

AWARENESS AND UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES BY STAFF AND STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF LAFIA

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Abstract

*This study **assessed** availability, awareness and utilization of information resources by staff and students of Federal University of Lafia (FULafia). Three research questions guided the study. The instrument used for data collection was the researcher self-developed questionnaire and observation checklist. **The first** instrument **was** used to identify the availability of information resources in the library while the **second one** was used to solicit information on users' awareness and utilization of the library resource. The study used **a** descriptive survey with a total population of the 2181. The sample size of 436 was drawn using a simple 20% of the entire population. Data was analyzed using simple percentage. It was concluded that, the library have some useful information resources, that users are aware of some of the available resources and **they** utilize some of them. Findings also show that users are not aware of some **of the** resources available in the library. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that **the** library should acquire **additional** information resources, especially ICT based ones, information access policies should be adjusted for more openness and the library should make deliberate efforts to make users aware of **the** available information resources to encourage utilization of available information resources.*

Keywords: Awareness, availability, utilization, information resources, staff, students.

Introduction

The library as a warehouse of knowledge is the heart of the development of the world and it is an essential need and requirement that enables an individual to function. Knowledge is the most important factor that is required for an individual or organization to function, flourish and take decisions that will lead to the improvement of human livelihood. This knowledge is acquired, processed and put into different disciplines of human endeavor in the library. Knowledge is one of the major resources in human development. Based on the foregoing, it

behooved that information/knowledge should be accurate, relevant and current which is an important precursor of technological development and innovations. Information is said to be a group of processed data that can help an individual deduce an implication and value judgment in decision making. For information to be useful for human development, it must be processed, available and easily accessible to use on a timely base and user need to be aware of its existence. This is the role libraries all over the world irrespective of their type and size have been doing for a long time. Libraries have a significant role of procuring, processing, managing and making available this information to users in the form of knowledge. According to Akpe, Ajav and Ngunna, (2018), the library serves as an agency for acquisition, collections, organization, storage, preservation and dissemination of information. Libraries across the globe have one central goal which they try to achieve in providing services to its users. It is therefore important that library resources should be made available and to be utilized by users. It is also important that users are aware of the resources available in the library with the aim of encouraging usage by patrons to improve the overall development of the nation. Awareness of available resources and the utilization of same will enhance users' academic performance and in turn help in the development of the educational institutions.

Information resources when available and users are not aware of its availability is of no import. Onye, (2016) posits that awareness of an information resources mean that patron knows that the particular resource exist in the holding of a library. This feature is very important as it is only when you know something is in existence (Aware) that you can think of utilizing it. Awareness of an information resources prepositioned availability. Availability simply put means an information resource is physically present when the information resource is needed. Availability means that the information resources are within reachable domain of the user when the user decides to utilize it. It means the resources can be easily accessed. Another importance of the library is utilization of information resources which refers to the situation where available resources are been put to use by patrons. Utilization means the resources are available for patrons to use. The library have the important role of ensuring that users are aware of the resource available in their holding as this could help to attract users to make use this resources and hence help the library to perform the require role of acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating information effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The establishment of Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) like other academic institution of higher learning, the university library was established alongside with the aim and obligation it was meant for. This library was saddled with responsibility of providing educational support for the academic performance of both staff and student of the institution in the area of research output and learning. Some information resources are provided and made available in the library but most of this resource cannot be said to be utilized as many of this resources are gathering dust in the library if not for the efforts of the cleaners. The question which readily comes to mind is why are some information resources not utilized? Is it that users are not aware

of the existence of these resources? All this are not yet known, it is on this backdrop that this study on awareness, availability and utilization of information resources by staff and students of Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) is been undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

6. **To** Identify the information resources available in the Federal University of Lafia Library
7. **To determine the** information resources that staff and students are aware of the availability in the Federal University of Lafia Library
8. **To identify the** information resources that staff and students of Federal University of Lafia Library utilize

Research Questions

The study thought to answer the following questions:

1. What information resources are available in the Federal University of Lafia Library?
2. **Which** information resources staff and students **are** aware of **their** availability in the Federal University of Lafia Library?
9. What information resources do staff and students of the Federal University of Lafia Library utilise?

