

Use of Library Resources by Undergraduate Students from Two Tertiary Institutions in South West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

University libraries serve the teaching, learning and research needs of their communities including undergraduate students. The main objective of this descriptive study was to determine usage pattern of the library resources by undergraduate students in University of Ibadan and Bowen University, Nigeria. The study population comprised 1013 randomly selected respondents who completed a 23-item structured questionnaire.

There were more females (54.2%) than males (45.8%) and more than half (59.3%) are between the ages of 20-24 years and are in 300 level. Majority (86.0%) of the respondents had used the university library and more than two-thirds used it to study for examinations and completion of assignments. More than a quarter (33.3%) of non-library users indicated that they preferred to study in halls of residence. The library materials mostly used are textbooks (66.1%) and reference sources (19.7%). Perceived attitude of library staff towards library users was cordial (33.8%) and responsive (29.3%). More than half (54.7%) had never requested for assistance from a librarian.

Majority of the students use the university library however, many do not make optimal use of the resources due to lack of current materials while others do not do so because the library is not conducive for them to study. Academic libraries and library managers should therefore ensure that the Libraries are stocked with relevant, quality and up-to-date learning materials for the students and also make the library environment conducive for students to study.

INTRODUCTION

A university is an institution of higher education whose major functions are teaching, learning, research and community service. The main objectives of establishing universities are to create new knowledge to solve societal problems. Universities also provide intellectual enrichment that serves any graduate well in the world both theoretically and practically (Pettigrew, 2011). As the highest peak of learning in the hierarchical organization of the educational system, a university is a resource for the unknown future (Baloh & Desouzak, 2011). University education offers courses that individuals can specialise in and have total knowledge of, at both undergraduate and post graduate levels.

Universities are planned specifically for lifelong learning whereby educating individuals for present and future purposes is its watchword. In their teaching activities, universities provide the professional training for high level jobs, as well as the education necessary for the development of the personality of the individual. Universities provide opportunities for students to acquire needed knowledge and skills that will enable them make meaningful contributions to the social and economic development of the society.

Another important mandate of universities is the conduct of research aimed at solving societal problems through generation of new knowledge and applied research to address problems of production through innovation (University of Ibadan, 2016). The hall mark of a good university is the value of the research productivity of her faculty as measured by bibliographic indices such as Thompson Reuters Journal Citation Reports or Hi-index. For a university to be able to carry out its mandate of teaching and research, a functional library equipped with relevant learning and research materials is essential.

University libraries are thus vital to the core mission of their parent institutions. A university library is a principal academic resource setup, sponsored and managed by the university to support curriculum needs of students and foster learning, teaching and research (Ofodile & Ifijeh, 2013; Nkamnebe et al., 2014; Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009). Through provision of appropriate learning resources delivered by academic librarians and para-professionals, the library contributes to the quality of teaching and research. The performance of a university library in meeting the information needs of the community being served depends largely on availability of resources and efficient information services provision. Some of the information services provided by university libraries include among others reference and information, lending, photocopying, information literacy, library orientation, database

searching, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, indexing and abstracting, translation and consultancy. University libraries cannot be fully utilised unless they are stocked with adequate and up-to-date learning and research resources that are relevant to the needs of their clientele. Such resources include books, journals, magazines, digital resources such as online databases and references sources. However, availability and accessibility of information resources in university libraries may not translate to their utilisation by clients if such products are not supported by well-designed marketing or publicity programme (Popoola, 2008). Emphasizing the importance of utilisation of libraries to learning, Ogunsheye (1978) cited by Ogbuiyi and Okpe, (2013:34) asserts that:

“neither a good book nor a good library can make the individual to be educated, but the successful use of the book and library makes a well-informed, stable and well-adjusted learned individual”.

Although there are studies on undergraduate use of academic libraries and library resources in Nigeria (Omotosho & Okiki, 2015; Owolabi et al., 2015; Anyaoku, 2015; Nkamnebe et al., 2014; Agboola & Bamigboye, 2011; Nwezeh & Shabi, 2011; Yusuf & Iwu, 2010) but few compared usage patterns among undergraduates in a public and private university and perception of the attitude of library staff towards users. We conducted a study to address this gap in knowledge and the results of the study are presented in this article.

METHODOLOGY

Study sites

Founded in 1948 the University of Ibadan (UI) is the oldest university in Nigeria. The university is situated along Ibadan Oyo road, UI with a land mass of 1000 sq. miles and undergraduate capacity of 12,894 for the year 2015/2016 academic session (www.ui.edu.ng/history/). There are 15 faculties and several departments, institutes, centers, the College of Medicine and a main Library in the university. The university has both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and contributes significantly to manpower development for other tertiary institutions in the country.

