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Utilization of Information Resources and Students' Academic Performance in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the utilization of information resources and its impact on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study will be conducted in the context of the increasing reliance on information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the education sector. The objectives of this research are: Examine the relationship between adequacy of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, examine the relationship between organization of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State and examine the relationship between accessibility of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State To achieve these objectives, a descriptive (quantitative) approach was employed. A survey was administered to a sample of students from various tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The survey gathered data on students' awareness and availability of information resources and their frequency of utilization for academic purposes. The data collected from the survey were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, to determine the level of awareness, availability, and utilization of information resources. Correlation and regression analysis were employed to examine the relationship between the utilization of information resources and students' academic performance. The results of this study led to the conclusion that utilization of information resources has a strong, significant and positive relationship with students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Also, the independent variables: adequacy, organization and accessibility of information resources of the study shared a significant relationship with academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. Thus, for academic library (librarians) to continue to serve their essence in sustaining students' academic performance, care must be taken to ensure that library resources are adequate, well organized and accessible to all students of the academic community. Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations were made: That tertiary institutions and academic libraries should set-up principles for evaluation of students' level of utilization of information resources in order to ascertain to what extent library resources are utilized and do something about it and that academic librarians should periodically review library resources to check their level of adequacy, organization and accessibility so that their role would be significant in promoting effective utilization of information resources and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Utilization of information resources, Students' academic performance, Information and communication technologies (ICTs), Awareness of information resources, Availability of information resources

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Introduction:

Tertiary institutions can best be described as a catalyst for development because they offer higher and advanced form of education which produce the middle as well as high level manpower which occupies a fundamental position in the socio-economic and political development of the nation. Nevertheless, this role of tertiary institutions cannot be achieved without the provision of libraries which holds the information resources or knowledge necessary for the development of the citizens.

Libraries are founded with the singular mission of providing information sources and services for members of the academic community to utilize in teaching, and learning and for research activities. Information resources comes in both print and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, abstracts, indexes, newspapers/magazines, reports and non-print materials such as e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers/magazines, e-dictionaries/encyclopedias, databases, the internet/e-mails, audio and videos recordings, diskettes magnetic disk, computers and others (Ekpang,2018). Utilization of information resources is the prior objective of academic library because it promotes academic excellence and competence which is the objective of its' mother institution.

For libraries to contribute to the advancement of knowledge; its information resources should be effectively utilized by students (Ekeng and Ekpang,2021). So, utilization of information resources is the actual use of library resources by students/users. It is the extent to which students and other members of the academic community make use of the resources of a library to meet their information needs (Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami and Salami,2014). Similarly, Ukih (2012) sees utilization of information resources as using the library resources. This justified the purpose of establishing the academic library in tertiary institutions.

Academic performance refers to a student's overall academic achievement or the amount to which he or she has met his or her educational objectives Sivathaasan and Velnampy (2013). Adeyemo (2012) stated that academic success has a significant impact on a student's self-esteem, desire,and tenacity in pursuing educational goals. Aremu (2000) in Ogunbodede, and Oribhabor, (2022) reported that a good academic performance exceeds a ceiling or stated standard, whereas poor academic performance falls below an expected norm.

Studies has shown that utilization of information resources has the potential to boost students' academic performance to greater heights and keep them far ahead of their colleagues who do not use the library resources for further studies. Thus, inadequate academic performance is a result of the student's failure to utilize library resources (Ekeng and Ekpang, 2021). This implies that students will perform better if they make effective use of the information resources in the library. However, the observation of Josiah, (2011) amid others has shown that students are not utilizing the library and its resources adequately as expected of them. This has also been reflective in the monthly statistics of the readers' services unit of several libraries. In addition, the result of the 2021/2022 examination of General Studies (GSS) in the university of Calabar, which recorded poor performance of students affirms the state of utilization of information resources as general poor/inadequate.

To this end, it is no longer a wonder why students' academic performance continues to drop by the day as all indications has pointed to this fact that students are hesitant to consult information resources that are sacrosanct to their academy performance. Moreover, Ekpang (2018) also reported that the problem of underutilization of information resources has continued to plague students of tertiary institutions despite the efforts of school management in providing functional library with adequate information resources and facilities for their use. In this regards, certain indicators need to be in check to ascertain why students continue to turn aside from the library and its resources even when they are sick or plague with poor academic performance. In the same vein Ogunbodede, and Oribhabor, (2022) reported that the issue of poor academic performance among Nigerian undergraduates has been sources of concern of worry for many educational stake holders. Thus, since it is the goal of the teacher to improve the academic performance students, this researcher is

