

---

---

## **Users' Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources and Services in Nigeria: A Case Study of Delta State Library in Asaba**

*Aniogbolu, Chukwudi Alphonsus  
Okpousung-Nina, O. Mariam*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study evaluates users' awareness and utilization of library resources and services in Public libraries in Nigeria with a particular reference to the Delta State library, Asaba. It emphasizes on the importance of library and information resources and services. The study employs the descriptive survey design. A researcher structured questionnaire entitled "users' awareness and utilization of resources and services in libraries" (UAURSL) was distributed to a total of two hundred (200) respondents. Data collected were analyzed using the simple percentage and frequency counts. The findings revealed clearly that there is need for proper utilization of resources and services in the library. The study therefore emphasized the need for proper and adequate enlightenment of library users on accessibility of the available resources and services in the library in order to ensure proper usage of the available resources and services in public libraries. The study stresses the need to ensure adequate provision and utilization of resources and services in libraries through proper awareness, availability and accessibility of these resources and services.*

**Keywords:** *Information, Libraries, Academic Libraries, Library Use, Information Literacy, Users, Information Literate Person.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Delta State library board, Asaba was established in 1991. The board has branches in the various local government areas within the state and in some cases, uses mobile libraries to reach areas where branch libraries do not exist. The Delta State library, Asaba is a public library commonly referred to as the people' university and is maintained by the state government through taxpayers' money. The board provides free services to members of the community and exists for study, vocational, recreational and cultural purpose. The library is established to meet the information, education and recreation needs of the host community irrespective of nationality, age, sex, religion, language, status, political inclination

---

---

*Aniogbolu, Chukwudi Alphonsus (CLN, MNLA) is a Lecturer and Okpousung-Nina, O. Mariam is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Library and Information Science, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi –Uku, Nigeria. E-mail: anichuks60@gmail.com*



and level of education. The level of services rendered by the public library depends to a large extent on the resources made available by the government.

The public library is meant to assist in nationwide transmission of information and culture as well as presentation of records; to encourage people to write and publish in native dialects; to render information oriented-services to both adults and children; to encourage mass literacy and adult education programmes; to assist in educational development both scientifically and technologically and to encourage good reading habits among children in primary schools.

The Public Library performs the following functions:

- i. Provides current awareness services by sometime mounting extension services like book talk and film shows.
- ii. Renders services to special people such as old people, farmers, market women, hospital patients,
- iii. Helps to provide books and other kinds of educational materials to members of their communities for studying, recreational and vocational purposes.
- iv. Helps to acquire, organize and stock all kinds of materials, which are related to local histories and interests as well as helps to conserve and preserve our cultural heritage through the collection of local histories.

Library and information services are those services that are provided by libraries to their users in order to take care of their information needs. These consist of circulation service, reference service, instruction on the use of library and a host of other services. Although, human information needs appear to be insatiable but are necessary for libraries to ensure the provision and proper information delivery. Libraries are resource centres where different information resources are organized and kept for use by the people. It is an institution that acquires, organizes, preserves and makes available the recorded knowledge of man to the users.

The library could also mean a collection of book and non-book materials organized and kept for reading, studying and consultation. It could also be defined as a collection of information materials in whatever format usually printed (hard copy) and non-printed (electronic format) organized for effective use. This definition implies that the library has become an information agent that is charged with the task of acquiring, organizing, preserving, storing, retrieving and disseminating that information. The library could also be seen as an organized collection of source of information and similar resources made accessible to a defined community for references or borrowing. Mashayabo (2017) defines the



library as a collection of books and other materials organized and maintained for use. Libraries as institutions that acquire, process, organize, and make available information to users are utilized as social services institutions that are aimed at enabling the users to make the most effective access to their resources and services. Libraries are currently facing their greatest challenge since the exponential growth in the volume of information in circulation (information explosion). The global digital revolution has also affected both the traditional forms of the creation, organization and dissemination of knowledge and information globally. The importance of information cannot be overemphasized.

