

AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BINGHAM UNIVERSITY, KARU, NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

Over the years, the role of library resources and its' utilization across university has been advocated by professionals in an effort to improve students' reading skills as well as overall academic achievement. This paper investigated the availability and utilization of library resources by undergraduate students of Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State. The study formulated five research objectives and five corresponding research questions. A descriptive survey method was used, using questionnaire as the data collection tool. 105 students were randomly selected from 12 faculties from each department, having purposively sampled from the total population of undergraduate students. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tool which involved frequency and percentages. The findings of the study revealed that the availability of library resources in Bingham University is at a moderate level as textbooks, dictionaries and periodicals are available while audio-visual resources and audio resources are not. The findings also revealed that majority of the students utilized the library resources occasionally and during examinations. Several factors were found to have hindered effective utilization of the library resources, which are insufficient internet access, poor orientation about library resources and restricted library hours. Therefore, the study recommends the provision of audio-visual and audio resources available and accessible to library users, orientation on library resources should be prioritized so as to ensure effective utilization of library resources, and library operational hours should be extended.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, Library, Library Resources, Undergraduate Students

Introduction

An academic institution without a library is like a building without foundation, which is why Bingham University that was established in 2005 by the Evangelical Church Winning All [ECWA] has a library. It is located in Karu Local Government of Nasarawa State in North Central region of Nigeria (BHU Student Handbook, 2023). Currently, it has a population of about 6000 students and 40 undergraduate academic programmes spread across 12 faculties in the University (BHU News Bulletin , 2023).

Bingham University Library was established in April 2006 to support its parent institution in actualizing the objectives of teaching, learning and research.

A Library constitutes the source of good and quality educational resource because it provides the learners with various learning materials. According to Allahde (2022), a library is

an organized collection of information resources; selected, acquired, processed, stored for retrieval and dissemination to library users by trained persons called librarians. Libraries provide people with access to the information they need to work, play, learn and govern. Libraries fall in several categories which include: National Library, Academic Library, Public Library, School Library, Private Library and Special Library (Bello, 2020). Each type of library develops its collections, service and facilities based on the information needs of its users.

However, the focus of this research is mainly on academic library which is an integral part of the university, college or other institution of post-secondary education administered to meet the information and research needs of students, faculty and staff. (Reitz, 2004). University libraries play a vital role in providing information services in various forms to students, lecturers and researchers. This is why Okunu, Akalumhe, and Munu (2011) concluded that the university library is the heart and blood of the university.

Problem Statement

Bingham University Library just as other academic libraries all over the world was established to support its parent institution in actualizing its objectives of teaching, learning and research. In recent time, there is a decline in the use of library physical collections and service in the University, which may jeopardize the reason for the establishment of the Library in the first place and can further negatively affect the quality of teaching, learning and research. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the availability of library resource in Bingham University Library and its utilization by undergraduate students.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the availability and utilization of library resources in Bingham University Library, Karu by undergraduate students of the University.

The study intended to:

1. Identify the types of resources available in Bingham University Library, Karu.
2. Determine how often undergraduate students of the University utilize the Library resources.
3. Ascertain the undergraduate students' purpose for using the library.
4. Find out the problems that hinder effective utilization of library resources by undergraduate students of the University.
5. Identify the strategies to be adopted for improved utilization of the Library resources by students.

Research Questions

The study sought to address the following questions.

1. What types of resources are available for undergraduate students in Bingham University Library?
2. How often do undergraduate students of the University utilize the Library resources?
3. What is the purpose of utilizing library resources by the undergraduate students?
4. What are the problems that hinder effective utilization of library resources by undergraduate students of the University?

5. What strategies could be adopted for improved utilization of Library resources by undergraduate students of the University?

Literature Review

Singh and Kaur (2009) confirmed that preservation access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of academic libraries alongside supporting the mission of their parent institutions which is teaching and research. According to Manson (2010) an academic library has the mission to build and maintain a collection that will support and enhance the instructional needs of the institution. He also posited that academic libraries are to provide access to all source of information. Abubakar and Terna (2007) defined availability of library resources as ensuring their presence in Nigeria libraries for immediate use. Availability is the condition of being available, especially of being accessible or obtainable. Availability of library resources means something that can be easily obtained or seen and use.

Utilization is the act of making use of certain things for a purpose. It is also seen as making use of library resources for the purpose of attaining educational goals. These library resources are the materials needed in the library to facilitate learning. According to Ugah(2008), Utilization of library resources stimulates excitement and instills confidences in the users to develop their talents, potentials and capabilities both academically and socially. Aina (2011) stated that accessibility determine the speed at which an information output in any format is obtained. Library resources which contain information in both print and non-print format such as textbooks, indexes, newspapers, report, internet, video, tapes etcetera is the totality of acquired materials gathered by a library for its users (Umar 2016). Its availability, and utilization are important factor in knowledge acquisition and research. Indeed, every academic library regardless of size is expected to have adequate information resources available for its community for reading, learning and research.

