

AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES BY ACADEMIC STAFF OF FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE IN NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, SHABU-LAFIA CAMPUS

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability and utilization of library resources by academic staff of Faculty of Agriculture in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus. Four research questions guided the study. Survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 46 academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture Shabu-Lafia Campus. 46 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 42 (91%) were retrieved and used for the study. The findings of the study established that textbooks, serial materials, reference materials, audio-visual materials, e-resources, dissertations, translation and proceedings, encyclopedia, dictionaries, posters, atlases, maps and globes were the types of library resources available in the Faculty of Agriculture Library. The most utilized library resources were serial materials, e-resources and textbooks. The findings further revealed that inadequate Internet access, lack of proper funding, inadequate power supply, inadequate staff and unqualified personnel were the major challenges encountered by academic staff in the utilization of library resources. Strategies that could be employed to enhance the use of library resources by academic staff in the library studied include advocacy on acquisition of current library resources, the need to improve library funding and provision of Internet services respectively. The study recommends that library resources such as research monographs, indexes, abstracts, CD-ROMs, audio and video cassettes should be acquired and made available for use, advocacy on the use of theses and dissertations, translation and proceedings and dictionaries should be vigorously carried out to enhance the utilization of the library resources, library management should provide up-to-date library services in line with global best practices in addition to the provision of congenial reading area for academic staff, training and retraining on online searching skills should be periodically organized for academic staff, and adequate funding of library operations, improved collection development and maintenance should be given a top priority.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, Information, Resources, Academic Staff

Introduction

Basically, every university library is expected to provide the most needed up-to-date information resources to support teaching, learning and research. University library has become an integral part of the university system and plays significant role in the educational

development of the society. The university library is the heartbeat and intellectual hub of the university. University library as a concept has been defined in several ways by different scholars. Obi (2013) defines academic libraries as those attached to institutions of higher learning such as universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and research institutes. Today more than ever, libraries had democratized learning by removing the major barriers to learning. Provision of library resources in university library adds to the quality of the education provided by the parent institution and ensures that the programs offered in all the faculties meets acceptable standards. The library resources available in university libraries are meant to be utilized by lecturers, students, researchers and visiting scholars.

Utilization of library resources by users generally enhances the frontiers of knowledge while at the same time, builds a virile socio-economic base and creates numerous information resources. University library is regarded as a pool of knowledge, it is expected to stock materials that will enhance teaching, learning and research skills of both faculty staff and students. There are diverse materials procured and stocked in university libraries which include: books (print) and non-book (non-print) materials. Books comprised of textbooks, serial materials and reference materials. Text books are mainly housed in the reader's section where they can be borrowed while reference materials are kept under strict supervision of reference librarians. Reference books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, yearbooks, manuals, almanacs, handbooks, directories, fact book/sheet, gazetteer, gazettes, maps, atlas, biographies and autobiographies are also utilized by academic staff for learning, teaching and research. It is therefore very important for university libraries to ensure adequate provision of library resources in order to greatly enhance its utilization. It is equally necessary that university libraries provide viable materials as well as guide (s) to utilize information resources in different formats. This will help in adding value to teaching, learning and research in university.

Utilization of libraries materials in university libraries depends to a large extent on the availability of information resources and how they are accessible to the library users. Granting access to library information resources requires series of protocols, cataloguing, classification, and indexing to ensure that users can identify and locate the resources with ease. Availability of library resources should be considered as a management tool, purposely applied, to determine how library is serving the needs and expectation of its users, effectively and efficiently. Rao (2005) stressed that libraries, in their effort to provides resources to meet their users' needs, collect resources in various sizes and formats over a period of time. These resources include printed works, audio and video recordings, micro-forms, visual and electronic resources, and the generation of equipment for accessing, reviewing or listening to data store on them. Library collections are changing rapidly as more and more electronic resources are becoming available.

In addition, library resources involved both human and materials resources which are utilized in all means towards achieving the organizational goals. University library is expected to bring information resources to the finger-tips of its users. Therefore, it is expected to enjoyed high degree of patronage by students, lecturers and researchers to

satisfy their diverse information needs. There is no doubt that every university library is vested with the responsibility in the provision of relevant library resources to its users' community. The paper focuses on the availability and utilization of library resources by academic staff of Nasarawa state university faculty agriculture shabu-lafia campus.