The university has a Library System consisting of a main library complemented by Faculty and Departmental libraries. The Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) is UI main Library, Kenneth Dike (KDL), which has over 700,000 volumes and seats 1,250 readers (<http://library.ui.edu.ng/kdl/>)

and three main divisions namely Collection Development, Readers Services and Technical Services. The services offered in KDL include reference, loan, special (internet services, online bibliographic database searching), reprographic and training (information literacy). In addition, there are a total of 66 branch libraries in Faculties, Departments, Institute's and Centre's as well as E. Latunde Odeku Medical Library.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention established Bowen University as a private Christian institution in 2002. The university has a student population of approximately 4,500, one College of Health Sciences and six Faculties. The university library also known as Timothy Olagbemiro Library has two divisions - Information Resources and Access Management (IRAM) and Information Research and Instruction Services (IRIS). It has two branches, the Law Library, located at the former University Library (Simon's Library) and the Medical Library, located at the Bowen University Teaching Hospital (BUTH), Ogbomoso. The library is automated and has electronic libraries (E-Lib) located in the Library and at the branch libraries, all connected to the internet which makes it possible for the library users to access online resources, including the databases to which the library subscribes. As at 2016/2017 when the study was conducted, there are about 25,000 volumes of books, 19,199 volumes of journals/periodicals and 303 multimedia items in the library (http://www.bowlib.bowenuniversity-edu.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=12&Itemid=27).

Research design and population of study

The study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The study population comprised of all registered undergraduate students who had spent a minimum of one academic year in the two universities.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage systematic random sampling technique was used for selection of study participants. In the first stage, faculties that offer similar programs in both universities were purposively selected. Second, selection of one department in each faculty was done by balloting and thirdly, selection of students by level/year study was also done by balloting. Finally, in each of the selected departments, students in a particular level/year of study (for example, 200 level/ year two etc.) were selected by balloting. Using this procedure, a total 1013 students were randomly selected from the two universities.

Instrument and procedure for data collection

A 23-item structured questionnaire, divided into five sections, demographic information, awareness, use of the university library and resources, training/perception of attitude of library personnel towards users and challenges, was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pre-tested among a sample of 25 undergraduate students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria, with a reliability coefficient of 0.76.

The researchers administered the questionnaire to the students between 2016/2017 in their classrooms after obtaining permission from lecturers. Potential participants were informed about the objectives of study that the information they provided will be kept confidential, and that participation was voluntary. All students found in a particular selected class were given the questionnaire. The researchers were available to answer questions that the students asked. Those who completed and returned the questionnaire were assumed to have given informed consent. Of the 1610 questionnaire administered in the two universities, 1013 (UI=686 and Bowen=327) were completed and returned given a response rate of 63.0%.

RESULTS

Demographic profile of the respondents

There were more females (54.2%) than males (45.6%) and slightly less than two-thirds (59.3%) are within 20 -24-year age range. Less than half (41.3%) are in health sciences disciplines and 55.1% are in their third year of study/300 level (Table 1).

