AWARENESS OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN LIBRARIES: AN ASSESSMENT OF KOGI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ANKPA

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ABSTRACT

There has been growing concern about students' awareness of the library in higher educational institutions in Nigeria, as this will go a long way in enhancing their academic performance if information resources domiciled in libraries are consulted and consumed by users. The effective use of these information resources in libraries is anchored on the awareness of students and users about their availability. It is then safe to say that awareness of information resources is germane to the use of these resources. It is an indisputable fact that information is necessary for the well-being and development of individuals and society at large in the attempt to achieve political, socio-economic, religious, industrial, scientific, and technological advancement. Current information resources are of great importance to students at any level because they are essential in planning and decision making with regards to their academic activities in any higher institution of learning. The exponential growth of information resources in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa, and the awareness of the existence of these resources is one of the determining factors of users' satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is a need to improve the level of awareness through different approaches, such as user education, the display of new arrivals, and orientation programs.

Keywords: Awareness, Information Resources, Libraries

INTRODUCTION

There has been growing concern about students' awareness of the library in higher educational institutions in Nigeria, as this will go a long way in enhancing their academic performance if information resources domiciled in libraries are consulted and consumed by users. The effective use of these information resources in libraries is anchored on the awareness of students and users about their availability. It is then safe to say that awareness of information resources is germane to the use of these resources. Library resources are the information bearing materials that enable the library to fulfil its goals of meeting the information needs of its users. Therefore, it collects resources in various sizes and formats over a period of time and makes these resources available for users to consult. Library resources are many and varied, but they can be divided into two broad categories, namely "print and non-print materials". The printed materials are books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, and reference resources. Non-print resources are, however, often referred to as audio visual and electronic resources, and generations of requisite equipment are required for accessing, viewing, or listening to data stored in them.

It is an indisputable fact that information is necessary for the well-being and development of individuals and society at large in the attempt to achieve political, socio-economic, religious, industrial, scientific, and technological advancement. Current information resources are of great importance to students at any level because they are essential in planning and decision making with regards to their academic activities in any higher institution of learning. The provision of these current information resources in academic libraries is indispensable because it assists students in every facet of their academic endeavour. In other words, students of higher institutions cannot do without these valuable current information resources.

Current information resources are central to the provision of services to patrons in libraries and information centres, and without those resources, it would be impossible to meet the information needs of the users. Current information resources can be defined as those up to date materials that are available in the library and are ready for use. All other information bearing materials that can be found in a modern library which are provided in response to the information needs of users are called library resources (Edoka, 2012).Curren2012). Information resources are recent materials that convey, carry, or contain information for use by students (Ugwuanyi, 2017). Hussaini, Veshistha and Jimah (2018) described information resources as materials that allow libraries to effectively perform the function of providing information to users.

Current information resources are materials that users consult in making decisions and also for solving current academic problems in an academic setting. Odu (2017) confirmed that these information resources constitute an integral part of research, teaching, and learning. If the resources are properly exploited, they could lead to proficiency in one's professional calling and enhance personality development. Current information resources are materials held in a library for use by patrons. They cater to the informational, academic, or even entertainment needs of library users. They are usually categorised into books, journals, manuscripts, magazines, etc. They can also be paper-based or in

digital formats, (in which case they will be referred to as e-library resources. Current information resources are basically sources of information. Traditionally, these resources were mostly books, journals, newspapers, other editorials, and encyclopedias. But with the advent of the internet, digital sources of information have become prevalent. These digital sources of information include, but are not limited to, online libraries and journals, online encyclopedias like Wikipedia, blogs, and video logs like YouTube (Kumar, 2013).

According to Kwon (2018) critical use of current information resources in the library is crucial in higher education. Therefore, higher institutions should stress students' abilities to use libraries and information resources critically. With the new generation of computer literate students and the vast amount of information available in both print and electronic formats, the necessity of developing the ability to use information resources in the library is paramount. Consequently, academic libraries like the college libraries assume a far greater role in assisting students to locate and evaluate information critically. The provision of these current information resources is necessary for students, especially for better, faster, and easier access to information.

Awareness is the condition or state of being in the know about the availability of certain items or provision of services, especially if they are accessible or obtainable. Awareness of information about resources means ensuring their presence in libraries for immediate use (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2012). Alokun (2018) affirms that awareness of information is central to human development, but insufficient knowledge may create problems resulting in abject poverty, ignorance, hunger, illiteracy, and so on. Gama (2017) noted that for any library to flourish in any society, the economy must be sufficiently vibrant and the government must commit funds to its development. The author further asserts that to succeed in any aspect of human endeavour, the availability and accessibility of up to date resources are essential. In the same vein, Maram and Ogunrowbi (2018) confirmed that high unavailability of library resources in most college libraries have a negative effect on the use of library facilities. In the words of Oyedirian and Tidmgs (2014) who opined that non-availability of library facilities in Nigerian schools causes frustration and low use of libraries by students more so when students are not aware of these resources. Okeh (2018) states that it is essential that current information resources should be made available and adequate enlightenment campaigns are initiated to ensure that these resources are utilised by users so that learning can take place for the overall development of the country.

