Utilization Of Information Resources And Services By Postgraduate Students Of Agricultural Education University Of Agriculture Makurdi Benue State

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to investigate Information Resource and services Utilization by postgraduate Student of Department of Agricultural Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi Benue State. The Researcher made use of the descriptive survey design for the study using Questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Due to the smallness of the size of the study population, the whole population (108) was used. The major findings of the study revealed that, photocopying services are offered by the library, current awareness services (CAS) in various areas are provided by the library and the students find library information resources grossly inadequate. The study therefore recommended that, the library of University of Agriculture Makurdi, should provide sufficient information resources and services to meet the needs of the postgraduate students, Types of information resources available should be made known to the Postgraduate students and how and where they could be accessed be well defined. Students should be given constant orientation on how to use library resources and services regularly in meeting their information needs for a better academic performance. Factors that hindered students from being satisfied with the available resources and services for their information needs should be looked into and students be allowed to channel their complaints; concerning the problems and challenges they faced trying to access information resources from the library. The study concluded that, the problems affecting students' utilization of library resources and services be looked into with the view of making the library more conducive and accessible to the postgraduate students.

Keywords: information resources, information services, utilization, sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Academic library is an essential tool in higher institutions of learning. It is of immense benefits to lecturers, students and researchers inclusive as it support teaching, learning and research. Academic library's main function is to support the parent organization in achieving the organisational objectives. As the name suggest, academic libraries are involved in providing support for research and educational activities in the universities, institutions, and other academic organizations. It involves content development, acquisition, technical services, providing institutional repositories, inter- library loans and document delivery services among others. Some academic libraries also established writing centers and centers for information literacy too. Today, academic libraries are struggling to keep their place as the major source of inquiry in the face of emerging digital technology. As observed by Campbell (2006), numerous creative and useful services have evolved within academic libraries in the digital age: providing quality learning spaces, creating metadata, offering virtual reference services, choosing resources and managing resources licenses, collecting and digitalizing archival materials, and maintaining digital repositories."

Academic libraries presently are faced with not only the decision on what books and journals to acquire to satisfy faculty and students but also on how to remain relevant in the digital era, mindful of low budgets and resentments on the part of institutional administrators. There is also the issue of library user opting for alternate, more convenient, and "qualitative" sources of information (the internet). As Lombardi (2002) notes, users will prefer more computer content, more and more computer indices, digitized findings aids, digitized repositories of articles, online access to newspapers among others. It is in view of the forgoing that Wikipedia online encyclopedia defines academic library as a library that is attached to a higher education institution which serves two complementary purposes to support the school curriculum and to support the research of the university faculty and students. An adequate library is not only the basis of all teachings and study: it is essential condition of research without which addition cannot be made to the sum of human knowledge. It is in the light of this that eminent educationist Cyril Norwood in his speech at the annual conference of ASLIB (1935) submitted firmly that it is better proof of education to know how to use a library than to possess a university degree. An academic library must be able to support the university programs as embedded in the curriculum which is while the Kothan commission recognizes the library as the heart of the university.

The utilization of information resources and services depend on the type of information resource and services that are available, their currency, relevance, forms, user education, programs and the parent

organization of the information systems. Now day's information resources are the important services of library and information centers. Information is regarded as a critical resource ranking just after air, water, food, and shelter (Kemps 1976). People need information for making decisions. They may acquire information through the research process which is the process of finding ideas, facts, and new information by systematic study. Information is acquired, processed and disseminated through the university library, "a place where books and users interact together for the transmission of civilization and cultivation of human being" and ''the most important resource in the pursuit of general goals and objectives of the institutions of higher learning" (Nwosu, 2000). For the academic librarian, it is necessary to understand how resources are being utilized, the changing needs of users and their level of satisfaction. The various types of information resources found in our academic libraries include but not limited to the following, encyclopedia, electronics books, dictionaries, websites, newspapers, citation data bases, books, books reviews, conference proceedings, journals, library catalog, open access data bases, scientific publications and thesis, syllabus literature, Nordic article resources, and films. These resources today are predominantly in hybridized form: print and electronic used for the purpose of digesting and dissemination of information.