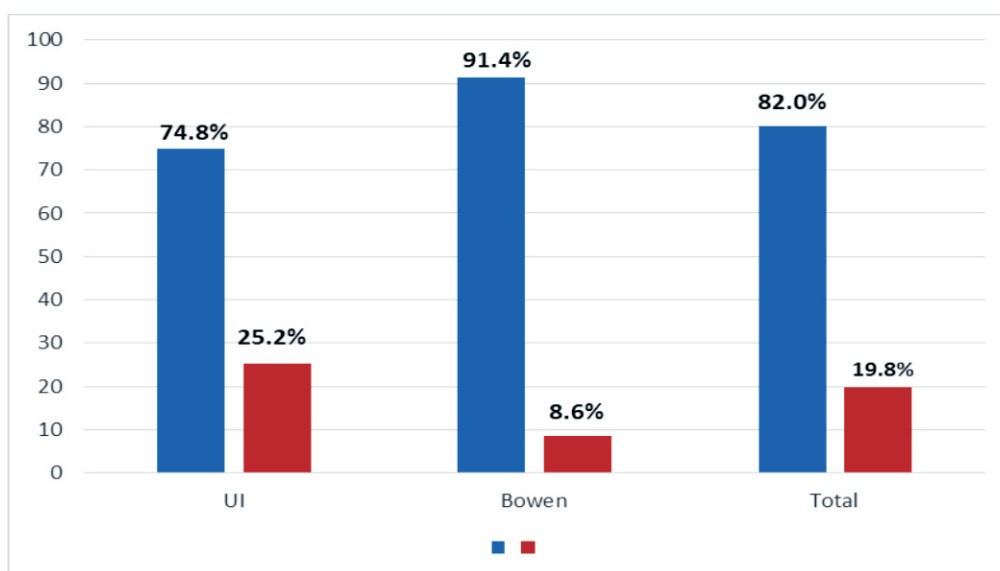
Awareness of library resources

Awareness of library resources by the respondents is shown in Figure 1. A large majority (80.2%) of students in both institutions is aware of the resources available in the university Library; however more (91.4%) students in Bowen University than UI (74.8%) were aware of such resources.

Table 1: Demographic profiles of the respondents

Demographic Variables	University of Ibadan (n=686)		Bowen University (n=327)		Total (n=1013)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Age:						
1. 15-19	166	24.4	151	46.2	317	31.3
2. 20-24	430	62.7	171	52.3	601	59.3
3. 25-29	74	10.8	4	1.2	78	7.7
4. 30+	16	2.3	1	0.3	17	1.7
Gender:						
1. Male	343	50.0	121	37.0	464	45.8
2. Female	343	50.0	206	63.0	549	54.2
Levels:						
1. 200	53	7.7	84	25.7	137	13.5
2. 300	348	63.8	120	36.7	558	55.1
3. 400	23	3.4	105	32.1	128	12.6
4. 500	172	25.1	18	5.5	190	18.8
Faculty:						
1. Health Sciences	359	52.3	59	18.0	418	41.3
2. Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	87	12.7	31	9.5	118	11.6
3. Humanities/Law/ Education	11	1.6	63	19.3	74	7.3
4. Social Sciences	84	12.2	94	28.7	178	17.6
5. Science and Technology						

Figure 1: Awareness of the Library resources



Use of the university library by undergraduate students

Table 2 shows students' use of the library. Overall, 86.0% of the respondents in both institutions had used the Library. While almost all (98.2%) the students in Bowen University used the Library, 80.2% of their counterparts in UI had done so.

When asked the last time they used the library, 80.0% students in Bowen University reported they used the Library the week of the study while only 15.0% of UI students did same. However, 48.0% UI students claimed they used the Library two months preceding this study. More than two thirds of the students (65.7%) used the university library mostly for studying in preparation for examination and to write assignments.

On frequency of use of the Library, a total of 12.0% respondents from both universities used the Library daily and 24.0% occasionally. The university library was rarely used by 28.5% and 20.9% UI and Bowen university students respectively. However, 10.0% UI students and 23.7% of their counterparts in Bowen University used the Library weekly. Overall, 32.0% of the students spent time ranging from four to five hours during each visit to the Library. While 20.0% UI students spent three hours during each visit, 26.2% of their Bowen counterpart did the same.

When asked why they had not used the Library, 27.8% of UI students and 66.7% of Bowen students and non-users indicated that they preferred reading in their room or in the reading room in their halls of residence.

Use of resources available in the Library is shown in Table 3. When asked if they could find information materials from the Library about three quarter (75.7%) of students from both institutions confirmed they could do so. Of this figure, 93.0% are students of Bowen University while 67.5% are UI students. The main purpose why most (85.8%) students in UI and Bowen University used the Library is to read and/or study their personal books or notes while use of OPAC was the least (7.2%). Information seeking was another reason given for use of the library by more than half (59.5%) of the respondents. More (70.4%) students from Bowen University than UI students (50.1%) sought information in the library. The study also revealed that textbooks are the library resources used often by 66.1% of the students surveyed followed by reference sources (19.7%).

