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Extent of Utilization of Library Information Resources by Students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the extent of utilization of library information resources by students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Three specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study was 2,977 final year-students in the Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. The sample size of 352 final year students in the Colleges of Education was selected for the study using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection for the study was a self-developed structured questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using Frequency Counts, Percentages, Means and Standard Deviation. Findings of the study revealed that students utilize a range of information resources such as textbooks, journals, magazines/newspapers, indexes, abstracts, reference materials, maps, encyclopedia, dictionary, projects, gazettes, and atlases. Their usage spans activities like course assignments, class presentations/discussions, examination/test preparation, project support, studying course materials, and enhancing professional competence. In addition, the research indicated a high extent of information resource utilization among Colleges of Education students in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The recommendations stemming from these findings include the need for College of Education libraries to organize user education or workshops at the start of each semester, targeting all categories of students. Additionally, the library staff should enhance their public relations efforts, fostering a positive rapport with students to encourage them to seek necessary assistance.

Keywords: Utilization, Extent of Utilization, Library Information Resources, Students of Colleges Education, Colleges of Education, Nasarawa State.

Introduction

Libraries are considered repositories of human knowledge and experiences, and they come in various types, each with its own set of goals and objectives aligned with the organization they serve. The fundamental concept of librarianship revolves around delivering pertinent, precise, and timely information services to meet the needs of their patrons, thereby contributing to the achievement of institutional objectives. Functioning as the core of educational institutions, libraries play a crucial role in offering information resources and services to support the academic endeavors of their community, encompassing students, educators, and other stakeholders in the field of education. In higher education institutions, libraries take the lead in furnishing information services to cater to the diverse requirements of students, lecturers, and researchers, facilitating their teaching, learning, and research activities. These libraries are often referred to as the central hubs or nerve centers where academic activities converge.

The essence and function of information is to adequately equip the information seekers to make right decisions among the alternative choices. Library information resources which students utilize include resources identified by Popoola and Haliso (2009) as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet/E-mail, videotapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, microforms, etc. Ellis and Oldman quoted in Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo and Okello-Obura (2013) noted that through the use of electronic resources, researchers and students now have access to global information resources, particularly the Internet for their scholarly intercourse. There is abundant opportunity in terms of resources available to all library patrons for appropriate research to enhance their academic activities. Students as members of academic community utilize library information resources to carry out independent studies pertaining to academic activities.

The utilization of information resources in various organizations is influenced by a multitude of factors, as highlighted by Uhegbu (2007). According to Uhegbu, the demand for and utilization of information can be attributed to factors such as research, job performance, examination preparation, leisure and recreation, problem-solving, awareness, and education. These factors collectively shape the diverse purposes for which individuals and organizations seek and utilize information, ranging from academic pursuits to professional competence, staying abreast of current developments, supporting research

endeavors, aiding project write-ups, enhancing general knowledge, facilitating peer information exchange, developing educational materials, and even for social activities.

Throughout time, students have demonstrated various behaviors linked to the quest for information, predominantly concerning their academic endeavors. Consequently, the act of sourcing information among students becomes pivotal, serving as a means to uncover solutions to questions that arise due to uncertainties surrounding diverse problems. In essence, the acquisition of information plays a paramount role in the academic journey of students, serving as a guiding force in their pursuit of knowledge and success in the contemporary educational landscape.

The significance of information resource utilization for students' academic advancement cannot be overstated. It is reasonable to posit that increased familiarity with the library's resources correlates with more frequent library use. However, it is noteworthy that some library users may perceive the library primarily as a quiet and convenient study space, leading them to overlook the available information resources. This is in contrast to those who never visit the library and, consequently, do not engage with its resources at all.

Utilization of information differs from person to person and from one corporate organization to the other according to their information needs and other socio-economic imperatives. Nasarawa State, Nigeria, is home to several Colleges of Education, each serving as a hub for learning and knowledge acquisition. The dynamic nature of information sources, ranging from traditional print materials to modern electronic databases, necessitates a comprehensive exploration of how students navigate and make use of these resources. This study aims to explore the extent to which Colleges of Education students' source and utilize information resources provided by their institution libraries to enhance academic growth.

Statement of the Problem

Access to information stands as a cornerstone in the academic journey of students enrolled in Colleges of Education. These institutions play a pivotal role in nurturing future educators, and the quality and breadth of information available significantly impact the students' knowledge acquisition and skill development. The diverse and comprehensive information accessible through libraries, both in traditional print formats and modern electronic resources, serves as a reservoir from which students draw the essential elements of their academic pursuits. Whether through textbooks, academic journals, or online databases, students in Colleges of Education rely on these resources to deepen their understanding of pedagogical theories, teaching methodologies, and the broader educational landscape.

However, in the course of observation, several issues have been identified, prompting the need for an in-depth exploration of information sources and library resource utilization among students in Nasarawa State. One of the central issues is the effectiveness of information sourcing by students. The researcher has noted a potential lack of clarity regarding the diverse channels available for accessing information, including traditional libraries, online databases, e-books, academic journals, and other platforms.

