

Availability, Accessibility and Utilization of Information Resources in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institution's Libraries in South West Region, Nigeria

Olayinka, A. O., Taiwo, T. F. & Sulaimon, A. A.

Department of Library and Information Science,
The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Abstract: *This study examines the availability, accessibility and utilization of information resources in Technical Vocational Education and Training instruction's libraries in South West Nigeria. Specifically, this study was carried out in the Polytechnic, Ibadan. The population of the study are students of the Library and Information Department of the Polytechnic, Ibadan. The Yamane (1967) formular was used to determine the sample size was arrived at One hundred and Fifty (150) respondents while the study made use of survey research design and adopted a research questionnaire as a research instrument. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency tables were used to analyze the data. The result of the study revealed that academic journals (both local and international) are accessible in the library, the library provides electronic resources such as e-books and e-journals, reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks) are available for use in the library. Furthermore, the study revealed that challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan are inadequate availability of relevant information resources, limited access to electronic resources, inadequate internet connectivity, outdated or obsolete information materials and insufficient library facilities. The study recommends that libraries in the Polytechnic Ibadan should be equipped with more information resources and with modern and state of the art facilities.*

Keywords: Academic library, Accessibility, Availability, Information Resources, Utilization

Introduction

An academic library serves as an information center in a school environment, identifying, collecting, organizing, storing, preserving, retrieving, and disseminating information to meet the changing information needs of teachers, students, and non-teaching staff (Anumkua, Alachie, & Igbokwe 2016). Library resources are component of assets of an organization, department or unit. The resources are obtained to meet the library's clients' information demands while also achieving the parent institution's objective. Library resources are the items or property that enable the library's everyday activities. Effective library services require adequate qualitative and quantitative library resources. Ensuring quality library and information services requires enough funding.

In accordance with Adeleke and Nwalo's (2017), academic libraries must fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with students' need for information resources that can be adapted precisely to their needs and enhance their knowledge. This is because an active library is one that makes information materials easily accessible to its patrons. In doing so, the library must strike a balance between specific research and information needs and the useful collection of information resources that could satisfy user needs. According to Magoi and Elisha (2022), using information resources effectively depends on developing the necessary abilities.

Academic libraries use a variety of media in their programs and collections, including computer-assisted instruction, audio and video recordings, and films of all sizes and shapes. Academic libraries offer media and graph production capabilities, books, and technology to enhance instruction, including overhead projectors, TVs, and cameras (Chernik 2002). Availability of resources refers to being ready and accessible when needed, while utilization refers to the frequent usage of resources to meet specific demands (Tefko, 2013). Effective use requires both availability and accessibility at the proper time. Individuals and corporations use information differently based on their requirements and socioeconomic status. The nature of the task at hand impacts utilization. Availability and usage of academic library resources refers to the process of supplying and making available the resources required to meet the information needs of users. As a result, academic library resources can be obtained in a variety of ways, including purchase, acquisition, gifts, donations, exchange, and loans.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions serve an important role in facilitating teaching, learning, and research through offering timely and relevant information resources. Students and staff at institutions such as The Polytechnic, Ibadan, should have ample access to both print and electronic information resources that improve academic performance and skill development. Nevertheless, existing research indicates that this expectation is frequently not satisfied in numerous Nigerian

academic libraries. Empirical evidence shows that while some basic information resources, like textbooks, may be available, current information resources, especially electronic databases and online materials, are consistently inadequately provided and accessible (Folasade, 2019). For example, a research carried out in Ibadan found that although print materials were reasonably accessible, electronic resources were either inadequate or unavailable because of inadequate infrastructure, few computers, and erratic power supplies (Yashim & Amuda, 2025). In a similar vein, research from Nigerian polytechnic libraries reveals that internet-based resources are frequently unavailable, and when they are, poor connectivity and technological difficulties make them difficult to access. Even though digital information resources are becoming more and more important in today's classrooms, there is still a dearth of thorough research on the relationships between information resource availability, accessibility, and use at TVET institution libraries, especially at the Polytechnic, Ibadan. It is challenging to create well-informed interventions that can boost students' academic performance and library services because of the gap.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Identify the types of information resources available in libraries in the Polytechnic, Ibadan Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the extent of utilization of available information resources by users in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan
- iii. Identify challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan .