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motivated to check factors such as availability, adequacy, organization, and accessibility of information resources in the library which may pose a limitation to the extent of which information resources are utilized by the students. The researcher believes that academic performance is a multiple of utilization of information resources; that is, whatever the factors that inhibits utilization of information resources is likely to hamper the academic performance of students in the long run. Hence, improving utilization of information resources will tend to enhance the academic performance of students. In this wise, utilization of information resources can strive where essential and adequate information resources are made available for all students to use. Similarly, available information resources will be of no use if they are not well organized by cataloguing and classifying them into appropriate quarters for the students to have easy access to the information resources. Thus, it is also the place of the information center such as the library to ensure that all students have access to the information resources acquired to meet their academic goals. It is therefore in the light of this, that this research is carried out to ascertain the availability of information resource and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the study

Results of examinations in tertiary institution in the past few decades have shown that the academic performance of students is declining continuously. Only a few in hundreds are found to perform at optimal level in examinations. Recently, poor academic performance in tertiary institution is tending to norm among students. This problem has been on the horizon, drawing the concerns of various stakeholders such as educational administrators, planners, parents, lecturers, government and the general public. Parents are expressing worries about the poor academic performance of their wards despite their huge investment on their educational pursuits. Also, the government through the Tertiary Education Trust-fund (TETFund) has address the issue of students' academic performance by the galvanized action of building more facilities and providing information resources (in print and non-print), library facilities and librarians (information professionals) to care for and serve information resources to students so that they can attain their academic goals and improve on their academic performance. Despite this innovative inputs as interventions to improve academic performance of students, much has not been achieved in this regards.

With this outcome, the lingering problem of poor academic performance of students could be anchored on the fact that students are not utilizing the information resources of the library for their academic development. Studies has shown that students who use the library resources performs better academically than their counterparts who do not use the library. This implies that better and enhanced academic performance are but a reward for effective and diligent use of information resources.

However, statistics of reader services division of several libraries and on-line attendance as well as examination results has shown that library information resources are underutilized by students. This problem is a torn in the flesh of most students of tertiary institutions, thus, why would a student who is earnestly sick fail to seek solution where it can be found, except that something is not just right about the system. It is abnormal therefore for students to turn from using the library information resources in spite of the menace of poor performance in examination. Consequently, this research is cumbered about finding the underlying factors inhibiting utilization of information resources in tertiary institutions. Could it be that the information resources are not adequate, organize and accessibility; or could it be stemming from the attitude of the service providers themselves. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate utilization of information resources as a correlate of students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature review

The importance of information resources cannot be over stated because the academic performance of students depends on the utilization of information resources. Ogunbodede and Oribhabor (2022)

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examined the digital resources usage and academic performance of undergraduate students in Nigeria. The result revealed that the level of usage of digital resources is low as only 4% of the students made use of digital resources daily. The study established that the students make use of the internet resources, e-books, and online educational videos on YouTube, e-journals, and e-newspapers. It was also revealed that the students had a positive perception of the impacts of digital resources usage on their academic performance. Lastly, the test of the hypothesis one showed that there is significant relationship between digital resources and academic performance of students in Nigeria.

In the same vein, Okpokwasili and Okoro (2015) stated that when library information resources are adequate and relevant to the users' needs, there will be an increase in the number of library users. Also, Wanyonyi, Odin and Sikolia (2018) investigated the effect of adequacy of information resources on user satisfaction at Pawani university library, the researchers reported that adequate information resources in both print and electronic should be given priority in order to meet user demand. Similarly, Ibenne (2018) reported that most resources become outdated and irrelevant with time and to ensure library holding remains useful, the outed information should be removed from the collection.

Consequently, Opoku (2011) observe that many university programmes failed accreditation from regulating bodies because the information resources in place for some programmes grossly inadequate, outdated and not-relevant to the scope of studies prevailing in that institution of learning. Owusi and Mundi (2021) also stated in their study on users' perception of adequacy, currency of information resources and functional ICT facilities on utilization of university libraries in South-south geo-political zone of Nigeria, it was concluded that in developing information resources effort should be directed towards ensuring acquired information resources that are adequate, current and ICT facilities functioning to enable maximum uses of the library.

In the midst of this, Ugah (2008) further observed that students in tertiary institutions were frustrated in the process of looking for information for the f studies. This was attributed to u catalogue, miss-catalogue and mid shelved information resources. Moreover, Bature (2007) reported that 62.75 % of the students in school, either found the organization of materials in the libraries hard to understand or difficult to locate them because of how it was not organized and that this discouraged student from utilizing the library resources. Thus, Ekpang (2011) believed that organization of information resources meet the information needs of students and others patrons, the findings, identifying and obtaining information resources is achieved with little or no stress. The arrangement of books according to the degree of mutual relationship of subjects would lead to save his time (Library & Information Science Network, 2018). Akpet (2010) also acknowledged that organization of information resources for effective utilization in a library takes place when library resources like books and other non-books materials are catalogue and classified for easy retrieval. Furthermore, Muhammad, Baff and Garba (2018) reported that library materials were poorly organized in libraries in Kano State. They also stated that often, many materials even though available in the library are not traceable due to poor organization of library resources.