Furthermore, the utilization of library resources presents a multifaceted challenge. The researcher has observed potential obstacles such as poor indexing of information resources, which can impede students' ability to efficiently locate relevant materials.

This calls for urgent need for a comprehensive understanding of the problems associated with information sourcing and utilization of library resources by students in Colleges of Education across Nasarawa State. Hence this study on Extent of utilization of library information resources by students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to appraise the extent of utilization of information resources by students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the various information sources accessed by students enrolled in Colleges of Education within Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

2. Purposes for which students in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State utilize the available information resources in their academic endeavors.

3. Assess the extent to which students in Colleges of Education across Nasarawa State utilize different information resources to meet their educational needs.

Methodology

The design for this study was a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Nasarawa State. The accredited colleges of education in Nasarawa State are Nasarawa State College of Education, Akwanga, City College of Education, Mararaba, Gurku, Hill College of Education, Gwanje, Akwanga, Ipere College of Education, Agyaragu, Jibwis College of Education, Keffi, Metro College of Education, Adogi-Lafia and Innovative College of Education, Karu. The population of the study was 2,977 final year-students in the Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State (National Commission for Colleges of Education, Statistics Unit, 2023). The sample size of 352 final year students in the Colleges of Education was used for the study. Instrument for Data Collection was questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Frequency Count, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research question

Results

Research Question 1: What sources of information do students in Nasarawa State Colleges of Education rely on?

To answer this research question, data on the sources of information of students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as presented on Table1bellow

Table 1: Frequency Counts and Percentages of the sources of information of students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

SN	Sources	FREQUENCY		E PERCENTAGE (%)		
		YES	NO	YES	NO	DECISION
1	Books	333	0	100	0.0	Yes
2	School Library	333	0	100	0.0	Yes
3	Magazine/Newspaper	298	35	89.4	10.6	Yes
4	Radio	256	77	76.9	23.1	Yes
5	Television	287	46	85.6	14.4	Yes
6	Social Media Sites	275	58	82.6	17.4	Yes
7	Friends/Peers	267	66	80.2	19.8	Yes
8	Family Members	293	40	87.9	12.1	Yes
9	Bulletins/Newsletter	268	65	80.5	19.5	Yes
10	Pamphlets	273	60	81.9	18.1	Yes
11	Encyclopedia	279	54	83.8	17.2	Yes
12	Dictionary	287	56	86.2	13.8	Yes
13	Lecture notes	294	39	88.3	11.7	Yes
14	Handouts	281	52	84.4	15.6	Yes
15	Internet	276	57	82.9	17.1	Yes
16	Project/Thesis	299	34	89.8	10.2	Yes
17	Journals	289	44	86.8	13.2	Yes
18	Seminars	225	78	76.6	23.4	Yes

Table1 shows the sources of information of students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria in Frequencies and Percentages. From the table as indicated by the respondents, all the items 1-18 with 'yes' percentage values above 50% are considered 'information sources' of the students.

Research Question 2: What purposes do students in Nasarawa State Colleges of Education have for utilizing information resources?

To answer this research question, data on the purpose of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 2

Table 2: Mean Scores on the purpose of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
53	Course assignment	333	3.12	0.99	Agree
54	Seminar paper	333	2.34	0.68	Disagree
55	Class presentations/ discussion	333	3.08	0.97	Agree
55	Examination/ test preparation	333	2.72	0.93	Agree
57	Support Project	333	2.81	0.81	Agree
58	Studying course materials	333	3.00	0.94	Agree

59	Professional competence	333	2.68	0.76	Agree
60	Up datedness with current development	333	2.86	0.85	Agree
61	Support research write ups	333	2.95	0.88	Agree
62	For general knowledge	333	2.97	0.91	Agree
63	To develop educational materials	333	2.69	0.78	Agree
64	For social activities	333	2.67	0.71	Agree
65	To aid peer information exchange	333	2.76	0.80	Agree

Table 4 shows the responses of respondents on the purpose of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa tate in Means and Standard Deviations values. From the table as presented, except for item 54 with a mean of 2.34 which is less than the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents agreed to all other items (Items 53, and 55-65) with Mean values ranging from 2.67 – 3.12 which are above the benchmark of 2.50.

Table 3: Mean Scores of the extent of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Resources Utilization	N	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
36	Textbooks	333	3.12	0.97	High Extent
37	Journals	333	3.24	0.99	High Extent
38	Magazines/Newspaper	333	2.99	0.95	High Extent
39	Compact Disc-Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM)	333	2.22	0.56	Low extent
40	Indexes	333	2.81	0.81	High Extent
41	Abstracts	333	2.78	0.90	High Extent
42	Reference Materials	333	2.89	0.89	High Extent
43	Online Databases	333	2.01	0.45	Low extent
44	Maps	333	2.95	0.83	High Extent
45	Data Archives	333	2.42	0.61	Low extent
46	Encyclopedia	333	2.97	0.86	High Extent
47	Dictionary	333	2.94	0.92	High Extent
48	Projects	333	2.87	0.80	High Extent
49	Handouts	333	2.67	0.75	High Extent
50	Internet Facility	333	2.32	0.57	Low extent
51	Gazettes	333	2.90	0.88	High Extent
52	Atlases	333	2.79	0.79	High Extent
	Grand Means		**2.75**	**0.79**	**High Extent**

