which students would be able to make use of such resources. According to Okogwu and Dike (2017), in evaluating the utilization of the resources, both

prints and electronic, a satisfactory report of the usage will encourage the renewal of the subscription or eventual cancellation of the resource.

Libraries have worked hard to make information resources available to their patrons, but usage has been a problem. Several issues have made it difficult to use the library's resources. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the challenges library users face in utilization of information resources and services in selected Colleges of Education libraries in South East Nigeria.

### **Statement of Problem**

As one of the requirements for the approval of the establishment of any College of Education by the National Commission on Colleges of Education, the supervisory body of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria directed for the establishment of a functional, state of the art library with an up-to-date information resources for the use of the teachers on training and for a sound transformation of educational development. In compliance with the directive, colleges of education established state of the art libraries equipped with up-to-date books and other information resources for the use of the library users with the support of their parent institutions and the aid of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) that supports Nigerian government owned tertiary institutions in stipulated areas of development and the library was not an exception. However, it has been observed that the resources and services provided by the libraries in Colleges of Education library are not maximally utilized by the library users due to some challenges. Hence, this study intends to examine the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected Colleges of Education Libraries in Southeast Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected Colleges of Education Libraries in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine the extent of utilization of the library resources and services in the selected college of education libraries in South East Nigeria .
2. identify the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected Colleges of Education Libraries in South East Nigeria.

## **Research Questions**

Three research questions derived from the objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent do you use the library resources and services in the libraries under study?
2. What challenges do library users face in utilizing the library resources and services in the selected Colleges of Education libraries under study?

## **Conceptual Clarification**

A library is a collection of resources, services, and sources as well as the building where they are kept. Similarly, Ogbemor (2011) described library as an organized collection of published and unpublished book, visual and audio-visual materials with the aid of services of staff who are able to provide and interpret such materials as required to meet the informative research, educational and recreational need of its users.

Traditionally, library has its role as a place for collection, organization, presentation, and dissemination of information materials gathered in a place. However, Oke (2008) observed that this role has been improved upon as the libraries now lay serious emphasis on dissemination of information that has been collected, organized and stored not only in a given library but from library to another or between libraries. Consequently, there is a birth of modern technology (digital library) which uses modern technology to facilitate the role of dissemination of information to the seekers.

The definition of a modern library is always evolving to include locations for unfettered access to information from a variety of sources and forms. By offering librarian assistance in navigating and analysing vast amounts of material using a range of digital tools, they are expanding their services outside the actual walls of the institution.

## **Information resources**

Information resources are items containing information. They can be seen as anything consulted in order to obtain information. Aminu (2016) described information resources as any information in electronic, audio-visual, or physical form or any hardware or software that make possible the storage of information. In the context of libraries and information science, Adeoye and Popoola (2011) define information resources as all library collections, including printed and non-printed media that are provided with the goal of satisfying users' information needs.

Books, periodicals, computers, and associated technological devices are examples of such resources. Information resources can be divided into two categories based on the concept's analysis: traditional printed resources and electronic information resources.

### **Information Services**

Any library or information system's primary objective is to offer its patrons comprehensive and expeditionary information services. Library information services, according to Buhari (2016), are the services that libraries and their staff provide to their patrons in order to satisfy their information demands. Among other things, libraries offer the following fundamental services: circulation, user education, internet, indexing and abstracting, reprographics, current awareness, and reference.

Nonetheless, the utilization and satisfaction of these services by users—the ultimate objective of today's information professionals—rely heavily on the effectiveness and efficiency of libraries and their staff in promoting efficient information services to support research, teaching, and learning.

### **Utilization**

The philosophy of utilization in librarianship entails that no matter how large and well stocked a library is, if the resources are not accessed and utilized, such library is meaningless. Therefore, it is the utilization of library resources and services that infuses life into library (Odu and Edam-Agbor, 2018).

Utilization of information resources and services is described as the degree to which available library resources and services are effectively and efficiently used by the students and staff through adequate access, at right time and the right medium. In a similar vein, Akpe, Ajay, and Ngunna (2018) described information resource utilization as the degree to which library resources and services are utilised for research, teaching, and learning.

Similarly, Akpe, Ajav and Ngunna (2018) defined utilization of information resources as the extent to which the resources and services of the library are actually used for teaching, learning and research. The extent to which the library is used usually is captured by the statistics which is compiled daily by the library staff. It is therefore very pertinent that in order to gauge the extent to which the resources are utilized, the librarians should be proactive in providing the statistic of usage on daily basis.