Adebayo (2012) notes that access to information by the society is very crucial because it accelerates the level of individual advancement as well as corporate educational development because information is indispensable. Aniogbolu (2016) writing on the concepts of information and information literacy notes that accessibility to the right information is necessary for the general well-being of the individuals, institutions or organizations, public and private, formal and informal, profit and non-profit oriented; Government at both Federal and State as well as Local Government, religious organizations, educational institutions, and many others to function effectively.

On connectivity, Imo and Igbo (2013) confirm that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka is now connected to the MTN foundation which is aimed at ensuring availability of electronic resources for both staff and students. Omekwu (2006) notes that most libraries in Nigeria lack functional websites and advises that libraries ought to upload their bibliographic records to become part of the global resources in order to be able to enhance teaching and learning by downloading information for users. Longshak (2010) in a study of web technologies and services for access to knowledge notes that libraries through the ages enhanced access to knowledge traditionally through their routine operations like acquisition, cataloguing, classification, abstracting, indexing, current awareness services, and selective dissemination of information. The internet as a resource is an electronic resource that is now having the most significant import on library services. The emergence of electronic information resources has greatly transformed information handling and management in libraries. Yusuf (2011) notes that information bridges the gaps between knowledge and ignorance.

On information literacy as a means of seeking information and utilization information adequately, Aniogbolu and Okoh (2017) note that information literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behaviour to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise



and ethical use of information in society. They further add that the concept of information literacy as a subject of study includes, models of information literacy, models of information behaviour (different approaches to searching, browsing, interpersonal communication etc.), characteristics and types of information sources, search formulation and strategy, and information retrieval. Information literacy essentially knows when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.

On the utilization of library resources, Popoola (2008) states the need for university and polytechnic libraries to stimulate primary demand for their products and services through functional library promotion programmes, such as the current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, user education for proper utilization of library resources and services. Ibenne and Durodolu (2011) predicated on the quality of information resources available and effectively being utilized by the students and staff. Chiwar (2017) notes that basic library services are designed to ensure meaningful utilization of the resources, and appropriate services like lending services, reference services, current awareness services, inter-lending loan services, exhibition of new arrivals, and selective dissemination of information, users' education and reprographic services must be provided to ensure better use of the library. Chiwar further notes that lack of awareness of what is available in the library can hinder the use of library resources and services. Alkali and Gama (2017) write on the availability and awareness of online subscribed databases of academics in university libraries in Katsina State note that awareness is to know what is going on or understanding of activities. They also add that awareness could also be described as specific coordination and knowledge sharing among library users.

Mashayabo (2017) also notes that the utilization of library resources is an ingredient that led to success in an academic pursuit. Mashayabo adds that use as an activity is still the most valid majors of any item of worth to a library or information system. Amkpa (2000) in a study of information services and lecturers utilization of libraries in Federal University of Technology in Nigeria observes that the provision of quality information services such as reference services, borrowing services, SDI, photocopying services and interlibrary lending services are fundamental to create lecturers' awareness to increase their utilization of library information resources.

According to Aguolu C. and Aguolu, I. (2002), students' utilization of library resources is part of the institution's activities and as such be perceived as hubs from which all intellectual activities should radiate to all academic and research programmes. Reitz (2004) is of the view that utilization implies the



extent to which the facilities and resources of a library are actually used by its clientele during a given period of time. On the sources of information, Caroline (2010) notes that informal sources of information include use of other people such as friends, classmates, family members and neighbour and so on to get information. Adeyoyin et al (2011) note that lack of marketing strategies affects library users' skills and utilization of library services. Therefore, it is imperative for libraries to engage in intensive marketing strategies of library resources in order to create awareness of available library and information resources and services in library to ensure the use of these resources and services.

Olanlokun (1983) on a similar study conducted on some Nigerian Universities observes that 59.9% of the faculty used the library.

Shapiro and Hughes (1996) provide a broader vision in referring to "a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact". Most studies (Unomah 1988 Fowowe, 1989 McCarthy, 1995 Amkpa, 2000) on library use have always concentrated on students' use of academic libraries (Simisaye, 2012). According to Nicholson and Bartlett (1962), the magnitude of increase in the use of libraries cannot be explained by the larger number of students alone. They also note that undoubtedly contributing factors show great emphasis on research, changes in teaching methods and accelerating out of literature especially in the scientific and technical fields (Nweze, 2011).