Problem Statement

Considerable efforts have been made in the provision of library resources to meet teaching, research and learning needs of academic staff and students to enable them have access to the resources that will enhance learning, teaching and research. However, it was observed that some of the available information resources including the offline electronic resources have not been utilized. This development may be attributed to the fact that the academic staff of the faculty seem to rely mostly on information obtained from the Internet, believing that it will satisfy their information needs at the right format and time. In order to proffer solution to this negative trend, the study sought to assess the availability and utilization of library resources by academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the availability and utilization of library resources by academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the available library resources in the Faculty of Agriculture Library, Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus.
2. ascertain the extent of utilization of the library resources by academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, Shabu-Lafia Campus.
3. to identify the challenges encountered by academic staff in the utilization of library resources in the Faculty of Agriculture Library, Shabu-Lafia Campus.
4. to determine the strategies that could be employed to enhance the utilization of library resources by academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture, Shabu-Lafia Campus.

Literature Review

The importance of libraries to education generally lies in the fact that they provide necessary information to lecturers, students and researchers and community services. The significance of academic libraries lies in the fact that they are repositories of knowledge that provide the vital information for national development.

Library resources can be in printed or non-printed format, including textbooks, journals, databases, internet, microfiche, diskettes, and cassettes. Others include computers, photocopying machines, CD-ROM, Fax machines, and Local Area Network (Ezeala and Yusuf, 2011). These resources might be tangible (i.e., printed resources) and intangible (i.e., electronic resources) formats. Barfi, Afful-Athur, and Agyapong

(2017) stress that the availability of library resources creates an enabling environment for the utilization of library resources to support teaching and learning.

Availability of Library Resources

Availability of library resources creates an enabling environment for the utilization of library resources, and this will promote teaching and learning. This means that learning will take place because they have the available resources. The study supports the work of Mbashir and Adeoti (2015) who found out that materials in terms of books and journals were adequate for faculty staff in the study carried out in Kogi State University, Nigeria. This view is also in line with Emezi (2006) who noted that a university library should endeavour to provide extensive materials (books and non-book materials alike) for study, teaching, learning and research for the benefit of the students and teaching and non-teaching staff of the university and others. In addition, Danlami & Ahmed (2019) studied Availability and Use of Information Resources and Services in Bauchi State Public Library. The findings of the study indicated that books/journals, and reference materials were utilized by the users. This finding aligned with study conducted by Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami, and Salami (2014) whose study focused on the availability, accessibility and use of Information resources and Services Among Information Seekers of Lafia Public Library in Nasarawa State.

Utilization of Library Resources

Literature on utilization of library resources in university libraries have been documented by scholars. Awojobi (2004) who recommended that lecturers should make use of as many information sources as possible. Okere (2022) in a Study "Utilization of Library Resources and Services by Academic Staff of federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The found that majority of the respondents affirmed that textbooks, followed by journals and newspapers were the dominant resources used by academic staff. Similarly, Barfi, Paulina and Agyapong (2018) investigated the utilization of library resources by lecturers in university of Cape Coast. The findings revealed that all respondents indicated that relevant materials available were being used. Further revealed that the materials used are books, journals, research monographs, indexes, abstracts, research reports and electronic resources. Furthermore, Yusuf and Iwu (2011) examined the use of academic library by faculty members and found that faculty members visited the library twice or thrice a month to access and use library resources. The findings also established that print and electronic library resources are used by the faculty more than any other library resources while faculty's main purpose of patronizing the library is to engage in active research as well as to expand the frontiers of knowledge. In another study conducted by Ifijeh (2011) on faculty use of library collections and services in Nigeria. The findings revealed that majority of the academic staff visit the library once or twice a month to borrow textbooks or use facilities at the library's media centre. The findings indicated that faculty makes use of the library resources for personal research and classroom teachings, stating that majority of the respondents are not fully aware of the available resources the library holds. Similarly, Aina (2014) carried out a study on the level of awareness and utilization of electronic resources among academic staff of Babcock University Business School. The findings revealed that low

level of awareness on the available electronic resources affects the accessibility and use of electronic resources by academic staff of Babcock University Business School.

In a related study, Simisaye (2012) reported that majority (59.3%) of the faculty of Tai Solarin University of Education visit the library once a week while 11.1% visit daily. Textbooks, e-journals and newspapers are the major library resources consulted by the faculties. Faculty's use of library resources is mainly to aid teaching, learning and research activities.

