Availability and Accessibility of Information Resources in an Academic Library: Pathway to Sustainable Development

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Abstract - **This study was carried out to determine how availability and accessibility could bring about sustainable development in perceived academic performance of polytechnics' students using Ibadan Polytechnic as a case study. Survey design was used with structured questionnaire and observation as instruments for data collection. The questionnaire was administered with the aid of a research assistant. From the findings, it was revealed that textbooks and dictionaries were readily available in the library while electronic books and journals were not accessible. The study also revealed lack of enough electronic resources, lack of enough computers to access Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) and power failure as some of the challenges to availability and accessibility of library resources. Some recommendations were made based on the findings.**
Keywords: **Availability, Accessibility, Library Resources, Sustainable Development, Academic Performance**

I. INTRODUCTION

Education, the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits, is pivotal to effective national development while information (the trade of libraries) plays a very important role in this development (Owoyemi, 2018). Education improves people's standard of living and promotes environmental development. Sustaining this environmental development however hinges on provision of goods and services for the present generation without sacrificing the future. For this to be achieved, library plays dynamic roles by managing the intellectual products and acts as a medium for getting the latest scientific and technological information either in print or electronic form (Oyewusi and Oyeboade, 2009). Academic libraries have for centuries played critically important roles in supporting learning, teaching, research and service within their host institutions or colleges. As a matter of fact, one can say that a library is the mitochodrium (power house) of any academic institution. Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) therefore submitted that for effective learning and realization of academic goals, necessary information materials and resources must be available and accessible.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Concepts of Availability and Accessibility: Availability and accessibility of information resources is germane to educational sustainability of any nation. Availability is the presence of print and e resources (books and non - books) in a library and information centres without any constraints. The effectiveness of any library is best measured in terms of how available and accessible its resources and services are; this is a major pre-occupation of libraries; that is focusing on designing and creation of access tools such as abstracts, index, bibliographies, catalog and others (Abdulsalami 2013). Availability of resources in academic library such as The Polytechnic Library, Ibadan has become inevitable on account of explosion of information and use. Some of its resources however include books (text books, bibliographies, dictionaries, gazette) and non-book (chats, maps, journals, e-journals, etc.) materials. In order to achieve academic sustainability, it is imperative for librarians to have regular trainings and surveys on current trends of users and resources' availability to satisfy users as this is considered a good measure of an institution's excellence and quality. However, efforts to improve availability of resources through interlibrary loan and document delivery services were faced with challenges. It was in this light that the internet was introduced into the educational system to bridge the prevailing information gap (Adika, 2003).

It is possible for resources to be available in the library, identified bibliographically through citations in indexes but the library may not have access to sources containing the relevant articles. Therefore, it is paramount to have the sources containing information in the library (Aguolu and Aguolu 2002, Nnadozie and Nnadozie 2008). According to Ajayi and Akinniyi (2004), Olorunsola (2008), information seekers were frustrated due to non-availability of sources containing the needed articles. The more accessible information sources are, the more relevant the library becomes to patrons. Hence, it is essential to regularly update and improve upon previously acquired knowledge for sustained human empowerment and capacity development. Nevertheless, this can only be achieved if the resources are available. Conversely, to solve the problem of unavailability and inaccessibility of library resources, measures put in place include: introduction of inter-library loan, library consortium (where e- resources are shared) and document delivery services. However, Adika still noted that these efforts only could not solve the problem of lack of access to current information. Hence Oyewusi and Oyeboade submitted that libraries can improve access and use of library resources by putting in place improved academic liaison librarians with personal helpline support and open access. However, identification, location and accessibility of information depend upon effective bibliographic tools

such as catalogs, bibliographies, indexes and abstracts. Information resources are made accessible to user through different tools such as Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) which is an online database of materials held by a library or group of libraries through which users search principally to locate resources available in that library.

According to Ansari (2008), a high percentage of library users in five academic libraries in New Delhi used OPAC as a search tool for retrieving documents because they control the OPAC themselves. It means that the users were trained on the use of OPAC and had access to enough computers with steady power supply. These tools help users improve their curiosity which can bring about sustainable development. Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) defined sustainable development as the efficient management of resources for human survival, taking into consideration both the present and not jeopardizing or damaging the future generations. The implication is that improvement on availability and accessibility of library resources should continue for reading culture development and invariably sustain the standard of education. According to Akintayo (2016), when users have access to quality and current information resources, it helps them reach their fullest potential in achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour that would lead to effective public participation in decision making. The ability to access information is especially vital in rural and marginalized areas where academic libraries are expected to promote indigenous development and proffer solutions that address specific problems in their regions, strengthen local communities and develop their local contents for sustainable development; this is done through access to international information resources as well as locally developed knowledge (Baker, 2006).