Whitlatch (1983) in a study of library use patterns among full and part-time faculty and students found the use of library by faculty to be low; 31.9% used the library once a week or more, while 5.2% never used the library. The majority of the faculty, (62.2%) relied on purchase books and periodical as their primary source of information for teaching and research while 29.1% relied on the library as their primary source. Burns Jr. (1978) notes that library use as an activity is still the most valid measure of any item of worth to a library or information system. He notes that the evaluation of the use of academic libraries is a component of the planning process that provides librarians with feedback to improve the total effectiveness of their academic libraries in response to the needs and wants of their target user. In spite of the various attempts by libraries to ensure effective use of the library by its users, various problems still militate against the use of the library. However, the purpose of this study is to appraise users' awareness and utilization of library resources and services in Public libraries with a particular reference to the Delta State library, Asaba. To guide this study therefore, the following questions were raised:



- (1) What are the sources of awareness of the availability of information resources and services in the Delta State library, Asaba?
- (2) What are the level and extent of assessment of information resources and services in the Delta State library, Asaba?
- (3) What are the frequency of use of information resources and services in the Delta State library, Asaba?
- (4) What are the extent of use of information resources and services in the Delta State library, Asaba?
- (5) What are the problems associated with the use of information resources and services in the Delta State library, Asaba?

## METHOD

This study adopted the survey research design. The population consists of all library users in the Delta State library, Asaba. The sample used for this study consists of two hundred (200) randomly selected library users drawn from the population. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire entitled “users’ awareness and utilization of resources and services in libraries (UAPURSL). Data collected were analyzed in tables using the simple percentage and frequency counts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that the age range of 17 to 32 representing 74.5% respondents form the bulk of the respondents for the study. Others are 33-47 representing 15% and 47 and above representing 10.5% of the respondents respectively. This is an indication that the library is established to meet the information, education and recreation needs of the host community irrespective of age. The assertion on the table indicates that age is not a barrier to information needs. This prompted Longshak (2010) in a study of web technologies and services for access to knowledge to state that libraries through the ages enhanced access to knowledge traditionally through their routine operations like acquisition, cataloguing, classification, abstracting, indexing, current awareness services, and selective dissemination of information. Table 2 shows that the respondents for the study are more of the male respondents with 74% responses, while females who visit the library are 26% of the respondents. Table 3 shows that majority of respondents in this study are students. This is in agreement with Nicholson and Bartlett (1962), who opine that the magnitude of increase in the use of libraries cannot be explained



by the larger number of students. Aguolu C. and Aguolu I. (2002), also observe that students' utilization of library resources is part of the institution's activities and as such be perceived as hubs from which all intellectual activities should radiate to all academic and research programmes. The 62 responses representing 81 % of the respondents attested to this.

Table 4 shows that the sources of awareness of library resources and services in libraries consist of library orientation, 184 responses representing (92%), display, 181 responses representing (90.5%), user education, 190 responses, representing (95%), bulletin/newsletters, 181, responses representing (90.5%), public relations, 172 responses representing (86%), library publication, 50 responses representing (25%) and library tour, 20 responses representing 910%) of the respondents. However, as Alkali and Gama (2017) note that awareness is to know what is going on or understanding of activities, Chiwar (2017) argues that lack of awareness of what is available in the library can hinder the use of library resources and services.

Table 5 indicates that in spite of the problems affecting the use of library resources and services in libraries, users still use the library daily. Omekwu (2006) advises that libraries ought to upload their bibliographic records to become part of the global resources in order to be able to enhance teaching and learning by downloading information for users. Chiwar (2017) notes that basic library services are designed to ensure meaningful utilization of the resources, and appropriate services must be provided to ensure better use of the library.

Table 6 indicates also that in spite of the problems affecting the use of library resources and services in libraries, users still use the library fully. When Popoola (2008) takes a crucial look at the need for utilization of library resources, he opines that libraries have to stimulate primary demand for their products and services through functional library promotion programmes, such as the current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, user education for proper utilization of library resources and services.