Eden and Edem (2002) examined the organization of reference information resources in the University of Calabar. The results of the study revealed that students are aware of the organizational methods used in arranging various reference resources for easy utilization and retrieval. The study that 81 respondents; (32%) indicated that they used author/title catalogue cards as major organizational methods for easy effective retrieval of information resources, followed by 78 respondents (31.2%) who indicated that they use subject catalogue cards whereas 46 respondents (18.4%) indicated that they used the labeled library shelves for easy directional guide for information retrieval and 45 respondents (18%) felt that library personnel were the main thrust of their organizational referenced. Also, Ifijeh (2018) stated that if libraries acquire numerous information resources and these resources are not properly organized, research productivity would be farfetched from library users and librarians. Therefore, this study examines the library resources

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for research productivity with emphasis organization of on the challenges librarians encounter in Nigeria.

Olise (2021) carried out to determine the organization of library resources for research productivity with emphasis on the challenges librarians encounter in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design method was employed for this study. The sample for this study comprised of 250 librarians systematically and randomly selected from different libraries in Nigeria. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and Krustal Walis were used to analyze the data collected. The study revealed that libraries organize their materials for research productivity to a large extent a midst the major challenges they encounter varying from lack of automation, poor funding to unavailability of technology. The study therefore concluded that organizing library resources is very needful for effective research since the library is one major source of information for researchers.

Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) revealed that accurate filing of subject entries in the subject catalogue ensures retrieval, 42 respondents (91.3 %) agreed, while 4 respondents were aware of the importance of the organizational function making information sources available. Obi (2018) maintained that proper organization involves regular shelf reading which enhances information utilization. In response to the statement, regular re- shielding of information sources ensures their proper placement. Only 3 respondents (6.5%) disagreed with the statement, while 43 respondent agreed. However, observation by researcher reveals that some libraries delay re- shelving. Barkindo and Olise (2021) studied organization and accessibility of information resources in Federal High Court libraries in North -East Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study revealed that the resources in the libraries were organized serially in accordance with the broad subject of each item in open shelves without the provision of any class mark on the books, it also identified some of the challenges to be lack of comprehensive and uniform information organization policy, continuous evaluation of the method of information access for effective and efficient library services.

(Okiki, 2013) Accessibility of information sources is an important recurring theme in the literature. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) notes that information source does not necessarily imply its availability accessibility, of a because the source may be available but access to it prevented for one reason or the other. Olowu (2004) identifies natural and artificial barriers to free access to information. of information resources. Ania (2011) stated that accessibility determines the speed at which an information output in any format is obtained. Therefore, good information resources should be received and retrieved to meet the desired need. University libraries support universities in discharging their responsibilities by acquiring all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning, research and the academic service functions of their universities. Terlanga, Iorver, Ternenge, Akosu, and Terhemen (2019) investigate the availability and accessibility of information resources by students in tertiary institution: A case study of Gboko Polytechnic Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the available information resources in the library are not accessible with the following percentages: Newspapers and magazines (88.8%), books (62.5%), Journals (25%), Encyclopedia (20%) and dictionaries (16.3%). This implies that if at all the students are using the library, they might be bringing their books to come and read. This means the students only use is not accessible.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine how utilization of information resources can influence students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the relationship between adequacy of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State
2. Examine the relationship between organization of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State

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3. Examine the relationship between accessibility of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State

Research questions

To tackle the problem of this study, answers to the following questions were sought by the researcher:

1. Is there any relationship between adequacy of information resources and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. Is there any relationship between organization of information resources and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria?
3. Is there any relationship between accessibility of information resources and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between adequacy of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.
2. There is no significant relationship between organization of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State
3. There is no significant relationship between accessibility of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State

Methodology

This study was conducted in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Cross River State is one of the thirty-six (36) state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is situated in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. It lies along latitude 5^0 28" and $4^0$27" north of the equator and longitude $7^0$50" and $9^0$28" east of Greenwich Meridian. The tertiary institutions in the state are University of Calabar, University of Cross River State (with campuses in Calabar, Akamkpa, Obubra and Ogoja) and several other polytechniques and colleges scattered in the area. The study population is made up of three thousand, five hundred and eighty-three (3538) students who were duly registered in their tertiary institutions' libraries in Cross River State. A multi-stage sampling method involving purposive and accidental sampling techniques were employed in the study to draw a sample of five hundred and thirty-one (531) students from four tertiary institutions. The instruments for data collection were the questionnaire titled: Utilization of Information Resources Questionnaire (UIRQ) and English Language Achievement Test to measure academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. The instruments were subjected to validity check and reliability test with very high reliability estimates. Ethical procedures were observed during the administration of the questionnaire. A coding schedule was prepared for all items of the research instruments. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was the statistical technique used to test the hypothesis under study.

