Original Research Paper

Library Resources and Services Provision to Undergraduate Sandwich/Part Time Students in two Selected Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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This study sought to examine library resources and services provision in selected university libraries for the part time and external degree students. The aim of the study is to determine the availability and adequacy of resources and services. The descriptive survey method was adopted. The findings showed that library resources and services were available to these sets of students. Book resources were rated available and adequate by respondents so also, reference services was rated adequate while others items were rated averagely adequate and outrightly inadequate. The study recommended that adequate services suitable to the peculiar needs of learners should be developed and provided. Resources and services should be digitalised for effective service provision while information literacy should be taught to enhance the research capacity of students.

INTRODUCTION

Distance learning has become a key factor in the promotion of access to education. All over the world, distance learning has become a potent force in the training of required manpower needed for socio-economic development. Another reason why distance education is attractive is its flexibility in terms of timing which gives a greater relief to the student as well as a choice of where to learn. This has helped in creating wider accessibility to educational attainment of learners. Therefore, catering for the academic interest of learners in terms of providing them with the needed resources is highly imperative.

The traditional responsibility of the library is providing up-to-date resources for teaching, learning and research. The library as a matter of policy is saddled with the responsibilities of acquiring, organising, storing, and making available materials for use by the clientele of the library. Aramide (2009) quoting Adeyoyin (2003) regards library resources as the life

wire of successful teaching and learning. Provision and usage of resources is the centrepiece around which library services revolve. Adequacy in the provision of resources to faculties and learners will guarantee qualitative university education. This is why the library is seen as an important support to faculties in their bid to dispense knowledge to their students. According to Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) the university library is an indispensable institution whose purpose is to make available to university staff, students and researchers the necessary resources and materials that would create an enabling environment for the pursuit of knowledge.

Literature Review

Provision of library resources to distance learners as a matter of fact is highly desirable as it guarantees quality in university

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education. Such resources include books, periodicals, journals, CD ROM and online databases. Use of information sources and services is imperative for academic excellence. Information availability is critical to the acquisition of knowledge most especially when the paradigm shift in education puts much learning responsibility on the learner. The achievement of student centred goals in education may become an illusion without adequate resources and appropriate services to enhance teaching and learning. One of the goals of higher education is to inculcate lifelong learning habits in the learner. Since higher education is premised on the constructivist learning theory which presupposes that the learner must learn independently of the lecturers through assignments and research activities therefore, prompt access to library resources is highly important.

In a study conducted by Kascus (1994b) it was discovered that provision of library support to distance learners was overlooked and jettisoned to the background. This was corroborated by Mabawonku (2004) in her study on library use by distance learners. She found out that students were left to fend for themselves because some institutions did not consider providing library services for such category of students. This is why Heller-Ross (1996) reiterated that the planners and executors of distance learning programme do not consider that the library should be part of the planning process. The role of the library is considered as an ''afterthought'' Reasons adduced for this attitude have been attributed to lack of fund, technological limitations, work overload, etc. This is a disservice and injustice to the students because if one compares the library support received by on-campus students with that of distance learners the differences can be regarded as unethical. Buckland (2002) acknowledged that the main purpose of library is to provide access to information. Kascus (1994) supported this view when he opined that provision of library resources is a crucial factor in the determination of quality outcome in distance education so it can be described as a key issue in distance education.

Kascus (1994), Edge et. al (2000) insisted that distance learners are entitled to library resources and services similar to the one provided for normal campus setting. The pre-occupation of the library as an institution is to organise, preserve and retrieve information from whatever format print or non print and make such available to users. Therefore, it is pertinent that institution fostering distance education must shoulder the responsibilities of providing access to resources for their students. Accessibility to resources is a pre-requisite for information use. The American Library Association reiterated that "equitable access to information from a range of sources in all format is a fundamental right in a democracy." It is believed that adequacy of resources and services for appropriate level would spur intellectual, cultural and technical growth of students, (Oyewusi et. al, 2009).

Provision of resources and services for distance learners require a new modality for taking the library resources and services to the doorstep of the learners. This new modality requires the adoption of Information and Communication Technology. ICT has enhanced access to accumulated resources worldwide. It has opened the floodgate of access to tremendous electronic resources online. Distance learners who are encumbered with myriads preoccupations can use this medium to satisfy their information needs. The internet has provided alternative access point to resources worldwide. Distance learners are expected to make use of this opportunity to satisfy their information needs. But inasmuch as this remote access to information is feasible, the question to ask is "Are these resources accessible to this group of learners? Gbokoyi

(2000) described accessibility as a means of reaching or using or approaching something. It is the responsibility of the librarian to ensure that these students are information literate to the extent that finding information on the net would not become worrisome. Information literacy is a major factor in accessing information on the net. It is possible for information to be available, but not accessible. It has been revealed through users' studies that students found it difficult to access library resources at a distance; that is via online. It is pertinent, therefore, according to Edge and Edge (2000) that distance learners should be able to use the right technologies for retrievals. Watson advocated training of distance learners through teleconferencing on how to explore resources online by demonstrating this through networked computer. This has reinforced the fact that information literacy is fundamental to distance education.