Awareness and availability of library resources in college libraries may help ease the research work of students, enhance their academic performance, and in turn help in the development of educational institutions (Ugah, 2018). Ugah further explained that resources may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one's subject of interest, but the users may not be able to lay hands on them, because of their lack of knowledge of the availability of the library facilities.

The College of Education is an academic library that is out to serve the information needs of the academic community, like the students, lecturers, faculty members, and non-academic staff of the

institution. The College of Education is established for teaching, research, and the offering of services to the community. It plays a key role in the nation by grooming future generations to utilise the acquired knowledge to execute their responsibilities more effectively. According to Akinyemi (2017), the establishment of college libraries is a guarantee for meeting the diverse information needs of the academic community, which comprises students, lecturers, administrators, and staff. The college library is regarded to as a social organisation committed to disseminating knowledge to the ignorant and the informed through their resources. College library is a necessity at some point in everyone's life be it for leisure, work or research purposes. The necessity for good college libraries in higher institutions of learning cannot be overstressed, as the quality of any education relies on the library, and the extent of its use (Buhari, 2016).

A well- stocked college library manned by a competent manager is a treasure to its users, parent body and the community where it is located. To guarantee that college library users have a lifelong education, libraries must be made accessible coupled with availability of current information resources at all sections of the academic community (Fakomogbon, Bada, and Omiola, 2013). The awareness, availability and subsequent use of these current information resources for learning and research cannot be disputed. However, there are several challenges affecting its availability and use. Kanu (2017) stressed that inadequate finance, unqualified personnel in the library, inadequate resources, lack of knowledge, lack of users' training and constant power failure are some of the impediments to the awareness of current information resources for learning and research. These challenges may also be applicable in the study area which is Kogi state College of Education, Ankpa.

Kogi State College of Education library came into existence in 1981, at the inception of the advanced teachers' college, Ankpa, in the then state. The institution later metamorphosed into the College of Education, Ankpa, at the creation of Kogi State in 1991. Part of the objectives of the library are to provide services to support the academic activities of the parent institution. The college library offers services such as circulation services, reserved services, serial services, reference services, and binding services. It also has several resources in both print and non-print formats. The non-print format is in the form of electronic resources, which are provided in the institution aimed at meeting the immediate information needs of the students and staff as well as non-academic members, thereby, promoting learning in the institution. Currently, the library has 406 seats that can comfortably accommodate users. As the heartbeat of the college, the library serves as the educational life-wire for every serious user. Presently, the college library has 23,359 volumes of books and 2,713 volumes of journals. The library has its own server, battery inverters, and solar panels. Hence, the library collections can be accessed in the absence of a power supply. The library has nine professionals, 10 Para-professional and eight supporting staff, bringing the total number to 27.

The College library has an E-library for students to use provided by the college. It was established with an Internet facility for E-learning. The electronic library is a form of cyber café within the library where students can access the Internet and search for electronic resources. The College library subscribed to several databases such as AGORA, HINARI, EBSCOHOST and JSTOR.

Moreover, the college library has so many resources, but the worry is that those resources seem not to be adequately available and current for student consumption, thereby affecting their use in terms of their learning and research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For a library to be functional, it has to meet its users' needs and ensure that users make functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. All activities, resources, and services of the library are geared towards helping the general public to achieve its information needs. However, as important as this library and its resources are, it has been observed generally that most students complete their education without visiting the library or using library information resources that could possibly contribute positively towards their academics, thereby making the number of students using libraries very small as compared to the number of students in academic institutions. This observation confirms the observation of the researcher in the study area, who also observes that information resources are not adequately being used for learning and research. The inadequate usage of these resources could be a result of non-awareness of current information resources or probably because those resources are not within the reach of the students. This is a bad trend for students' educational pursuits. If this situation is not addressed, it will lead to poor learning outcomes and poor quality research.

In light of the above, this study is out to investigate the awareness of current information resources in Kogi State College of Education library, Ankpa.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the awareness of information resources by students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. Specifically the study sets to:

i.   Ascertain the level of awareness on the availability of information resources in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

ii. Identify the types of information resources available for students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa.

iii. Find out the strategies for creating awareness of information resources among studenat in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

i.   What is the level of awareness on the availability of information resources in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

ii. What are the types of information resources available for students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

iii. What are the strategies for creating awareness of information resources by students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Obande and Abdulsalami (2020) conducted a study on the availability, awareness, and use of electronic resources among library registered students in Nasarawa. The study was conducted on a total of 7233 registered users from the Federal University of Lafia and the Nasarawa State University of Keffi. The population was sampled. Findings of the study reveal students are aware of the available electronic resources in both libraries. Yebowah and Dzokotoe(2017) in their study on awareness and use of electronic resources in university for student development studies The result of the study indicates that 65 percent of the respondents are aware, and when the strategies used for creating awareness were also checked, the mailing system ranked first among the five facilities used. Iroeze (2018), in her study on special education center libraries in south east Nigeria using three special education schools deduced that all three schools had only 9 out of the 19 information resources used for the study.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is one hundred and eighteen (118) undergraduate library and information science (LIS) students of Kogi State College of Education in affiliation with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Ankpa campus. The sample size of the study is sixty (60) undergraduate LIS students. These were selected from the population of the study identified above using a simple random sampling technique. Fifteen (15) LIS students were sampled from the 200, 300, 400, and 500 levels in the LIS department of Kogi State College of Education in affiliation with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Ankpa, bringing the total number to sixty (60).The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire. A structured questionnaire titled: "Availability and Use of Current Information Resources by Undergraduate Students for Learning and Research in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa (AUCIRUSLRKSCEA) was developed by the researchers for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research I: What is the level of awareness on the availability of information resources in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