Literature Review

Information Resources

The degree to which users utilize a library's resources to fulfill their information needs is referred to as "use of information resources." Nevertheless, one of the study's primary focuses is the kind and nature of information consumption among users of public libraries. The "use" is an action that assesses an item's value to a library or information system. usage is the only criterion that may be used to decide whether a document should be kept in a library's collection, and usage is crucial in directing a library's efforts to develop its collection. The demand for a library's resources can determine how many people utilize it.

The library makes an attempt to accommodate users who might not be happy with the system's output. These needs might not be met by the product or object given to the user. These are all issues that may arise from using a library in order to solve them. In order to address these real needs, public information centers should be built with both anticipation and actual needs in mind. Experts at public libraries need to have professional and technical training. As a result, information is crucial to all human endeavors and to human life in any community. Nowadays, information is a product, packaged, and offered for sale at a reasonable cost.

Public libraries play an important role in accomplishing organizational goals and survival strategies by increasing user access to information resources. Libraries should be designed to reduce user effort in accessing relevant information quickly. They provide a variety of information resources, promoting knowledge transmission that is vital to scientific and technological advancement (Ayaowei, 2024). Most importantly, library users want information rather than the actual library itself.

Availability of Information Resources

The existence of books and non-book materials in a library or information center is referred to as the availability of information resources. The logical problem of making books physically available in the library when wanted by information seekers is central to librarianship." The main tenet of library stock control is that the policy and information resources should be connected to the degree of item demand. An acquisition policy should assist a library in making decisions about what, where, and when to purchase in order to improve access to necessary information resources.

The availability of the resources determines how a library's physical resources are managed. According to Abdulsalami (2013), availability needs practical performance metrics to support it, even though determining the eventual benefit to the community and individual user is challenging. Access to the library's resources is another aspect of availability since a user cannot access anything if a document is not physically there. This indicates that the best way to gauge how well a library is being used is to look at how easily people can access and utilize its resources and services.

Abdulsalami (2013) stressed that book availability represents stock efficacy in libraries, which are designed to gather, store, and provide access to books. The emphasis on intellectual access to information is supplemented by the requirement for physical access to electronic documents. He contends that the provision and use of information resources are increasingly viewed as a political and social duty, which is likely to rise in response to rising information creation and user demand. This constant increase makes it difficult to provide users with relevant information in a timely manner.

Accessibility of Information Resources

The accessibility of information resources is a frequently recurrent issue in the literature. Resources may be available in the library and bibliographically identified as relevant to one's subject of interest, but the user may be unable to access them. Citations in indexes may be identified, but the corresponding articles may not be available from the sources. Information sources that are more easily accessible are more likely to be used. Readers want information sources that are easy to reach. The problem of Nigerian students is not the problem of desiring to use the library but whether or not the library can provide for their needs and whether there is access to what is provided (Adeyeoye, 2024).

According to Abdulsalami (2013), the term access is employed by different persons in reference to various bits and pieces of the whole, such as "subject access, open access, and knowledge access system". However, each pertains to one or more aspects of providing access to information, or, more broadly, knowledge and understanding. All aspects of library service provision and use as they relate to knowledge access. Abdulsalami (2013) identified further natural and manmade barriers to unrestricted access to knowledge. The library's low reputation was attributed to a lack of access to information resources.

Iyoro (2004) studied the role of social publications in fostering educational excellence among information professionals, highlighting that social accessibility aids the learning process. Notably, easily accessible serial collections significantly contribute to knowledge acquisition. Aguolu (2002) discusses global efforts to enhance information accessibility but points out challenges faced in developing countries, including power failures and equipment issues that hinder the performance of modern information storage and transfer devices.

Utilization of Resources in Libraries in Nigeria

Dapo-Asaju et al. (2021) found that students in Lagos State primarily utilized public libraries for study skills ($x = 3.58$) and exam preparation ($x = 3.37$), while usage for relaxation was low ($x = 2.20$). Nwabueze and Ntogo-Saghanen (2021) reported that users in Rivers State accessed 19 of 27 available information resources. In Bauchi State, Abdulahi et al. (2019) noted that 56.8% regularly utilized books/journals, 75% read newspapers, and 30% used computers/internet. Furthermore, Obinyan et al. (2011) revealed that most users borrowed books for approximately two days, with lower percentages using the library for assignments and leisure activities. The study highlighted that fiction and reference materials were most popular, while indigenous knowledge materials received minimal attention from users like farmers and petty traders.