Table 2: Use and frequency of use of the Library

Variables	UI		Bowen		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Ever used your university library?	550	80.2	321	98.2	871	86.0
1. Yes	136	19.8	6	1.8	142	14.0
2. No						
Last time you used the Library						
1. Never	23	4.2	0	0.0	23	2.6
2. Two weeks ago	26	4.7	13	4.0	39	4.5
3. Last week	58	10.5	31	9.7	89	10.2
4. This week	82	14.9	256	79.8	338	38.8
5. A month ago	98	17.8	13	4.0	111	12.7
6. Two months ago	263	47.8	8	2.5	271	31.1
Period when the library was most frequently used?	n=550		n=321		n=871	
1. When I have group discussion	4	0.7	2	0.6	6	0.7
2. When I need to borrow a book	30	5.5	6	1.9	36	4.1
3. Never	36	6.5	6	1.9	42	4.8
4. At my leisure time	100	18.2	115	35.8	215	24.7
5. During examinations and when I have assignment	380	69.1	192	59.8	572	65.7
Frequency of use of the library	n=550		n=321		n=871	
1. Daily	50	9.1	53	16.5	103	11.8
2. Weekly	55	10.0	76	23.7	131	15.0
3. Two to three times weekly	74	13.5	95	29.6	169	19.4
4. Monthly	45	8.2	8	2.5	53	6.1
5. Twice a month	16	2.9	5	1.6	21	2.4
6. Occasionally	153	27.8	59	18.4	212	24.3
7. Rarely	157	28.5	25	7.8	182	20.9
Estimated time spent in the library during each visit	n=550		n=321		n=871	
1. One hour	51	7.4	6	1.9	57	6.5
2. Two hours	139	20.3	32	10.0	171	19.6
3. Three hours	137	20.0	84	26.2	221	25.4
4. Four-five hours	145	21.1	134	41.7	279	32.0
5. More than five hours	114	16.6	64	19.9	178	20.4
6. Never	100	14.6	1	0.3	101	11.6

Variables	UI		Bowen		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Reasons for non-use of the library	n=36		n=6		n=42	
1. I don't have the time	4	11.1	0	0.0	4	9.5
2. I don't like going to the library	7	19.4	0	0.0	7	16.7
3. Books are with foreign contents which are difficult to Understand	7	19.4	0	0.0	7	16.7
4. I get all the information I need online	8	22.2	2	33.3	10	23.8
5. I like reading in my room/hall	10	27.8	4	66.7	14	33.3

Orientation, training and perceived attitude of library staff towards library users

Overall, 79.0% reported that they had received training or orientation on how to use the library. (Figure 2). When asked how they met their information needs, 24.0% and 61.2% respondents in both UI and Bowen respectively said they browse the internet. About a third (33.8%) reported that library personnel were friendly and welcoming; 45.9% and 28% of students of Bowen University and UI students felt so respectively. While slightly more than two-thirds (61.8%) UI students have never asked a librarian for assistance, 61.5% students of Bowen University had done so. Of those students who had been assisted by a librarian, 89.0% reported that their information needs were met.