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Having realized that library is the back bone of any institution, several steps have been taken by librarians to ensure that needed resources are available to satisfy users. It is still very obvious that in spite of these efforts, users still complain of unavailability and inaccessibility of materials.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine how available and accessible library resources are to the students of the Faculties of Engineering and Science. The specific objectives are to
1. Find out the types of resources available in the library.
2. Assess the types of resources accessible to students.
3. Examine the frequency of use of these resources.
4. Find out the challenges of availability and accessibility of resources.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey design method using structured questionnaire based on the objectives of study and observation as instruments for data collection. Copies of the questionnaire were administered with the aid of a research assistant. The study population was 9000 of both national and higher national diploma students. A sample size of 200 which is 22.2% of the study population was randomly selected.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Simple frequency and percentage was used to analyze the data collected. One hundred and eighty five (185) were filled and returned giving a response rate of 92.5%.

TABLE I GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	116	63
Female	69	37
TOTAL	185	100%

In table I, the study indicates that majority of respondents were male (116, 63%) while female respondents has the least frequency of 69, 37%.

TABLE II MARITAL STATUS

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	7	3
Single	178	97
Total	185	100

Table II reveals that the highest frequency (178, 97%) of the respondents were not married and the least (7, 3%) married.

TABLE III AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Age range (year)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
14-20	42	23
21-26	130	70
27-30	8	4
31 and above	5	3
Total	185	100

Table III shows that those within the age range of 21-26 constituted the highest frequency (130, 70%) while 31 years and above had the least frequency (5, 3%).

TABLE IV LEVEL OF STUDY

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ND 1	25	14
ND 11	32	17
HND 1	89	48
HND 11	39	21
Total	185	100

It is revealed from table IV that the highest respondents were from HND1 with the frequency 89 and 48% while ND1 has the least frequency (25, 14%).

From table V, respondents indicated different levels of availability. The table reveals that 179(96.8%), 173(93.5%) textbooks and dictionaries respectively were available for

use. This buttresses the study of Aguolu & Aguolu (2002) that resources may be available in the library. On the order hand, the availability of printed journals (16, 13.5%) and electronic journals (86, 46.5) were low.

TABLE V AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Information resources available	Yes (%)	No
1	Textbooks	179 (96.8)	6 (3.2)
2	Journals	16 (13.5)	25 (86.5)
3	Electronic books	96 (51.9)	89 (48.1)
4	Electronic Journals	86 (46.5)	99 (53.5)
5	Dictionaries	173 (93.5)	12 (6.5)
6	Abstracts	138 (74.6)	47 (25.4)
7	Indexes	144 (77.8)	41 (22.2)
8	Bibliography	148 (80)	37 (20)
9	Encyclopedia	146 (78.9)	39 (21.2)
10	Past projects	133 (71.9)	52 (28.1)
11	Conference proceedings	116 (62.7)	69 (37.3)
12	Almanacs	111 (60)	74 (40)
13	Year books	143 (77.3)	42 (22.7)
14	Handbooks	160 (86.5)	25(13.5)
15	Atlas/Maps	157 (84.9)	28 (15.1)
16	Newspapers	154 (83.2)	31 (16.8)
17	Magazines	157 (84.9)	28 (15.1)
18	Audio/Visual materials	95 (51.4)	90 (48.6)
19	CD-ROM	91 (49.2)	94 (50.8)
20	Directories	144 (77.8)	41 (22.2)
21	Gazette	100 (54.1)	85 (45.9)