Table 7 shows that lack of adequate information infrastructure and power outages are the major problems militating against the usage of libraries by users. Others include lack of access to information resources and service and lack of skills in the use of the library. On information literacy as a means of seeking information and utilization information adequately, Aniogbolu and Okoh (2017) note that information literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behaviour to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise and ethical use of information in society.



**Table 1:** Age distribution of Respondents

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
17-32	149	74.5
33-47	30	15
47 and above	21	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019

**Table 2:** Gender distribution of Respondents

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	148	74
Female	52	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019

**Table 3:** Category of Respondents

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Students	62	81
Self employed	9	4.5
Civil servants	29	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019

**Table 4:** Sources of Awareness of Respondents

(Here respondents are allowed to choose more than one option)

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Display	181	90.5
User Education	190	95
Bulletin/Newsletter	181	90.5
Brochure	-	-
Public Relations	172	86
Social Media	-	-
Library Orientation	184	92
Library Publication	50	25
Library tour	20	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019.

**Table 5:** Frequency of Use of Resources and Services

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily	179	89.5
Once a week	11	5.5
Once a month	-	-
Occasionally	10	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019

**Table 6:** Extent of Use of Resources (n=200)

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fully	191	95.5
Partially	5	2.5
Moderately	4	2
Poorly	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019

**Table 7:** The Problems of Using the Library.

(Here respondents are allowed to choose more than one options)

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of qualified manpower	-	-
Lack of awareness	-	-
Lack of access to information Resources and services	187	93.5
Lack of relevant materials	-	-
Lack of interest	-	-
Lack of skills in the use of the library	183	91.5
Lack of adequate infrastructure	200	100
Poor power supply	191	95.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source:* Survey, 2019.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the findings of the study revealed clearly that various problems are associated with the utilization of resources and services in a public library in Delta State (Delta State Library, Asaba). These are the problems of inadequate



information infrastructure and power outages. Others include lack of access to information resources and services as well as lack of skills in the use of the library. The study also shows that the only sources of awareness of library resources and services in the library consist of library orientation (92%), display (90.5%), user education (95%), bulletin/newsletters (90.5%), public relations (86%), library publication (25%) and library tour (91%) of the respondents. It also indicates that in spite of the problems affecting the use of library resources and services in the library, users still use the library fully daily. In the light of the above, the study recommends as follows:

- i. That public libraries must as a matter of urgency promote critical inquiries and provide access to resources and services required for excellence in research, teaching and learning at all levels of education.
- ii. Offer resources and services for mass literacy programmes.
- iii. Promote manpower development, entrepreneurial skill acquisition.
- iv. Provide special services for the physically challenged persons among others.

These in no small measure will encourage the proper utilization of resources and services in public libraries

#### REFERENCES

- Adebayo, O. (2012) Information as an Economic Resources: The Role of Public Libraries in Nigeria. *Chinese Librarianship: An International Electronic Journal*, 2, (1) 66-75.
- Adeyoyin S. O., Omotosho A. O. and Bello T. A. (2011). Advertising Library and Information Products and Services in Nigerian Libraries. *Library and Information Science Digest*, 5, 27.
- Aguolu, C. C. and Aguolu, I. E. (2002). *Libraries and Information Management in Nigeria; Seminar Essay on Themes and Problems*. Maiduguri: Edulandform Services.
- Alkali, N. U. and Gama, U. G. (2017). Availability and Awareness of Online Subscribed Databases bt Academics in University in Katsina State. *International Journal of Development in Information and Library Science*, 3(1&2), 51.
- Amkpa, S.A (2000). Student use of University of Maiduguri Library: An evaluative study. *Gateway Library Journal*, 2 and 3, 70- 80.
- Aniogbolu, C. A and Okoh, H. E.(2017)Effects of Information Literacy Programme on the Effective Usage of the Library. *International Journal of Development in Information and Library Science*, 3(1&2), 15.