Both Adeoye and Popoola (2011) highlighted the effectiveness, availability, accessibility and usage of information resource in studies, conducted a study and discovered that many users still prefer electronic print. Based on the finding, they suggest that e-book offers from the publishers and libraries may be higher than many users preferences. The quality of academic performance of a student of any institution depends on the availability and utilization of library resources by the potential users

Methodology

The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. This design was chosen for this study because, according to Kothari and Garg (2020), descriptive survey research is fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The sample of the study comprised 105 students from 12 faculties in Bingham University Karu, which was randomly selected from each department having purposively sampled from the total population of undergraduate students.

Analysis of Data and Discussion

Research Question 1: What types of resources are available for undergraduate students in Bingham University Library?

The responses to the above question are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Types of Resources Available in the Library

S/N	Types of Resources Available	A	NA	NS	U
1	Textbooks	104(99.05%)	0	1(0.95%)	0
2	Dictionary	95(90.5%)	3(2.9%)	7(6.6%)	0
3	Periodicals	46(43.9%)	10(9.5%)	45(42.8%)	4(3.8%)
4	Online Resources	76(72.4%)	14(13.33%)	11(10.47%)	4(3.80%)
5	Audio-Visual Resources	25(23.8%)	24(22.9%)	48(45.7%)	8(7.6%)
6	Audio Resources	24(22.9%)	28(26.7%)	45(42.8%)	8(7.6%)

KEY: A: Agree, NA: Not Agree, NS: Not sure, U: Undecided

Table 1 above depicts the types of information resources available in Bingham University Library. The table indicate that out of the 105 respondents sampled, 99.5%, 90.5%, 72.4%, and 43.9% representing 104, 95, 76, and 46 respondents respectively agreed that textbook, Dictionary, Online Resources and periodicals are available in the library. The table, however, indicates 48(45.7%) and 45 (42.8%) respondents who are not sure about the availability of Audio-Visual Resources and Audio Resources in the library respectively.

Research Question 2: How often do students utilize the library resources?

Table 2: Frequent Utilization of Library Resources by Undergraduate Students

S/N	Frequency	A	NA	NS
1	Always	26(24.8%)	50(47.6%)	29(27.6%)
2	Once in a week	17(16.2%)	53(50.5%)	35(33.3%)
3	Occasionally	62(59.04%)	36(34.3%)	7(6.66%)
4	Once in a semester	14(13.33%)	59(56.2%)	32(30.47%)

5	During examinations	44(41.9%)	34(32.4%)	27(25.7%)
6	Never access the library resources	3(2.9%)	63(60%)	39(37.1%)

Key: A: Agreed, NA: Not Agreed, NS: Not sure.

Table 2 above shows the level of utilization of library resources of the respondents. The results showed that 62(59.4%) of the total respondents agreed to have utilized the library resources occasionally and 44(41.9%) agreed to have utilized the library resources only during examination. On the other hand, 63(60%) respondents did not agree to have never utilized the library resources, and 59(56.2%) respondents did not agree to have only utilized the resources once in a semester. While 32(30.47%) and 29(27.6%) respondents representing once in a week, and always utilize the library resources, and not sure respectively.

Research Question 3: What is the purpose for utilizing library resources?

Table 3: Purpose for Utilizing Library Resources

S/N	Purposes	SA	A	SD	D	U
1	For assignment	42(40%)	56(53.33%)	1(0.96%)	4(3.81%)	2(1.9%)
2	To access the Internet (WI-FI)	35(33.33%)	38(36.2%)	11(10.47%)	15(14.3%)	6(5.7%)
3	To Study	69(65.7%)	34(32.38%)	1(0.96%)	0%	1(0.96%)
4	For project research	33(31.4%)	43(40.9%)	3(2.9%)	9(8.6%)	17(16.2%)
5	Preparation for examinations	56(53.3%)	47(44.8%)	0%	2(1.9%)	0%
6	To charge devices	24(22.9%)	28(26.7%)	21(20%)	21(20%)	11(10.47%)
7	To while away time	6(5.7%)	10(18.1%)	32(30.5%)	37(35.23%)	11(10.47%)
8	Never use the library resources	4(3.8%)	8(7.61%)	46(3.8%)	28(26.7%)	19(18.09%)

Key: SA: Strongly Agreed, A: Agreed, SD: Strongly Disagreed, D: Disagreed, U: Undecided.

On the purpose for utilization of library resources, the above table shows that 69 (65.7%), 56 (53.33%), 56(53.3%), 43(40.9%) and 38(36.2%) represent strongly agreed and agreed from the respondents that they use the library for the purpose of studying, assignment, preparation for examination, for project and to access the Internet respectively. Meanwhile, 37(35.23%) and 21 (20%) respondents represent strongly disagreed and disagreed that they utilize the library to while away time and to charge devices respectively. Finally on the above table, 8(7.61%) and 4(3.8%) represent agreed and strongly agreed to have never use the library while 19(18.09 %) respondents are undecided.

Research Question 4: What are the problems that hinder effective utilization of library resources?