Challenges of Utilization of Library Resources

There are litanies of challenges faced by library user while utilizing library resources. Barfi, Afful-Arthur and Agyapong (2018) investigated on Utilization of library resources by lecturers in university of cape coast. The findings revealed that the challenges faced include non-involvement of lecturers in book selection, few up to date materials, users not informed of new arrivals, poor library instruction, unavailability of automatic generator to power sockets, and inadequate library staff are factors that actually hinder or impede the use of library materials by lecturers. The impediments to library use by lecturers confirms the works of Ochogwu (2007) who catalogued problems of library use by lecturers to include lack of funds to purchase current books, facilities, inadequate staff and lack of proactive librarians.

Strategies for enhancing the Utilization of Library Resources

Strategically in order for libraries to have a great impact on their users through their resources, it is necessary for each library management to aim at managing the library effectively and provide timely information resources for all library users. Nnenda (2022) conducted a study on the Provision of Library Services and Utilization of Resources by Undergraduate Students in Federal University Libraries, South-South, Nigeria. He found out that adequate and functional ICT facilities can be put in place in the library; improved state of the library with friendly skills; user education can be put in the institution's curriculum; the new arrivals of library resources can be communicated to users; conducive reading environment made available to users; photocopying services made available within the library; internet facilities provided; authorities concerned can improve in the provision of funds; sufficient professional librarians and others. In the area of staff training, it is important that every library staff be trained and retrained on the use of all library services, facilities, and resources. In addition, it is pertinent that the library staff take courses to improve and update their knowledge on how to handle some modern library resources.

Furthermore, Ejike and Amaoge (2017) conducted a study on Strategies for Effective Utilization of Library Resources and Services by Distance Education Students in National Teachers Institute in Enugu State, Nigeria. The findings revealed the need to organize seminars, conferences workshop for users in order to learn new information searching skills, provision of adequate power supply by the library management, provision of conducive environment by the library management, expansion of the library for more space by the library administrators, provision of effective online access to NTI libraries for users, provision of sufficient and up-to-date textbooks and journals, employment of more library staff, Online courses should be introduced, internet connectivity should be provided,

introduction of library orientation for users are necessary for enhancing NTI students utilization of library services.

Methodology

Survey design was adopted for this study. This is because it studied both the large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence distribution and interactions of sociological and psychological variables. Anikweze (2010) attested that survey design involved collecting data about the target population, which is a group of people or items that are few considered to be the true representative of the entire population under the study. The instrument used for data collection were checklist and questionnaire. The population of the study comprised 46 academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture. Of the 46 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 42 questionnaire were filled and returned, indicating a response rate of 91%. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, expressed in percentage and frequency distribution,

Result and Discussion

The data were extracted from the returned questionnaire from the academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus.

Table 1: Types of library resources available in faculty of agriculture library Nasarawa state University shabui-lafia campus

Types of library resources	Responses
Textbooks	√
Serial materials	√
Reference materials	√
Audio-visual materials	√
E-resources	√
Journals	
Newspapers	√
Research monographs, indexes and abstracts	
Dissertations	×
Translations and proceedings	√
Encyclopedia	√
Dictionaries	√
Posters	√

Manuals	√
CD Roms	√
Cassettes (Audio & Video)	×
Atlases, maps & globes	×
Source: Field Survey, 2023	√

Keys: √ = Available
 × = Not Available

The study tried to ascertain the types of library resources available in the Faculty of Agriculture Library in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus. Observation and check- list were used to ascertain the available library resources in the Faculty of Agriculture Library. Responses in Table 1 showed that textbooks, serial materials, reference materials, audio-visual materials, e-resources, journals, newspapers, dissertations, translations and proceedings, Internet services, encyclopedias, dictionaries, posters, atlases, maps and globes were available for use by academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture in the University studied.

Table 2: Extent of use of library resources

Resources	WU	U	MU	NU	Total
Textbooks	10	10	15	7	42
Serial materials	13	6	17	6	42
Reference materials	3	6	5	28	42
Audiovisual materials	1	2	8	31	42
E-resources	12	11	19	1	42
Journals	13	10	17	2	42
Newspapers	6	5	8	23	42
Research monographs, indexes and abstracts	3	6	8	25	42
Theses and Dissertations	9	4	6	26	42
Translations and proceedings	3	7	5	27	42
Encyclopedia	1	2	8	31	42
Dictionaries	4	2	5	31	42

Posters	0	1	4	37	42
Manuals	1	2	8	31	42
CD ROMs	0	0	2	40	42
Atlases, maps & globes	2	0	2	38	42

Source: Field Survey, 2023

KEY: WU=Well Utilized; U= Utilized; MU=Moderately Utilized NU=Not Utilized.