- Aniogbolu, C. A. (2016). *The Concepts Information and Information Literacy*. In: *Introduction to information Literacy and Knowledge Management*. Agbor, Royal Pace.
- Burns Jr, R. B. (1978). Library use as a performance measure: Its background and rationale. *Journal of Academic Librarianships*, 4(1), 4-11.
- Caroline, E. A. (2010) Age as a Factor in Information Use Among Under-graduate Sandwich Students in some Nigerian Universities. *Delta Library Journal*, 4(1&2), 41-47.
- Carbo, T. (1997) Mediacy: knowledge and Skills to Navigate the Information Superhighway, in Infoethics Conference: Monte Carlo, Monaco: 10- 12 March 1997. Paris: UNESCO.
- Chiwar, M. A. (2017). Academic Staff Awareness and Use of Library Resources: The Case of Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola. *International Journal of Development in Information and Library Science*. Vol. 3, No. 1&2, P.23.
- Doyle, C. (1992) Outcome Measures for Information Literacy within the National Education Goals of 1990: Final Report of the National Forum on Information Literacy. Summary of Findings. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.
- Fowowe, S. O. (1989). Students' use of an Academic Library: A survey at the University of Ilorin Libraries. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 7 (1), 47-57.
- Ibenne, S. K. and Durodolu, O. (2011) Imperatives of Virtual Library Services on the Quality of Teaching, Learning and Research for Students in Nigeria Universities. *Gateway Library Journals*. Vol.14. No 1. PP: 16- 26.
- Imo, N. T. and Igbo, H. U. (2013) Students' Perception of Electronic Information Resources in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Library. In *Compendium of NLA Conference Papers*, Calabar.
- Lenox, M. F. and Walker, M.L. (1993) Information literacy in the Educational process. *The Educational Forum*. 57 (2), 312- 324.
- Longshak, C. (2010) Web Technologies and Services for Access to Knowledge, NLA, 48th National Conference and Annual General Meeting: Abuja 2010, held at African Hall International Conference Centre, Abuja, 18th - 24th July, 2010. P. 61.
- Mashayabo, M. K.(2017) Students' Use of Library Resources: A Case Study of Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Birnin-Kebbi Branch Libraries. *International Journal of Development in Information and Library Science*. Vol. 3, No. 1&2,P.1.
- McCarthy, C. A. (1995). Students' perceived effectiveness using university



- libraries. *College and Research Libraries*, 31 (192), 103 -119.
- Nicholson, N. N. and Bartlett, E. (1962). Who uses University Libraries? *College and Research Libraries*, 23(3):217-257.
- Nweze, C. M.T. (2011). Undergraduate Library Instruction in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 495. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/495>.
- Olanlokun, S. O. (1983). Attitudes of faculty and students on Library Service. *Lagos Librarian*, 10(2), 116-129.
- Omekwu, C. O. (2006) Nigerian Library and the World Summit on the Information Society. Issues, Imperatives and Implications. A Compendium of papers presented on the 44th Annual National Conference/AGM of Nigerian Librarians Association, Abuja, PP; 70-90.
- Popoola, S. O. (2008) Faculty Awareness and Use of Library and Information Products and Services in Nigerian Universities. *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science*. Vol. 13, No. 1. PP91-102.
- Reitz, J. M. (2004) Dictionary of Library and Information Science. West Port Libraries Unlimited. P: 102.
- Shapiro, J. J. and Hughes, S. K. (1996) Information Literacy as a Liberal Art: Enlightenment proposals for a new curriculum. *Educom review*, 31(2), 1-6. Available online at: <https://teaching.uncc.edu/sites/teaching.uncc.edu/files/media/article-books/InformationLiteracy.pdf>.
- Simisaye A.O. (2012). Faculty Use of University Library Resources: A Study of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagan, Ogun State, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 820, 1-11. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/820>
- Unomah, J. I. (1988) Students utilization of Academic libraries in Nigeria: the examples of two universities. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review*, 6(2): 51-57.
- Whitlatch J. B. (1983). Library Use Patterns Among Full- and Part-Time Faculty and Students. 44(2), 141-152. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.5860/crl\\_44\\_02\\_141](https://doi.org/10.5860/crl_44_02_141)
- Yusuf A. (2011). Libraries and sustainability of the Democratic Order. The Place of Public Library System in Nigeria, 6 & 7.