Empirical Studies

Olateju et al. (2020) examined the availability and use of information resources in public libraries in South-West Nigeria using a survey of three libraries and 150 respondents. The study found that the primary purpose for library use was examination preparation, with textbooks being the most available and frequently used resources. A significant barrier identified was the lack of relevant library materials. Recommendations include increased funding for acquiring relevant information materials and more textbooks to support users' examination performance. The study contributes valuable data for policymakers and stakeholders on improving public library utilization.

Ogugua et al. (2019) investigated the availability and utilization of school library resources by senior secondary students in Owerri West, Imo State. Using a survey design, they analyzed responses from 364 students through a self-constructed, validated questionnaire. The findings revealed a low availability of relevant information resources in the school libraries, which affects library usage. The study recommends assessing the value and usefulness of information resources before acquisition to better meet users' needs.

Research Methodology

This study made use of a descriptive survey research design. Survey was used because it is appropriate for gathering information about participants' viewpoints (Dwivedi, Choudrie & Brinkman, 2006). The population of the study are students of Library and Information Science Department, the Polytechnic, Ibadan. A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions served as the main instrument for data collection. This specific method was selected because it effectively and economically gathers large amounts of data while preserving the data source's confidentiality and homogeneity (Wang, Hong & Hsu 2006). The five-point Likert scale was therefore used in the questionnaire's development to measure participants' agreement with each statement. The scale contained a range of values, with 1 representing a significant degree of agreement and 5 representing a significant degree of disagreement. A total number of 150 students were administered research questionnaire which was used as instrument for data collection. The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. The study was focused on participants that possess certain attributes or experiences required in the study (students of library department). The Yamane (1967) formulae was used to determine the sample size was arrived at One hundred and Fifty (150). The Yamane formulae is represented as:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

where:

n = number of samples

N = total population

e = error margin / margin of error

$e = 0.05$

The quantitative data was processed, computed and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency tables were used to analyze the data.

Data Analysis

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the types of information resources available in libraries in the Polytechnic, Ibadan?

Table 1: The types of information resources available in libraries in the Polytechnic, Ibadan

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Stand Dev
1	Academic journals (both local and international) are accessible in the library	52 (34.7%)	83 (55.3%)	9 (6.0%)	6 (4.0%)	-	3.79	1.73
2	The library provides electronic resources such as e-books and e-journals	131 (87.3%)	10 (6.7%)	9 (6.0%)	-	-	3.84	1.37
3	Reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks) are available for use in the library	91 (60.4%)	40 (26.7%)	10 (6.7%)	9 (6.0%)	-	3.64	1.03
4	Technical and vocational manuals related to practical courses are available in the library	58 (38.7%)	80 (53.3%)	12 (8.0%)	-		3.47	1.19
5	Printed textbooks relevant to various course of study are adequately available in the library	51 (34.0%)	90 (60.0%)	9 (6.0%)	-		3.29	1.08

Table 1 shows that 83 (55.3%) of the respondents agree that academic journals (both local and international) are accessible in the library, 52 (34.7%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 9 (6.0%) of the respondents were undecided while 6 (4.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. Also, 131 (87.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that the library provides electronic resources such as e-books and e-journals, 10 (6.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 9 (6.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. Similarly, 91 (60.4%) of the respondents strongly agree that reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks) are available for use in the library, 40 (26.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement, 10 (6.7%) of the respondents were undecided while 9 (6.0%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. In addition, 80 (53.3%) of the respondents agree that technical and vocational manuals related to practical courses are available in the library, 58 (38.7%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement while 12 (8.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. Furthermore, 90 (60.0%) of the respondents agree that printed textbooks relevant to various course of study are adequately available in the library, 51 (34.0%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, while 9 (6.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

RQ 2: What is the extent of utilization of available information resources by users in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan?

Table 2: The extent of utilization of available information resources by users in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Stand Dev
1	Library textbooks are regularly used to support coursework and assignments	65 (43.3%)	81 (54.0%)	4 (2.7%)	-		3.59	1.05

2	Academic journals available in the library are frequently consulted for research purposes	89 (59.3%)	57 (38.0%)	4 (2.7%)	-		3.43	1.06
3	Reference materials (such as dictionaries and encyclopedias) are used when seeking specific information	134 (89.3%)	16 (10.7%)	-	-		3.43	1.16
4	Technical and vocational manuals in the library are used for practical and skill-based learning	95 (63.3%)	52 (34.7%)	3 (2.0%)	-		3.41	1.60
5	Audio-visual materials in the library are used to enhance understanding of course content	84 (56.0%)	35 (23.3%)	31 (20.7%)	-		3.65	1.81