Response in Table 2 indicated that serial materials and journals were the most utilized library materials with frequency score of 13. This is followed by e-resources and textbooks with frequency scores of 12 and 10 respectively. On the other hand, the findings also revealed that theses and dissertations, translations and proceeding, and dictionaries were the least utilized library resources with frequency scores of 26, 27 and 31 respectively.

Table 3: Challenges militating against utilization of library resources

Challenges	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total	%
Inadequate Staff	8	16	10	20	14	28	10	20	42	91
Inadequate Fund	19	38	12	24	8	16	3	6	42	91
Unqualified Personnel	6	12	5	10	15	30	16	32	42	91
Lack of current library resources	21	42	10	20	6	12	5	10	42	91
Inadequate Internet facilities	17	34	14	28	3	6	8	16	24	91
lack of conducive staff reading area	21	42	8	18	7	14	6	12	42	91
lack of internet searching skills	20	40	11	22	8	16	4	8	42	91
Inadequate internet access	19	38	10	20	7	14	6	12	42	91
lack of constant	20	40	12	24	5	10	5	10	42	91

power supply

Source: Field Survey, 2023

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The study tried to identify the challenges militating against the utilization of library resources by academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, Nasarawa State University Shabu-lafia campus. Responses in Table 3 indicated that lack current library resources, lack of conducive

staff reading area constituted the major challenges with frequency score of 21 (42%) each. This is closely followed by lack of online searching skills and lack of constant power supply, with frequency score of 20 (40%), other challenges include inadequate internet access and inadequate fund with frequency score of 19 (38%) each. The respondents also agreed that inadequate internet facilities with frequency score of 17 (34%) constitute a challenge in the utilization of library resources. The least challenges militating against utilization of library resources were unqualified personnel and inadequate staff with frequency score of 6 (12%) and 8 (16%) respectively.

Table 4: Strategies for enhancing provision and use of library resources in the University studied

Solutions	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total	%
Employed more staff to the library	8	16	5	10	17	34	12	24	42	91
Acquisition of current library resources	21	42	10	20	6	12	5	10	42	91
Provision of internet services	17	34	11	22	7	14	7	14	42	91
Improved library funding	18	38	12	24	6	12	4	8	42	91
Training and retraining of Staff	21	42	10	20	6	12	5	10	42	91
Introduction of library orientation for users	18	38	9	18	5	10	6	12	42	91

Communicate new arrivals of library resources	10	20	15	30	10	20	7	14	42	91
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Provision of user education services	21	42	10	20	6	12	5	10	42	91
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Source: Field Survey, 2023

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 4 presents findings on strategies that could be employed in enhancing the use of library resources by academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, Nasarawa State University, Shabu- Lafia Campus. The finding indicated that 21(42%) of the respondents advocated for the acquisition of current library resources, training and retraining of staff, and provision of user education. This is followed by the need to improve library funding, Introduction of library orientation for users with a frequency score of 18 (38%) and provision of internet service with a frequency of 17(34%), communicating new arrivals of library resources with a frequency of 10(20%) respectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that availability and utilization of library resources by academic staff is key in meeting their teaching, research and learning needs which are pivotal in meeting the learning objectives of Nasarawa State University in general and the Faculty of Agriculture in particular. It is expected that academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture would continue to make the best use of the available library resources to improve on their scholarship drive and productivity. Library management on the other hand should make deliberate plans and take urgent steps in addressing all identified challenges in this study with a view to enhancing access and use of available library resources by academic staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus. The strategies for enhancing the age of library resources utilization have been identified in order to enhance the utilization of library resources by the Faculty academic staff.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Library resources such as research monographs, indexes, abstracts, CD-ROMs, audio and video cassettes should be acquired and made available for use by the academic staff of the Faculty.
2. Advocacy on the use of theses and dissertations, translation and proceedings and dictionaries should be vigorously carried out in order to enhance their utilization by academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture in Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus.

3. The Library Management should provide up-to-date library resources in line with the global best practices, in addition to the provision of congenial reading area for academic staff, training and training on online searching skills should be periodically organized for academic staff of the Faculty of Agriculture, Nasarawa State University, Shabu-Lafia Campus.
4. Adequate funding of library, training and retraining of staff, user education and provision of internet searching skills should be prioritized as the strategies to improve utilization of library resources by academic staff of the Faculty.

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