TABLE VI ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Information Resources	Very accessible	Accessible	Rarely accessible	Not accessible	Mean	STD
1.	Textbooks	92 (49.7)	60 (32.4)	25 (13.5)	8 (4.3)	3.28	0.856
2.	Journals	47 (25.4)	52 (28.1)	50 (27)	36 (19.5)	2.59	1.070
3.	Electronic books	33 (17.8)	29 (15.7)	44 (23.8)	79 (42.7)	2.09	1.139
4.	Electronic Journals	29 (15.7)	30 (16.2)	47 (25.4)	79 (42.7)	2.05	1.105
5.	Dictionaries	82 (44.3)	61 (33)	26 (14.1)	16 (8.6)	3.13	0.958
6.	Abstracts	36 (19.5)	53 (28.6)	44 (23.8)	52 (28.1)	2.39	1.094
7.	Indexes	33 (17.8)	52 (28.1)	55 (29.7)	45 (24.3)	2.39	1.043
8.	Bibliography	32 (17.3)	59 (31.9)	43 (23.2`)	51 (27.6)	2.39	1.068
9.	Encyclopedia	49 (26.5)	60 (32.4)	40 (21.6)	36 (19.5)	2.66	1.072
10.	Past projects	49 (26.5)	49 (26.5)	49 (26.5)	38 (20.5)	2.59	1.090
11.	Conference proceedings	23 (12.4)	48 (25.9)	49 (26.5)	65 (35.1)	2.16	1.044
12.	Almanacs	26 (14.1)	42 (22.7)	52 (28.1)	65 (35.1)	2.16	1.059
13.	Year books	47 (25.4)	55 (29.7)	47 (25.4)	36 (19.5)	2.61	1.068
14.	Handbooks	53 (28.6)	61 (33)	42 (22.7)	29 (15.7)	2.75	1.040
15.	Atlas/Maps	42 (22.7)	53 (28.6)	48 (25.9)	42 (22.7)	2.51	1.079
16.	Newspapers	61 (33)	55 (29.7)	39 (21.1)	30 (16.2)	2.79	1.074
17.	Magazines	57 (30.8)	60 (32.4)	35 (18.9)	33 (17.8)	2.76	1.077
18.	Audio/Visual materials	31 (16.8)	37 (20)	42 (22.7)	75 (40.5)	2.13	1.125
19.	CD-ROM	22 (11.9)	47 (25.4)	36 (19.5)	80 (43.2)	2.06	1.079
20.	Directories	36 (19.5)	42 (22.7)	52 (28.1)	55 (29.7)	2.32	1.099
21.	Gazette	21(11.4)	29 (15.7)	62 (33.5)	73 (39.5)	1.99	1.005

Table VI shows that textbooks and dictionaries (92 49.7%; 82 44.3%) were very accessible to users while electronic journals and electronic books (79, 42%) were not accessible. This supports the finding of Adika (2003) that

efforts to solve the problems of accessibility of current information resources for users have not yielded the expected result.

TABLE VII CHALLENGES TO THE USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES

S. No.	Challenges	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	Resources are not available	70 (37.8)	115 (62.2)
2.	Resources are outdated	106 (57.3)	79 (42.7)
3.	Erratic power supply	108 (58.4)	77 (41.6)
4.	Lack of enough space for reading	81 (43.8)	104 (56.2)
5.	Too much distractions	77 (41.6)	108 (58.4)
6.	Poor ventilation	80 (43.2)	105 (56.8)
7.	Poor lightening	99 (53.5)	86 (46.5)
8.	Inadequate computer system	114 (61.6)	71 (38.4)
9.	It is difficult to locate needed materials	84 (45.4)	101 (54.6)
10.	Lack of enough qualified staff	65 (35.1)	120 (64.9)
11.	Chairs and tables are not conducive	68 (62.7)	117 (63.2)
12.	No enough electronic resources	113 (61.1)	72 (38.9)
13.	Lack of training on how to locate materials	87 (47)	98 (53)
14.	Poor arrangement of resources	70 (37.8)	115 (62.2)
15.	No enough publicity on library resources	109 (58.9)	76 (41.1)
16.	Unfriendly attitudes of library staff	90 (48.6)	95 (51.4)
17.	Lack of internet access	109 (58.9)	76 (41.1)
18.	Inadequate staff	79 (42.7)	106 (57.3)
19.	Inadequate professionalism	97 (52.4)	88 (47.6)

From table VII, inadequate computer systems (114, 61.6%), lack of enough electronic resources (113, 61.1%), lack of internet access and publicity (109, 58.9% each) were revealed as the major constraints to availability and accessibility of resources in The Polytechnic of Ibadan library. This finding supports that of Aguolu & Aguolu (2002) which submitted that resources may be available in the library, but access is prevented for one reason or another.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustaining educational development is vital hence librarians should be trained innovatively in order to bring about sustainable development in education and research. Based on the research findings, it is therefore suggested that: there should be more computers for OPAC searching; users be taught how to search OPAC. Government should come to the aid of the library by providing electronic resources with ready internet for users anywhere within the campus.

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