Information is the pivot of which the survival of any society rest. It remains the major ingredient in taking decisions, and assists in reducing the degree of uncertainty. Agboola (2011) while discussing the ways in which Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has affected the sector writes that using ICT, it is possible for a researcher in his office to access the full text digital contents of local and distant libraries and databases using computers and the internet. Students as well have access to this opportunity, though majority access through the commercial Cyber Cafes (Oduwole 2004). The pressure on the institutions is the provisions of the necessary infrastructure and the actual access to these sources and services. The pressure on the library and information centers is in the sourcing, acquisition, and repackaging of these sources as well as the provisions of necessary guidance to the end user. Fatoki (2004) submits that academic libraries work together with other members of their institutional communities by teaching core competencies of information literacy-abilities involved in identifying needs, examine the types of information services provided by the library to its users, the extent of utilization of information resources and services by postgraduates students of the department of Agricultural Education University of Agriculture Makurdi and to dig further into the problems encountered by users with a target' to ascertain if such problems are responsible for poor utilization of information of information resources and services by postgraduate students of the Department of Agricultural Education University of Agriculture Makurdi. It is in light of the above that the study

geared towards the influence utilization of information resources and services by postgraduate students of the Department of Agricultural Education University of Agriculture Markurdi.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the types of information resources available in the library for use by postgraduate students of Agricultural Education department, University of Agriculture, Makurdi?
2. What are the various types of services rendered by the library?
3. What is the extent of utilization of Information and Communication Technology Resources and Services in Benue State University library?

METHODOLOGY

This study has adopts the descriptive survey design. Descriptive design means gathering the important data from the sample of the entire population. The study has been narrowed down to postgraduate students or the Department of Agricultural Education University of Agriculture Makurdi who are currently undergoing their postgraduate Diploma, Masters as well as Doctorate Degree programme respectively. The study population consisted of all the postgraduate students in the Department of Agricultural Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The population was made up of one hundred and Eight (108) postgraduate students currently studying in the department (sourced from the Office of the HOD, Department of Agricultural Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi Benue State). Due to the manageable size of the population, (that is 108 postgraduate students; the researcher used the entire population.

The researcher used structured and "open ended questionnaire titled: "Influence of Information Resource and services Utilization by postgraduate Students of Department of Agricultural Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi Benue State Questionnaire". The questionnaire contains information on the research variables pertaining the Influence of Information Resource and Services Utilization by postgraduate Student of Department of Agricultural Education, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The instrument is a four (4) point rating scale with the response code of Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA). Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was divided into five sections with thirty three (33) options based on the research purposes. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a

reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained which showed that the instrument was highly reliable. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions raised.

RESULTS

The results are presented and analyzed based on the research questions raised to guide the study.

Research Question One

What are the types of information resources available in the library for use by postgraduate students of Agricultural Education department, University of Agriculture, Makurdi?

The answer to this research question is presented in table 1.

Table 1: The Mean Responses of Respondents on the Types of Information Resources Available

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Books are available in the library for the postgraduate students always	2.82	0.34	Agreed
2	Journals/serials are available in the library to the postgraduate students	2.95	0.38	Agreed
3	CD-ROM resources are sometimes available in the Library	3.22	0.45	Agreed
4	i do access data bases in the Library such as AGORA	3.12	0.41	Agreed
5	Internet resources are available in the library always for most postgraduate	3.02	0.40	Agreed
6	Encyclopedia are available in the library always	3.32	0.45	Agreed
	Others (specify)			
	Grand Mean	**3.08**	**0.41**	**Agree**

Table 1 revealed that all the 6 items had mean ratings range from 2.82-3.32 with a standard deviation (SD) from 0.34-0.45. A grand mean of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.41 is an indication that the items in table 1 represent different types of information resources available for use by postgraduate Students in the study area.