Table 2 shows that 81 (54.0%) of the respondents agree that library textbooks are regularly used to support coursework and assignments, 65 (43.3%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, while 4(2.7%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

Also, 89 (59.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that academic journals available in the library are frequently consulted for research purposes, 57 (38.0%) of the respondents strongly agree on the statement while 4(2.7%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. In addition, 134 (89.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that reference materials (such as dictionaries and encyclopedias) are used when seeking specific information while 16 (10.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement. Similarly, 95 (63.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that technical and vocational manuals in the library are used for practical and skill-based learning, 52 (34.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 3 (2.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

Furthermore, 84 (56.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that audio-visual materials in the library are used to enhance understanding of course content, 35 (23.3%) of the respondents agree to the statement while 31 (20.7%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

RQ 3: What are challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan

Table 3: The challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan

S/N	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Stand Dev
1	Inadequate availability of relevant information resources limits effective library use	102 (68.0%)	41 (27.3%)	7 (4.7%)	-	-	3.46	0.90
2	Limited access to electronic resources hinders effective utilization of library services	24 (16.0%)	87 (58.0%)	18 (12.0%)	11 (7.3%)	10 (6.7%)	3.31	1.04
3	Inadequate internet connectivity affects access to digital information resources	108 (72.0%)	20 (13.3%)	17 (11.3%)	5 (3.3%)	-	3.46	1.82
4	Outdated or obsolete information materials affect the quality of information accessed	113 (75.3%)	16 (10.7%)	11 (7.3%)	10 (6.7%)	-	3.45	1.89
5	Insufficient library facilities (such as seating, lighting, or equipment) hinder effective use of information resources	120 (80.0%)	16 (10.7%)	6 (4.0%)	5 (3.3%)	3 (2.0%)	3.44	0.97

Table 3 shows that 102 (68.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that inadequate availability of relevant information resources limits effective library use, 41 (27.3%) agree with the statement while 7 (4.7%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

Also, 87 (58.0%) of the respondents agree that limited access to electronic resources hinders effective utilization of library services, 24 (16.0%) of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 18 (12.0%) of the respondents were undecided, 11 (7.3%) of the respondents disagree while 10 (6.7%) of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement. In the same vein, 108 (72.0%) of the

respondents strongly agree that inadequate internet connectivity affects access to digital information resources, 20 (13.3%) of the respondents agree to the statement, 17 (11.3%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement while 5 (3.3%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. In addition, 113 (75.3%) of the respondents agree that outdated or obsolete information materials affect the quality of information accessed, 16 (10.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement, 11 (7.3%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement while 10 (6.7%) of the respondents disagree on the statement. Furthermore, 120 (80.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that insufficient library facilities (such as seating, lighting, or equipment) hinder effective use of information resources, 16 (10.7%) of the respondents agree to the statement, 6 (4.0%) of the respondents were undecided, 5 (3.3%) of the respondents disagree while 3 (2.0%) of the respondents strongly disagree on the statement.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that academic journals (both local and international) are accessible in the library, the library provides electronic resources such as e-books and e-journals, reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks) are available for use in the library and technical and vocational manuals related to practical courses are available in the library. Furthermore, the findings of this study showed that some of the challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan are inadequate availability of relevant information resources, limited access to electronic resources, inadequate internet connectivity, outdated or obsolete information materials and insufficient library facilities (such as seating, lighting, or equipment). This finding supports a study of Ogugua et al. (2019) who reported that a low availability of relevant information resources in the school libraries affects library usage.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it has been revealed that there are various types of information resources available in libraries in the Polytechnic, Ibadan. Information resources available in libraries include academic journals (both local and international), electronic resources such as e-books and e-journals, reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks), technical and vocational manuals related to practical courses and audio-visual materials. In addition, some of the challenges affecting access and use of information resources in libraries the Polytechnic, Ibadan are inadequate availability of relevant information resources, limited access to electronic resources, inadequate internet connectivity, outdated or obsolete information materials and insufficient library facilities. The effectiveness of any library depends on the full availability, accessibility and utilization of information by users. As a result, in order to meet the demands of users, the library staff should prioritize the right arrangement, accessibility, and utilization of information in the library.

Recommendations

- i. It is recommended that libraries in the Polytechnic Ibadan should be equipped with more information resources and also with modern and state of the art facilities.
- ii. The management of the Polytechnic Ibadan should provide strong internet facilities suitable for electronic library activities.

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