Review of Related Literature

Primarily, libraries are established and saddled with the duty of acquiring, organizing, preservation and effective delivering of information to information seekers and users. This requires the capacity of the library to meet the various needs of it users by providing them required information resources needed for their learning, teaching, research and life-long career development. The ability to utilize available information resource is centered on the awareness that such resources is in existence in a library. Awareness of information resources entails that information resources be carefully arranged conspicuously placed or displayed in a way that user will know of its presence in the library. Awareness according to Alhaji and Ndubisi, (2022) refers to a condition of consciousness of information resources in the library. Even when a user is aware of an available resource, accessibility of such resources is another factor that must be considered and satisfied to ensure use. There are various methods which can be used to create awareness of the existence of an information resource. Libraries employ various methods to achieve the above objective and commonly among them according to Olayinka, Isaiah, Dooshima, and David (2022) are displays on the open shelf, selected dissemination, library tours and new arrival display among others. To create awareness on available information resources in the library, it is important that information resources be arrange so that users can easily identify, locate and use them when needed.

Awareness according to Gafoor (2012) is to be aware, realize or interested in knowing about something or to know that something is important, or relevant. Awareness in general

means knowledgeable being conscious; cognizant, informed and alert. It is the state or ability to perceive, to feel or to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns. The Webster's dictionary defines awareness as "the quality or state of being aware, knowledgeable and understanding that something is happening or exists". In general terms, awareness also has to do with concern and sensitivity towards the society and its challenges. Akpojotor (2015) asserts that awareness is the knowledge or perception of a situation, fact, consciousness, recognition, realization, grasp and acknowledgement concerned about and well-informed interest or familiarity in a particular situation or development. It implies that knowledge can be gained through perception or by means that users of the library have information and knowledge of e-resources been subscribed to. When library patrons are well informed or aware of the information resources available in the library collection, they need to patronize the library more often will be there as they will be encouraged.

Awareness according to Annune et al (2002) is the act of making people knowledgeable about the existence of a situation or phenomenon. It is a veritable information tool used by libraries to carry out sensitization activities to the society hence; libraries remain the last resort of users acquiring latest information pertaining all works of life. Libraries can create awareness through different avenues among others which include workshops, study tours, field days and exhibitions. Awareness is meant to convey skills and knowledge that will contribute to extensive utilization of online database services in the library under study.

Awareness of information resources is very important so as to keep staff and students alert of available resources through which they can access needed information. Prangya and Rabindra (2013) opined that awareness in libraries is core usage of information resources by users. When materials are in closed access, users' ease of access to such online information resources is by far reduced. But if there are kept in open access (not subscription-based) staff and students utilize them easily for what resources they need them for.

Methodology

The population of the study used was two thousand, one hundred and eighty one (2181) which comprised of up to thirty-eight (38) staffs and two thousand (2143) students of the faculty of Education in Federal University of Lafia (FULafia). Stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the selection. The choice of adopting this technique is to give a uniform percentage used since they all share similar characteristics with other faculties.

Descriptive survey research was employed for this study. A sample size of four hundred (436) was gotten using twenty percent (20%) of the entire population based on adoption from the sample frame. Observation checklist was used to collect data from respondents for the study. The checklist was administered on the library staff and students of Federal University of Lafia (FULafia). Stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Data collected was analyzed using simple percentage to answer the researcher questions. Decision rule was based on simple percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The checklist was administered to the Federal University of Lafia Library staff that contained inventory of information resources available in the library. 436 questionnaires were administered to respondents. Of the 436 questionnaires, 426 (97.7%) were returned. Of those returned, 351 (82%) were deemed good and useful for this study.

Research Question 1: What are the information resources available in Federal University of Lafia Library?

Table One: Checklist on information resources available in Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) Library

S/N	Items	Available	Not Available
1	Dictionaries	√	X
2	Encyclopedias	√	
3	Gazettes	√	
4	Indexes		X
5	Abstracts		X
6	Handbooks	√	
7	Government pub	√	
8	Year books		X
9	Textbooks	√	
	Curriculum based		
10	Resources	√	
11	Journals	√	
12	Magazines	√	
13	Newspaper clipping		X
14	Pamphlets		X
15	Correspondence		X
16	Fictions	√	
17	Picture books		X
18	Radio		X
19	Tapes		X
20	Recorders		X
21	Realia		X
22	Discs	√	
23	Television/ cable satellites		X
24	Video cd	√	
25	Video cassettes		X
26	Motion pictures		X
27	Charts		X

28	Posters		X
29	Online catalogue (OPAC)	√	
30	Computer resources.	√	
32	Online data bases	√	
Total mean %		15(48.4%)	16(51.6%)

Source: Field data 2025

Table one shows response on the checklist showing the information resources available in the library of the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) Library. Thirty-two information resources were listed and finding shows that the university library have fifteen (15) of the itemized information resources. The available information resources represent 48.4% of the listed items. However the library did not have 16 of the information resources, this represents 51.6%.