Table 4: Factors that hinder Effective Utilization of Library Resources

S/N	Problems	A	D	U
1	Lack of awareness of library resources	44(41.9%)	48(45.7%)	13(12.4%)
2	Lack of relevant library resources	43(40.9%)	49(46.7%)	13(12.4%)
3	Insufficient Internet access	64(60.9%)	26(24.8%)	15(14.3%)
4	Power outage	34(32.4%)	58(55.2%)	13(12.4%)
5	Poor orientation about library resources and services	53(50.5%)	33(31.4%)	19(18.1%)
6	Restricted library hours	72(68.6%)	24(22.9%)	9(8.5%)
7	Lack of qualified library staff	18(17.1%)	66(62.9%)	21(20%)
8	Library is too silent for studies	15(14.3%)	77(73.3%)	13(12.4%)
9	Lack of eating and drinking in the library	29(27.6%)	66(62.9%)	10(9.5%)

10	Too many rules and regulations in the library	31(29.52%)	62(59.05%)	12(11.43%)
11	Not sure	10(9.53%)	43(40.95%)	52(49.52%)

Key: A: Agreed, D: Disagreed, U: Undecided.

From the above table, item 3, 5, and 6 has a good number of respondents who agreed that insufficient internet access, poor orientation about library resources and restricted library hour are the problems of effective library utilization which has a percentage of 60.9%, 50.5%, and 68.6% respectively. While 62.9%, 73.3%, 62.9% and 59.5% respondents respectively disagreed that lack of qualified library staff, library is too silent for studies, lack of eating and drinking in the library and too many rules and regulations in the library are the problems of effective library utilization. Meanwhile, 49.52% respondents are undecided or not sure.

Research Question 5: What are the strategies that could be adopted for improved utilization of library resources?

Table 5: Strategies for Improved Utilization of Library Resources

S/N	Strategies	A	D	U
1	Orientation on library resources should be a priority	93(88.6%)	5(4.8%)	7(6.6%)
2	Relevant and current resources should be made available in the library.	93(88.6%)	5(4.8%)	7(6.6%)
3	Internet access should be made available in all the libraries	99(94.3%)	0%	6(5.7%)
4	Solar energy should be provided in all the libraries to solve the problem of power outage)	94(89.52%)	0%	11(10.48%)
5	Library operating hours should be extended	88(83.8%)	9(8.6%)	8(7.6%)
6	Qualified librarians should be employed to manage the library)	79(75.24%)	10(9.53%)	16(15.23%)

)

7	A section should be created inside the library for group discussions	80(76.2%)	19(18.1%)	6(5.7%)
8	Water should be allowed inside the reading rooms	72(68.6%)	18(17.1%)	15(14.3%)
9	Library should be administered by flexible rules	64(60.9%)	17(16.2%)	24(22.9%)

Key: A: Agreed, D: Disagreed, U: Undecided.

Table 5 shows the strategies that could be adopted to improve the utilization of library resources. The items above indicate that majority of the respondents agreed with the assertions that Internet access should be made available in the library which has 99 (94.3%) responses while 6(5.7%) are undecided. Solar energy should be provided in all the libraries to solve the problem of power outage has 94(89.52%) respondents agreed and 11(10.48%) are undecided. Orientation on library resources should be the priority has 93(88.6%) respondents agreed, 5(4.8%) disagree and 7(6.6%) are undecided. Relevant and current resources should be made available in the library has 93(88.6%) respondents agreed, 5(4.8%) and 7(6.6%) are undecided. Library operation hours should be extended 88(83.8%); a section should be created inside the library for group discussion 80(76.2%). Qualified librarians should be employed to manage the library has 79(75.24%) responses, water should be allowed inside the reading rooms 72(68.6%), and library should be administered with flexible rules 64(60.9%).

Summary of the Findings

This study was conducted to assess the availability of library resources and its utilization by undergraduate students at Bingham University Karu. The study found out that library resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, periodicals and online resources are available in the University Library while availability of audio-visual resources and audio resources is not certain. Furthermore, the findings revealed that majority of the respondents utilize the library resources occasionally and during examinations while a few of the respondents have never used the library resources.

Several factors were found to have hindered effective utilization of the library resources in Bingham University. These include insufficient Internet access, poor orientation on library resources and services and restricted library hours.

To overcome these problems and improve the utilization of library resources by undergraduate students, the study found out that strategies such as Internet access need to be made available and

accessible in all the libraries, orientation on library resources should be a priority and library opening hours should be extended.

Conclusion

Judging from the findings of this study, it can be concluded that textbooks, dictionaries, periodicals and online resources are available in Bingham University Library. However, the non-availability of resources like audio-visual resources and audio resources can make it impossible for the Internet resources to be used; hence hindering the successful attainment of the objective of establishing the University Library.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Both audio and audio-visual resources should be made available and accessible to the library users in all the departmental and faculty libraries in the University.
2. Orientation on library resources should be made a priority in order to increase the users' level of awareness of the resources which would in turn increase the utilization of library resources.
3. Library operating hours should be extended and flexible for both staff and students.

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