Library Services are provided to clientele to enable them make judicious and efficient use of the library resources. These services rendered by the library are dependent upon the objectives of its parent organisation. The following are the services rendered by library generally as highlighted by Aina (2004). They include 'Lending service, Interlibrary loan service and Document delivery, Reservation service, User education, Reference Service, Information Literacy Programme, Exhibition and display, Literature search, Selective Dissemination of literature, Referral service, Extension and outreach service, Translation service etc. From all the services mentioned that are peculiar to libraries generally, few of them will be considered as necessary for distance learners in view of the dispersal nature of this type of learners. Many of the students do not reside where the academic library is, so their use of the university library is hindered somehow. Therefore, institution offering distance learning programmes should promote the following services for these sets of students.

They are reference service, Interlibrary loan service with document delivery so as to bring library resources to the door step of distance learners, literature search, normal lending service, referral service and much more information literacy programme. This was confirmed by Aina (2008) when he advocated for the provision of the following services for the sake of distance learners. These include reference service, borrowing of materials through exchange or on a contractual basis, access to interlibrary loan service, access to internet, access to subject literature and finally opportunity for consultation with librarians. In fact, access to different databases online would enable the students conduct effective research.

Objectives

The study sets out to achieve the following objectives:

(1) Determine the library resources and services (if any) provided for the use of distance learners.
(2) Find out the availability of these resources and services for distance learners.
(3) Rate the adequacy of these resources and services in the selected libraries.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for this study. At the time it was carried out. Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) is the only federal university in Ogun State running part time programmes while one of the state

universities; Tai Solarin Univeristy of Education, Ijebu-Ode (TASUED) was chosen because of the stability of the school calendar at the time of conducting the research. Both universities are government-owned. About 250 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents undergoing part time studies in these universities. The population for this study cut across 100 level students to 500 level students. At the end of the research, a total number of 200 copies of questionnaire were returned giving a response rate of 80%. The analysis of the data was done using simple percentage and frequency.

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of data gathered in line with the objectives of the study is presented in this section.

Table 1. Distribution by Gender.

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	72	36.0
Female	128	64.0
Total	200	100.0

The table above presents the distribution of respondents by gender. The result of the analysis shows 72 (36.0%) of the respondents were male, while 128 (64%) were female. This shows that the majority of the sample students were female.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Level

Level	Frequency	%
100	40	20.0
200	34	17.0
300	64	32.0
400	56	28.0
500	06	3.0
Total	200	100.0

The table above presents the distribution of respondents by educational level. The result of the analysis showed that 20 (20%) of the respondents were 100 level students, 17 (17%) of the respondents were 200 level students, 32 (32%) were 300 level students and 28 (28%) were 400 level students while 3 (3%) were 500 level students.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Frequency	%
<20years	50	25.0
20-25	66	33.0
26-29	42	21.0
30-35	38	19.0
36-40	04	2.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 3 above presents the distribution of respondents by age group. The result of the analysis shows that 50 (25%) of the respondents were below 20 years of age. 66 (33%) were between 20-25 years of age and 42 (19.0%) were between 26-29 years of age, 38 (19.0%) were between 30-35 years of age, while 42 (21.0%) were between 30-35 years of age while 4 (2%) were 36 years and above.

Table 4. Availability of Library Resources for Distance Learners

Resources	Available		Not Available	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Books	190	95	25	5
Periodicals	135	67.5	65	32.5
Journals	120	60	80	40
Encyclopaedia	150	75	50	25
Dictionaries	185	92.5	15	7.5
Bibliography	110	55	90	45
Indexes	90	45	110	55
Abstract	70	35	130	65
Conference Papers	60	30	140	70
CD-ROM databases	80	40	120	60
Internet/Online resources.	130	65	70	35

Table 4 above revealed that 190 (95%) of the students indicated that textbooks were available in the university library followed by dictionaries 185 (92.5), 135 (67.5.%) indicated periodicals availability while120 (60)% indicated that journals were also available, so also were encyclopaedia 150 (75%), Bibliography 110(55%), and Internet facilities. Index, abstract, and CD –ROM received were rated low with (45%), (35%) and (40%) respectively.