Research Question Two: Are staff and student aware of available information resources in Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) Library?

Table Two: Response on staff and students' awareness on the availability of information resources in Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) Library

S/N	Items	Aware	Not Aware
1	Dictionaries	√	
2	Encyclopedias	√	
3	Gazettes		X
4	Handbooks		X
5	Government pub		X
6	Textbooks	√	
	Curriculum based		
7	resources	√	
8	Journals	√	
9	Fictions	√	
10	Discs		X
11	Video cd	√	
12	Online Catalogue (OPAC)		X
13	Computer resources.	√	
14	Magazines	√	
15	Online Data bases	√	
Total mean %		9(60%)	6(40%)

Source: Field data 2025

Table two is response showing the awareness of users (Staff and Students) of Federal University of Lafia (FULafia). The table shows that of the 15 items available in the library, users are aware of the availability of some of these items. The response shows that the users were aware of 60% (9) of the resources. The resources users are aware of include online data bases, magazines,

computer resources, textbooks, dictionaries and others. On the other hand, users are not aware of the availability of 6 representing 40% of the available items.

Research Question Three: What are the information resources utilized by staff and students?

Table Three: Response on types of information resources utilized by staff and students

S/N	Items	Utilize	Not Utilize
1	Dictionaries	√	
2	Encyclopedias	√	
3	Gazettes		X
4	Handbooks		X
5	Government pub		X
6	Textbooks	√	
7	Curriculum based resources	√	
8	Journals	√	
9	Fictions	√	
10	Discs		X
11	Video cd		X
12	Online Catalogue (OPAC)		X
13	Computer resources.		X
14	Magazines	√	
15	Online data bases		X
	Total %	7(46.7)	8(53.3)

Source: Field data 2025

Table three indicate the responses by users (Staff and Students) of the library in the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia). Out of the 15 available items the users responded that they utilizes 7. The 7 items utilized by users represents 46.7% of the items that are available in the library. Items utilized by user are, encyclopedias, textbooks, journals and curriculum based information resources. On the flip side user do not utilize 8 of the available information resources which represent 53.3%.

Discussion of Findings

From the finding it can be seen that the library have some information resources which can support teaching, learning and research as is obtainable in other academic environments. The available resources include reference materials (Dictionaries, encyclopedias and others), textbooks, curriculum based text, journals, newspapers, online catalogue, online data bases among others. The library however did not have the like of maps, tape recorders, newspaper, motion pictures to mention a few.

This finding is supported by Onye (2016) research outcome that pointed out that awareness and utilization of information resources by staff and students can boast research outcome in any institution.

On the other hand, awareness of available information resources by users, result revealed that users are aware of some available information resources in the library. Users have the awareness of the information resource like dictionaries, encyclopedias textbooks and curriculum based resources including journals computer resources and online data bases. This is also supported by Nworgu, (2006) that pointed out that users awareness on information resources would encourage them to utilize such information resources.

Likewise, some users are however not aware of the availability of information resources like gazette, handbooks and government publications neither are they aware of availability of Discs and Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). This phenomenal maybe because some of these resources for example the government publications may not accessible by the users and hence concerted efforts need to be made to make user know of the existence of the resource available in the library.

Result also shows that the users (Staff and Students) utilize some of the available information resources. These information resources that users are utilizing are dictionaries, encyclopedias, textbooks, curriculum based resources, journals, computer resources among others. Users however, do not utilize many of the available information resources like handbook, government publications, disc, and online public access catalogue (OPAC). Also information resources like online data bases and some computer resource are not utilized. The lack of utilization of this resource could be attributed to the lack of awareness of the existence of this set of resources in the library which is an issue that will need proactive action by the library to improvement of utilization of available resources.

Conclusion

Based on findings from this study, it can be concluded that the library of the Federal University of Lafia (FULafia) have information resources that can help them perform their tripartite function of learning teaching and research. Staff and students are aware of some of these resources and utilize some of them. However the university lacks some information resources and users are not aware of some of the information resources available in the library which made the user not to utilize available information resources.

Recommendations

Based on **the conclusion of the study**, it is recommended that:

1. **The Library should acquire additional information resources, especially online and computer based resources to improve its holding and encourage more usage.**
2. **Appropriate information access policy should be formulated in order to enhance accessibility to the library resources.**

3. **The library should make deliberate efforts to provide selective dissemination of information (SDI) and current awareness services so as to ensure that users know the resources available in the library, especially those relevant to their areas of specialization.**

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