Table 3 shows Means scores and Standard Deviation on the extent of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. From the table as indicated by the respondents, items (36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, and 52) with Mean values ranging from 2.67 – 3.24 which are above the benchmark of 2.50, with corresponding Standard Deviations ranging from 0.75 - 0.99 values show high extent of information resources by the college students. Also, from the table as presented items (39, 43, 45, and 50) with mean values of 2.01 – 2.42 which are below the benchmark of 2.50 shows the low extent of information resources The table further revealed a cluster Mean of 2.75 and SD = 0.79. With this cluster mean (2.75) which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it means that, there is a high extent of utilization of information resources among students of Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Discussion

Based on the findings derived from the study, the following were discussed:

The study's findings, as presented in Table 1, illuminated the diverse sources of information accessed by students in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Notable sources included books, school library, magazine/newspaper, radio, television, social media sites, friends/peers, family members, bulletins/newsletter, pamphlets, encyclopedia, dictionary, lecture notes, handouts, internet, project/thesis, journals, and seminars. This aligns with the findings of Oyadeyi (2014), whose research on information needs and information-seeking behavior among students similarly identified Lecture Notes, Test Books, newspapers, Reference Materials, and Handouts as key information sources for students. The consistency in these findings suggests that students in Colleges of Education have a rich array of information sources at their disposal to fulfill their diverse information needs.

The second significant finding of the study unveiled the diverse purposes for the utilization of information resources among students in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State. These purposes included Course assignment, Class presentations/discussion, examination/test preparation, project support, studying course materials, professional competence, updatedness with current development, support research write-ups, general knowledge acquisition, development of educational materials, engagement in social activities, and aiding peer information exchange. This aligns with the research conducted by Hussain and Kumar (2013), which examined the utilization of information resources and services, revealing that students visited the library for studying course materials, competitive examinations, borrowing, and consulting reference books. Furthermore, the findings correspond with those of Olajide and Adio (2017), who reported that students utilized information resources for purposes such as assignments, examinations, and research. Similarly, the study's outcomes agreed with those of Mohammed (2011), highlighting the purposes of using information resources as assignments, examinations, and research. Additionally, the findings from Owalabi, Idowu, Okacha, and Ogundare (2016), stating that students used information resources for academic purposes, course works, assignments, research, communication with friends and colleagues, and as sources of information for project writing, were in concordance with the present study. This observation implies that students in Colleges of Education utilize information resources extensively to support and enhance their academic endeavors.

The study's third finding, as depicted in Table 3, illuminated a high extent of utilization of information resources among students in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The extensively utilized information resources encompassed textbooks, journals, magazines/newspaper, indexes, abstracts, reference materials, maps, encyclopedia, dictionary, projects, gazettes, and atlases. This aligns with the research by Hussain and Kumar (2013), indicating that books, newspapers, and periodicals are among the most commonly utilized information resources by users. However, a noteworthy discrepancy emerged in comparison with the findings of Salubi, Ondari-Okenwa, and Nekhwevha (2018), who identified Wi-Fi as the most utilized library resource. This contrasted with the present study, where internet facilities were reported to be utilized to a low extent by students in Colleges of Education. Additionally, the current findings contradicted those of Mohammed (2011), who highlighted the high utilization of computer-related resources such as internet access, downloading, e-Books, and printing by students. Similarly, the study's outcomes differed from those of Owalabi, Idowu, Okacha, and Ogundare (2016), who reported that students often used internet services, email services, online databases, and electronic databases. In essence, the observations from the present study suggest a preference among Colleges of Education students in Nasarawa State for the usage of print information resources over non-print resources.

Conclusion

Drawing from the study's findings, it can be concluded that students enrolled in Colleges of Education in Nasarawa State exhibit a high degree of utilization of information resources as an integral part of their academic pursuits. These students actively access information from diverse sources, including but not limited to Books, School Library, Magazine/Newspaper, Radio, Television, and Social Media Sites. Despite their keen engagement with information resources, the students encounter a multitude of challenges that significantly impact their effective utilization of these valuable resources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i. The college of education libraries should organize user education/workshop at the beginning of every semester or sessions for all categories of students to enable them make effective use of information resources. The workshop should focus more on the use of academic database and other electronic information resources with major emphasis on online databases, CD-ROM and Internet facility to enable the students broaden their search and narrow their search results

ii. The library staff should also modify their public relations and ensure good rapport between them and the students so as to encourage the students in seeking necessary assistance

iii. Students' information sources should be well-organized, classified accurately, and entered in the catalogue in college of education libraries to enhance access to information resources.

iv. Training programmes should be organized for the library staff so they can be more effective in meeting students' information needs

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