## **Challenges of Utilizing Information Resources and Services**

Libraries are faced with a lot of challenges in ensuring that the resources of the library are utilized by the library users. Among them are paucity of fund in ensuring that relevant and current library information resources are provided in the library. Omotosho and Okiti (2012) observed that inadequate funding is the major factor faced by library staff in the provision of effective library services. Also, the technological infrastructure required for virtual library services such as telecommunication facilities are lacking. Buhari (2016) agreed that the researchers' inability to stay connected to the internet in ICT, poor computer communication system and poor bandwidth leading to poor utilization of the resources.

In a related development, Tella and Ojo (2012) observed that many users are not aware of the various services being offered by the libraries and the comfort and convenience associated with such services. Inadequate skilled staff is another challenge to library services utilization. In the present ICT dispensation, electronic library services require staff with specialized skill networking computer appreciation and applications and if possible, web management. However, most librarians who have not migrated to the new ICT skills, lack the knowledge and skills needed to manage an electronic and virtual library resources and services.

Furthermore, Gwang (2011) identified insufficient information materials for users, lack of enabling conducive environment, outdated materials, mutilated books and long service queues, missing books unreliable photocopying service and unfriendly security personnel as challenges faced by library users in the utilization of library resources and services.

## **Research Method**

The study was a descriptive study that examined the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in federal and state College of Education Libraries in South East Nigeria. These states have a total of seven government owned Colleges of Education, viz: four state, three federal Colleges of Education and their libraries by extension. The Federal and state Colleges of Education in these states are Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, (FCEEA) Enugu State, Federal College of Education, (Technical) Umuze,(FCETU) Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo Ebonyi State, (EBSCOEI) Nwafor Oriizu College of Education, Nsugbe, (NOCEN) Anambra State, Abia State College of Education Technical, Arochukwu, (ASCOETA), Abia State, Enugu State College of Education (Technical) (ESCET), Enugu State and Imo State College of Education Ihitte Uboma. The newly established Federal College of Education in Onicha, Ebonyi State and Abia state were not

studied due to their newness. The study was conducted using questionnaire and checklists as instruments of data collection

The target population of this study are registered users of the College libraries and the College librarians of the selected College of Education libraries under study. The size of the population is 2817 comprising 7 librarians and 2810 registered library users in the selected Colleges of education libraries in South East Nigeria under study. A 10% proportionate sampling technique was used to select a sample of 281 user respondents while all the 7 College librarians of the selected libraries under study were used.

The questionnaire items were administered and collected personally by the researchers to ensure maximum return and correctness by visiting the college libraries used for this study. Data collected were tabulated and analyzed using simple statistics (mean).

## Result and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent do you use the library resources and services?

**Table 1: Responses on the extent of use the resources and services of the library under study**

	FCEEA $\bar{x}$ N=45	FCET U $\bar{x}$ N=65	EBSCO EI $\bar{x}$ N=36	NOCE N $\bar{x}$ N=33	ASCOE TA $\bar{x}$ N=15	ESCE T $\bar{x}$ N=55	ISCOEI $\bar{x}$ N=34	Overall I $\bar{x}$ 281	R
Current Awareness Service	2.6	2.78	2.55	2.69	2.6	2.53	2.53	2.61	7 <sup>th</sup>
New Additions/Accession list	2.77	2.72	2.58	2.66	2.53	2.62	2.5	2.62	6 <sup>th</sup>
Reference Service	2.58	2.52	2.72	2.57	2.66	2.56	2.52	2.95	1 <sup>st</sup>
Newspaper clipping service	2.64	2.51	2.5	2.54	2.53	2.54	2.58	2.55	9 <sup>th</sup>
Table of content of journal/Magazine publisher	2.57	2.52	2.61	2.51	2.6	2.50	2.50	2.54	10 <sup>th</sup>
Reservation of books	2.68	2.74	2.80	2.54	2.66	2.76	2.79	2.71	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Inter-Library Loan	2.64	2.63	2.62	2.66	2.66	2.67	2.73	2.66	4 <sup>th</sup>
E-mail Services	2.48	2.6	2.55	2.54	2.46	2.63	2.32	2.51	11 <sup>th</sup>
I.T. Services	2.51	2.71	2.58	2.51	2.53	2.56	2.44	2.55	9 <sup>th</sup>
Internet services	2.57	2.53	2.55	2.57	2.66	2.6	2.70	2.59	8 <sup>th</sup>

Digital library services	2.62	2.72	2.72	2.54	2.64	2.54	2.67	2.63	5 <sup>th</sup>
Photocopying Service	2.66	2.75	2.69	2.78	2.75	2.83	2.65	2.73	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Grand Mean</b>	2.61		2.64		2.62		2.59		2.82
	2.84	2.57	2.63						

**VGE-Very Great Extent GE-Great Extent LE –Less Extent NA-Not At All**

Table 1 above shows the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent of use of the resources and services of selected college libraries in the South East Nigeria. Using the principle of real limit of numbers, the results of the data analysis revealed that all the resources are used to a great extent by the users. That shows that they are using the library. Also, the overall mean showed that Reference Service (mean = 2.95 is ranked highest, while e-mail service (mean = 2.51) is ranked lowest when utilizing information resources and services by users in selected college of education libraries in the South East under study.