Results and Discussions

The results of data analysis carried out in this study is presented here. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance with relative degrees of freedom.

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Table 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between adequacy of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State (n=531)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r_{xy}	Sig. (p<.05)
Adequacy of Information resources	9043	16343	273615	0.70*	.002
Students' academic performance	9951	25462			

*Significant at (p<.05), critical r=.088, df=529

The result in table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of .70 is higher than the critical r-value of .088. This showed that there is strong positive relationship between adequacy of information resources and students' academic performance. The result also revealed that the probability value of .002 is lower than the .05 significance level for this study at 529 degree of freedom. This showed that both variables are significantly related. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 2. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between organization of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State (n=531)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r_{xy}	Sig. (p<.05)
Organization of Information resources	9229	16856	276644	0.68*	.014
Students' academic performance	9951	25462			

*Significant at (p<.05), critical r=.088, df=529

The result in table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of .68 is higher than the critical r-value of .088. This showed that there is strong positive relationship between organization of information resources and students' academic performance. The result also revealed that the probability value of .014 is lower than the .05 significance level for this study at 529 degree of freedom. This showed that both variables are significantly related. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between accessibility of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State (n=531)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r_{xy}	Sig. (p<.05)
Accessibility of Information resources	9563	17262	270132	0.62*	.007
Students' academic performance	9951	25462			

*Significant at (p<.05), critical r=.088, df=529

The result in table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value of .62 is higher than the critical r-value of .088. This showed that there is strong positive relationship between accessibility of information resources and students' academic performance. The result also revealed that the probability value of .007 is lower than the .05 significance level for this study at 529 degree of freedom. This showed that both variables are significantly related. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

This study was carried out to ascertain the relationship between utilization of information resources and students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that adequacy, organization and accessibility of information resources is significant and strongly related to students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The positive r-value was indicative of the complementary role utilization of information resources plays in enhancing students' academic performance in tertiary institutions. For this reason, care must be taken to guide all factors (such as adequacy, organization and

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accessibility) that may tend to inhibit or hinder effective utilization of information resources since utilization of information resources is quite fragile and diminishes gradually until its effects becomes really obvious as in the academic performance of the students. So by this findings, academic libraries (librarians) should see effective utilization of information resources as a key parameter for judging the academic performance of students and should do all things alright to ensure that utilization is 100% if they must continue to serve their purpose in the academic environment and sustain the goals/vision of their parent institution.

This finding aligns closely with the view of Okpokwasili et al (2015) who stated that when library information resources are adequate and relevant to the users' needs, there will be an increase in the number of library users. The finding is also in-line with the opinion of Opoku (2011) who stated that many university programmes have failed accreditation from regulating bodies because their information resources were grossly inadequate, outdated and not relevant to the scope of studies prevailing in that institution of learning. In addition, Owusi et al (2021) concluded that in the development of information resources, effort should be directed towards ensuring acquired information resources are adequate, current with functional ICT facilities.

In the same vein, the finding of the study shed light on the essence of organization and accessibility of information resources as significant indicators to evaluating the level of utilization of information resources in a typical library set-up. Students like other library users feel frustrated when they cannot access the information they seek from the library (Ekpang and Ekeng, 2021). Accessibility of information resources is an offshoot of organization of information resources. Where information resources are not well organized and classified into their appropriate quarters, the problem of accessibility becomes the more complex. The position of this finding is upheld by Ugah (2008) who purported that students in tertiary institutions feel frustrated when looking for information for their studies. Likewise, Akpet (2010) noted that organization of information resources is key to effective utilization and takes place when library resources like books and other non-books materials are catalogue and classified for easy retrieval. For this cause, Muhammad, Baff and Garba (2018) stated that poor organization is the reason why available library materials are not traceable. Thus, where acquired libraries resources are not properly organized, research productivity would be farfetched for both library users and librarians (Ifijeh, 2018).

Conclusion/Recommendations

The results of this study led to the conclusion that utilization of information resources has a strong, significant and positive relationship with students' academic performance in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Also, the independent variables: adequacy, organization and accessibility of information resources of the study shared a significant relationship with academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. Thus, for academic library (librarians) to continue to serve their essence in sustaining students' academic performance, care must be taken to ensure that library resources are adequate, well organized and accessible to all students of the academic community. Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. That tertiary institutions and academic libraries should set-up principles for evaluation of students' level of utilization of information resources in order to ascertain to what extent library resources are utilized and do something about it.
2. That academic librarians should periodically review library resources to check their level of adequacy, organization and accessibility so that their role would be significant in promoting effective utilization of information resources and academic performance of students in tertiary institutions.

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