Research Question Two

What are thevarious types of services rendered by the library?

The answer to this research question is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Score of various types of services rendered by the library

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Selective dissemination of information (SDI) is offered	3.20	.68	
2	There are Referral services	2.81	.86	
3	Photocopying services are provided	3.30	.67	
4	Lending service is provided	3.13	.65	
5	There is current awareness services (CAS) in various areas	3.35	.63	
6	Bindery service are available	3.38	.57	
7	There is laminating service too	3.33	.60	
8	Others (specify)	3.28	.54	
	Grand Mean	**3.22**	**0.65**	**Agree**

Table 2 revealed that all thevarious types of services rendered by the librarysuggested were all agreed by the respondent with a grand mean of 3.22 and standard deviation of 0.65.

Research Question Three

What is the extent of utilization of Information and Communication Technology Resources and Services in Benue State University library?

Table 3: Frequency distribution on extent of utilization of ICT resource service

S/N	Extent of ICT Utilization	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Total	mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Internet resources and services	28	28	52	92	392	1.96	0.18	Disagree
2	Telephone	28	36	40	96	396	1.98	0.17	Disagree
3	Data Base	24	40	40	96	392	1.96	0.18	Disagree
4	Visual	28	20	60	92	384	1.92	0.18	Disagree
5	OnlineResources and services	32	32	88	48	448	2.24	0.18	Disagree
6	Computer	52	24	88	36	484	2.42	0.15	Disagree
7	CD Rom	20	16	68	96	360	1.80	0.19	Disagree
8	Email	28	32	40	100	388	1.94	0.18	Disagree
	Cluster mean						**2.03**		**Disagree**

Table 3 shows response rate of respondents on the extent of utilization of Information Communication Technology Resources and Services. The result of analysis indicates that 100 respondents represent 50% who said utilization of Email resources and services are low.

4.4   Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are based on the analysis of data from the questions formulated to guide the study.

The findings of this study has established firmly that Benue State University Library is equipped with Information Communication Technology Resources such as Lap Top, Desk Top, internet resources, database, visual resources, Email resources among others. The findings of the study also show that the level of Utilization of Information Communication Technology Resources and Services in Benue State University, Makurdi is generally very low. These findings are in agreement with the views of Ogbonna (2000) that in any academic library where there are no quality Information Communication Technology services provided, the extent of utilization of such Information Communication Technology services will also be very low. This will in turn affect the condition of Information Communication Technology Resources on ground as most of the electronic devices will be damaged.This is also in consonance with Ankpa and Aba (2010) Asadu (2010) Aina (2004) and Akinde 2007 who recommended that, the best ways to overcome factors inhibiting the Availability and Utilization of Information Communication Technology Resources and Services in Academic Library in Nigeria will be to provide adequate Information Communication Technology facilities and skilled users. Others are improved internet services, low cost of subscription of services, automation of libraries and viable selection policy mechanism of library materials.

5.3   Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, and the purpose for which the research was carried out, it has shown that Benue State University Library has Information Communication Technology Resources such as Laptop, Desktop, internet resources, visual resources, online resources CD ROM, database and others.Also, it has been" noted from the findings that the extent of Utilization of Information and Communication Technology Resources and Services in Benue State University library is very low due to operational challenges the library is facing.

5.4 **Recommendations**

In view of the findings of this research, the following recommendations are given to improve on Information Communication Technology resources and services in Benue State University Library Makurdi these include:

1. There should be an increased in annual budget provision by the government non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and well-meaning individuals to enhance effective Information and Communication Technology Services.

2. In other to improve and ensure the lifespan of Information and Communication Technology facilities, the library management should have a good maintenance culture by ensuring that necessary repairs and replacement of obsolete Information and Communication Technology Facilities are carried out.

3. There should be viable and visionally information and communication technology resource selection policy to guarantee the acquisition of the needed and functional Information Communication Technology facilities.

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