Research Question 2: What challenges do library users face in utilizing the library resources and services in the selected college libraries under study?

Table 2: Responses on the challenges library users face in utilizing the resources and services of the libraries understudy .

	<b>FCEEA</b> $\bar{x}$ N=45	<b>FCETU</b> $\bar{x}$ N=65	<b>EBSCOEI</b> $\bar{x}$ N=36	<b>NOCEN</b> $\bar{x}$ N=33	<b>COETA</b> $\bar{x}$ N=15	<b>ESCET</b> $\bar{x}$ N=55	<b>ISCOEI</b> $\bar{x}$ N=34	<b>Overall</b> $\bar{x}$ 281	<b>R</b>
Lack of online help	2.84	2.56	2.72	2.69	2.66	2.58	2.64	2.67	4 <sup>th</sup>
Non availability of library resources	2.55	2.58	2.58	2.59	2.53	2.54	2.67	2.57	10 <sup>th</sup>
Unfamiliarity with the search methods	2.66	2.64	2.66	2.60	2.66	2.62	2.61	2.64	6 <sup>th</sup>
Services not satisfactory	2.66	2.61	2.5	2.54	2.6	2.6	2.58	2.58	9 <sup>th</sup>
Staff are not helpful/ Librarian not user friendly	2.71	2.64	2.63	2.69	2.73	2.61	2.61	2.66	5 <sup>th</sup>
Time constraint	2.66	2.67	2.61	2.57	2.6	2.65	2.64	2.62	8 <sup>th</sup>
Space constraint	2.62	2.66	2.5	2.54	2.6	2.54	2.58	2.57	9 <sup>th</sup>
Epileptic power supply	2.73	2.74	2.72	2.72	2.73	2.70	2.76	2.72	1 <sup>st</sup>



Lack of knowledge of the existence of the service	2.75	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
Browsing cost is high	2.68	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>
Lack of time required to search for information	2.62	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>
Speed of access is low	2.75	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>2.65</b>		
<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>2.64</b>							

**Keys: SA-Strongly Agree A-Agree D-Disagree SA-Strongly Disagree**

The data presented in table 2 above shows the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the twelve (12) items of challenges faced by users in selected college libraries in South East Nigeria in utilizing the information resources and services of the libraries had mean values ranging from 2.57 to 2.72 which are all above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. The above findings indicated that the respondents agreed that all the twelve (12) identified items in the table are challenges faced by users in utilizing the information resources and services in selected college libraries in South East Nigeria.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Extent of use of the library resources and services**

The result from the finding reveals the extent of use the resources and services at the selected College libraries in the South East Nigeria understudy. From the study, the services are used to a great extent. This is in agreement with Akpe, Ajay and Ngunna (2018) that defined utilization of information resources as the extent to which the resources and services of the library are used for teaching, learning and research.

### **Challenges of utilization of Information Resources and Services**

The result of the findings revealed the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected College of Education Libraries. They include lack of online help, non-availability of library resources, unfamiliarity with the search methods, services not satisfactory, staff are not helpful/ librarian not user friendly, time constraint, space constraint, epileptic power supply, lack of knowledge of the existence of the service, browsing cost is high, lack of time required to search for information, and speed of access is low among other challenges facing the utilization of information resources and services in Selected college libraries in South East Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the works of Buhari (2016)

which revealed that the researchers' inability to stay connected to the internet in ICT, poor computer communication system and poor bandwidth leading to poor utilization of the resources.

Also this study is in agreement with the study carried out by Tella and Ojo (2012). They observed that many users are not aware of the various services being offered by the libraries and the comfort and convenience associated with such services. Inadequate skilled staff is another challenge to library services utilization.

### **Conclusion**

The objectives of this research as highlighted earlier in the work have been achieved following the findings as analyzed above. The study was aimed at examining the challenges of utilization of information resources and services in selected Colleges of Education Libraries in South East Nigeria. Information resources and services of the Colleges of Education libraries under study were utilized to a great extent. The analyzes showed that the College Libraries understudy were faced with a lot of challenges that hindered the utilization of their information resources maximally.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the forgoing, the following recommendations which are by no means exhaustive are made:

1. Libraries should train and retrain their staff to support the users on the utilization of the library resources and services.
2. Utilization of resources and services of the libraries should be improved through an improved network access and internet bandwidth for speedy utilization of information resources.
3. The selected College libraries should create extensive awareness of the information resources and services of their library for an extensive utilization by the library users.
4. Also the library should provide a conducive environment with regular provision of power supply to encourage users for a better utilization of the information and services of the library.

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