Table 1: Awareness of available information resources in Kogi State College of Education

Awareness on availability of information resources	Agree		Disagree		Total
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**%**
Text books	200	95	10	5	100
Online Databases	134	64	76	36	100
Newspapers/magazines	180	86	30	14	100
Encyclopaedia	159	76	51	24	100
Dictionaries	188	90	22	10	100

Government Document	97	46	113	54	100
Conference Proceedings	154	73	56	27	100
e- journals	177	84	33	16	100

Table 1 depicts the opinion of respondents on the awareness and availability of information resources in Kogi State College of Education Library. Majority of the respondents claimed that they are aware of the available resources in table 1. Worthy of note on table 2 is the number/percentage of those who claimed that they are not aware of some of the resources. This is an indication that there are some students who do not visit the library because table 1 showed that these resources are available in the library of the institution. Of interest and concern is that over 40% of the respondents are not aware of the availability of resources such as conference proceedings, online databases and government documents. The implication of this is that the students may not know that these resources are quick reference tool. Lecturers should endeavour to give assignments which will make the students use these resources. This is evident from the fact that those they know their usefulness have high percentage of awareness, such as books, journals, dictionaries, encyclopaedia, and newspaper. In the past lecturers draw the attention of students to these resources for assignment but it is doubtful if this is the practice today. Therefore, this result has thrown a challenge to the Library and those teaching library use for the need to make their lesson highly practical explaining the nature and use of these resources which abound in the library. Most of the resources which they claimed they are not aware of are quick reference tools.

Research Question II: What are the types of information resources available for students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

Table 2: Types of Information Resources Available For Students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

	Items	Available	%	Not available	%	Total	Decision
	Text books	59	98.33	1	1.66	60	Available
	Databases	7	11.66	53	88.33	60	Not available
	Newspapers	49	81.66	11	18.33	60	Available
	Encyclopaedia	51	85	9	15	60	Available
	Dictionaries	52	86.66	8	13.33	60	Available
	Government Document	48	80	12	20	60	Available
	Conference Proceedings	8	13.33	52	86.66	60	Not available
	E-Journals	49	81.66	11	18.33	60	Available

Table 2 revealed the types of current information resources available for learning and research by undergraduate students at Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. The table shows that among the available resources in the library, textbooks rank first, followed by dictionaries and encyclopedias. However, databases, and conference proceedings with low percentages are not available.

Research Question III: What are the strategies for creating awareness of information resources by students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa?

Table 3: Strategies for creating awareness of information resources for students in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

Strategies for creating awareness of information resources	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Total
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**100**
Catalogue cards/OPAC	21	10	81	39	64	30	44	21	100
Accession list/ recent addition	16	8	73	35	49	23	72	34	100
Displaying new titles	11	5	77	37	44	21	78	37	100
Advertisement blurbs	12	6	63	30	39	18	96	46	100
Orientation Programmes	13	6	84	40	32	15	81	39	100
Reference list	11	5	84	40	36	17	79	38	100
User Educa-tion	13	6	79	38	44	21	74	35	100

Table 3 reveals that the strategies for creating awareness by the library are very low because in all the resources evaluated higher percentage of the respondents claim they are not aware of some of the resources. The level of awareness of the catalogue cards/OPAC in this study shows that only 49% of the respondents agreed that they are aware of OPAC as a means of creating awareness. This could be improved upon if more system terminals are available in the library, and the provision of internet can better create the awareness of the availability of OPAC in the library.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The exponential growth of information resources in Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa, and the awareness of the existence of these resources is one of the determining factors of users' satisfaction.

However, the results of this study showed that the level of awareness of information resources among the respondents was significant at Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa, Nigeria. Nevertheless, there is a need to improve the level of awareness through different approaches, such as user education, the display of new arrivals, and orientation programs. The researcher is of the view that improvement in awareness of the availability of information resources will no doubt guarantee the continuous patronage of the library by the students in the college. To achieve this, a library as an ocean of information must also be properly funded to address major constraints facing the library.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the research, the following recommendations were made:

1.   It is suggested that the college library should arrange various user awareness programmes /orientation and training programmes, display of new materials arriving in the library to educate the students on how to identify, access and utilise the available information resources to achieve their educational goals.

2.   Library Consortium should be established or joined by the library; this may help in providing adequate information resources in different areas of specialisation and expand their digital resource to meet the user needs.

3.   Libraries management boards should also provide library staff with training and retraining opportunities so that they can provide effective and efficient information services to library users.

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