Table 5. Library Services Available to Distance Learners

PARAMETER	Frequency	%
Reference Services	106	53.0
Internet Services	54	27.0
Interlibrary Loan Service	06	3.0
Document Delivery	06	3.0
Photocopy	19	9.5
Book loan	06	3.0
User Education	03	1.5
Total	200	100.0

The table above presents the distribution of respondents by services available in the library for distance learners. The result of the analysis shows that 106 (53%) of the respondents indicated the availability of reference services, 54 (27%) indicated internet services while19 (9.5%) indicated photocopy. Also book loan and inter library loan service recorded 06 3.0% each with user education, having 3 (1.5%) was rated low in terms of availability.

Table 6. Adequacy of Library Resources to Distance Learners

Resources	Highly Adequate		Averagely Adequate		Not Adequate	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Book	142	71.0	56	28.0	02	1.0
Periodicals	68	34.0	116	58.0	16	8.0
Journals	68	34.0	98	49.0	34	17.
Encyclopaedia	90	45	60	30	50	25
Dictionaries	160	80	30	15	10	5
Bibliography	80	40	40	20	80	40
Indexes	70	35	75	37.5	55	27.5
Abstract	50	25	45	22.5	105	52.5
Conference Papers/pamphlets	60	30	20	10	120	60

Table 6. **Continued**

CD ROM	34	17.0	88	44.0	78	39.0
Internet/Online Databases	58	29.0	66	33.0	76	38.0

Table 6 presents the adequacy of library resources to distance learners. The result of the analysis shows that books 142 (71.0%) dictionaries 160(80%) were regarded as adequate while periodical having 116 (58%), journals 98 (49%) and CDROM 88 (44%) were considered as being averagely adequate while abstract 105 (52.5%) and conference papers internet services were averagely adequate while abstract and conference paper 120 (60%) were considered as inadequate not adequate.

Table 7. Adequacy of Servives Rendered to Distance Learners by Academic Libraries

Resources	Highly Adequate		Averagely Adequate		Not Adequate	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Book	142	71.0	56	28.0	02	1.0
Periodicals	68	34.0	116	58.0	16	8.0
Journals	68	34.0	98	49.0	34	17.
Encyclopaedia	90	45	60	30	50	25
Dictionaries	160	80	30	15	10	5
Bibliography	80	40	40	20	80	40
Indexes	70	35	75	37.5	55	27.5
Abstract	50	25	45	22.5	105	52.5
Conference Papers/pamphlets	60	30	20	10	120	60
CD ROM	34	17.0	88	44.0	78	39.0
Internet/Online Databases	58	29.0	66	33.0	76	38.0

The table above presents the distribution of respondents on the adequacy of the services offered in the library. The result of the analysis shows that reference has 144 (57%), internet 88 (44%), photocopy 110 (55%) and book loan 116 (58%) were adequate while current awareness 102 (51%), selective dissemination of information 100 (50%), user education 96 (48%) and literature search 100 (50%) were averagely adequate.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study revealed that provision of resources to distance learners in the two universities studied was actually feasible that is available. The majority of the respondents in the two universities sampled indicated that their universities' libraries provided resources for their use. Though inferences from the study showed that books were the most available of all the resources of the library, it could also be as a result of the fact that the distance learners do not have adequate time to explore the resources of the library and as a result are not aware of all the resources available in the library, most especially since other resources are on closed access. In terms of the adequacy of these resources, book resources were rated adequate while CD-ROM databases and others were rated low.

In terms of providing library services to this group of learners reference service was regarded as the most available when compared to other services. Internet service was rated second while other services which are dependent on internet

facilities were low. Reference services were considered to be very adequate and this was followed by photocopy services and then internet services while book loan, SDI and user education and others were considered low.

CONCLUSION

Distance learning has become a key player in the provision of access to education. So, therefore for qualitative education, distance learners require information resources and library services for the use of the learners so that they can optimise their opportunities. Even though the university library provides resources and services for the use of learners without discrimination, but the fact remains that the availability of resources does not guarantee accessibility. Hence, internet connection should be relied upon as a vehicle for bringing the resources and services of the library to the doorstep of distance learners. Moreover digitalization of all library resources would enable the learners to search the library database without the rigour of having to travel to use the library when necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The university should ensure that newly admitted students are giving library user education at the commencement of their studies. This will create the needed awareness of library resource and services available for usage among the learners.

2. The academic library should be able to provide services suitable to the peculiarity of these kinds of students Watson (1992) suggested e-mail, faxes, reference service, bibliographic instruction, document delivery and 24hr messaging. He advocated the adoption of the internet to facilitate these services.

3. In as much as online access to the library is a sure way of making resources and services available to distance learners, the library with their parent body should ensure the digitalisation of all its resources for ease of accessibility i.e. ensuring full automation in its libraries.

4. Information literacy should be taught to the student to enhance facilitate their research capability.

5. Full use of the resources and services of the institution's library will discourage plagiarism which seems very rampant among undergraduate students nowadays.

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