Figure 2: Orientation and training on use of the library

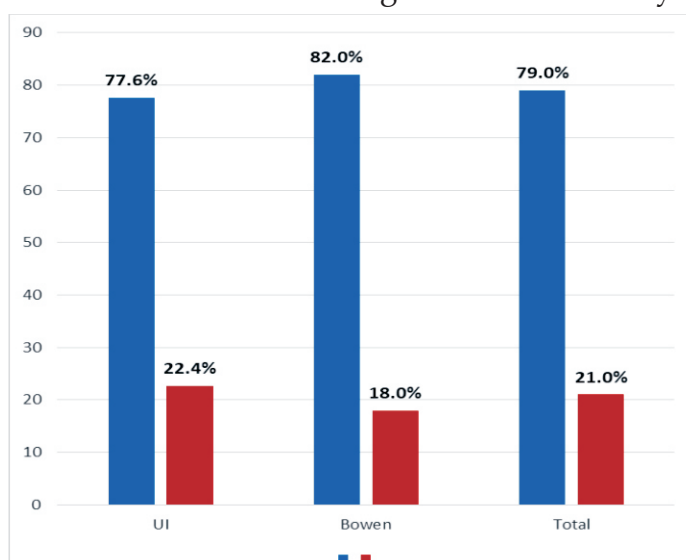


Table 4: Perceived attitude of library staff towards library users

Variables	UI		Bowen		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Do you receive adequate attention from library staff						
1. Yes	594	86.6	282	86.2	876	86.5
2. No	92	13.4	45	13.8	137	13.5
Total	686	100.0	327	100.0	1013	100.0
What is the attitude of library staff towards library users?						
1. Welcoming, friendly / cordial	192	32.3	150	53.2	342	39.0
2. Hostile / hash	98	16.5	10	3.5	108	12.3
3. Responsive	188	31.6	109	38.7	297	33.9
4. Non responsive	103	17.3	4	1.4	107	12.2
5. None	9	1.5	9	3.2	18	2.1
6. No Response	4	0.7	0	0.0	4	0.5
Total	594	100.0	282	100.0	876	100.0
Have you ever asked a librarian for assistance when in need of information resources?						
1. Yes	262	38.2	201	61.5	463	45.7
2. No	424	61.8	126	38.5	550	54.3
Total	686	100.0	327	100.0	1013	100.0
Did the librarian meet your information need?						
1. Yes	224	85.5	188	93.5	412	89.0
2. No	38	14.5	13	6.5	51	11.0
Total	262	100.0	201	100.0	463	100.0
How did you meet your information need?						
1. I ask my friend	90	21.2	32	25.4	122	22.2
2. I got information from my lecturer	28	6.6	4	3.2	32	5.8
3. I found the information book on the library shelf	114	26.9	48	38.1	162	29.5
4. I consulted my personal books	104	24.5	19	15.1	123	22.4
5. I did nothing	87	20.5	23	18.3	110	20.0
6. I browse through my phone	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Total	424	100.0	126	100.0	550	100.0

Challenges to use of Library

The main challenges to use of the library are not finding relevant

information materials; power outages/inadequate power supply and distraction by other students moving around the reading area (Table 5).

Table 5: Challenges to Use of the Library

Variables	UI n=550		Bowen n=321		Total n=871	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Challenges to use of the university Library						
1. Cannot find needed materials	287	52.2	66	20.2	353	34.8
2. Electricity is not available	210	39.8	87	26.2	306	30.2
3. The library is too hot and not conducive for reading	125	22.7	125	38.2	251	24.8
4. Too much distraction in the library	120	21.8	13	4.0	153	15.1
5. Library staff not approachable	75	13.6	8	2.4	79	7.8

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that a great majority of the students in both universities had used the library, a finding similar to that reported by Anyaoku in which 85% of undergraduate medical students had used the library (Anyaoku, 2015).

About two thirds (61.0%) of students from both universities used the library primarily for preparation for examination. This figure is slightly higher than that found among students of two Adventist universities (Babcock and Solusi) in which 57.0% of the respondents reported using the library to prepare for examination. This finding is similar to that of previous studies in which students reported that the reason why they used the library was to write assignment, prepare for examination and update their knowledge (Quardri, 2014; Onuoh, 2011; Yusuf & Iwu, 2010). Majority of the respondents in this study also reported that the reason why they used the library was to read their own books. The possible explanation why most of the respondents in this study use the library for reading their personal books might be because their library does not stock the required textbooks or do not have recent editions of the recommended text books. This finding is similar to those of previous authors (Anyaoku, 2015; Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2014 Nwezeh & Shabi, 2011) whose studies revealed that students use the library to read their personal books.

Most of the students in this study have been trained on how to use the library. This shows that the librarians are performing their duties of conducting routine library orientation and user education/information literacy. Librarians conduct library orientation and information literacy at the beginning of every academic session to educate patrons about the resources and services available and how to access them with ease. This training might explain why only 46.0% of the respondents sought assistance from librarians. This figure is higher than that found among students of Boston University in which 24.0% of the students were assisted by librarians (Boston University Library, 2011).

The three main barriers to use of library and library resources in the two universities studied are lack of needed materials, power outages and library environment not conducive for reading. Inadequate funding of libraries is the reason why libraries are unable to purchase current text books journals and other resources. Lack of current learning materials is not limited to government owned university libraries alone. Earlier studies (Agboola & Bamigboye, 2011; Anyaoku, 2015; Onuoh & Awoniyi, 2011) on library use by undergraduate students confirmed that lack of needed resources or non-availability of current learning materials is a major barrier to use of library.

Implications for promotion of library usage

The findings of this study have implications for what libraries and librarians can do to sustain high usage and improve library services. Libraries can increase the customer base, create awareness about available resources and services using different promotional approaches such as print (booklets, mail outs, bookmarks, flyers, brochures, banners) and online (email, screen savers and alert) announcements. Other innovative ways of promoting library services among undergraduate students is through use of social media which is popular among young persons in Nigeria. Librarians need to sustain initial training and continue education programs to promote and inform potential users about the resources available in the library and how patrons can access them.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that a large percentage of undergraduate students use their university library and have received training on library use. However, many do not make optimal use of the library resource due to lack of current materials while others do not so because the library is not conducive for them to study. Academic

libraries and library managers should therefore ensure that the Libraries are stocked with relevant, quality and up-to-date learning materials for the students and also make the library environment conducive for students to study. Librarians should adopt innovative strategies in promoting library services in order to attract users to the library and increase client base.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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