

## STUDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES UTILIZATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO LIBRARY

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study examined students' characteristics and information resources utilization in the University of Uyo library. To carry out the study, two specific objectives were formulated from which two research questions and two hypotheses were drawn. Out of the population of 9694 registered undergraduate students in the University of Uyo library for 2013/2014 academic session, the sample size of 484 registered undergraduate students were purposively sampled for the study. Data were collected for the study through the administration of 25 – item questionnaire tagged “Students’ Characteristics and Information Resources Utilization Questionnaire” (SCIRUQ). The data obtained were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). The findings showed that there is significant relationship between age and students’ utilization of University of Uyo library information resources. It also showed that there is significant relationship between gender and students’ utilization of University of Uyo library information resources, The study concluded that though students of all ages and gender utilize the information resources in the library. One of the recommendations was that University libraries need to adopt the computerized methods to access and utilize information resources in the library.*

**KEYWORDS:** Students, Characteristics, Information Resources, Utilization, University of Uyo Library

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### INTRODUCTION

Student's satisfactory level in the utilization of information resources in the library is an important issue in terms of an academic library. This is because the user community is the most important component of a library. The library as a service oriented institution or organization is to meet the information need of the student (Nwalo, 2003). The extent to which the library satisfies student's need is fundamentally more important because the goal is to bring about satisfaction (Amkpa, 2000). Thus it becomes pertinent to determine the extent to which students utilize the information resources of the library. Every information service exists for the sole aim of satisfying the student informational needs.

The characteristics of the students have an effect on their use of library services. Students who grew up in the digital era irrespective of their year of study and gender often find the library resources time consuming and mostly disappears in the subject of their studies as it is dedicated to professionals and experts onslly. Rather, they prefer to use simple instructed information that is still responsive to their information needs, which is mostly provided via search engines like Google, Yahoo, binges (Hoq, 2012). Student of presentable economics background uses digital information through the library database that is sometimes hard to access because of the layout that digital libraries choose to present their digital service, which all contribute to the time that

could have been put into getting a specific task done. However, librarians are concerned that students don't know how to properly evaluate the information found on the web, therefore, the academic library needs to make its information system more accessible and approachable by student, and find ways to be more available on the general internet (Lippincott, 2011).

One of the basic goals of a university is to provide enabling environment for the conduct of research and dissemination of knowledge for societal development. Access to information is imperative to successful conduct of research in the universities. Maliki (2007) in discussing the role of access to information for research opined that access to relevant information is necessary for all academic purpose/work. Access and use of information is needed for problem solving and decision making in research process. Thus, Maliki (2007) used the term informatizing to describe institutions (universities) that provide wider access to information to aid research process and also viewed use of information as being vital in efficient research process. Previous researchers argued that access to information is critical in the utilization of libraries in Universities. Thus this seeks to determine student characteristics and information resources as they affect utilization in the university of Uyo library.

### **Statement of the Problem**

All academic institutions have attempted to make provision for their library resources in order to provide quality information measures to meet the needs of all categories of her clientele. These libraries endeavor to have quality information resources to facilitate teaching and learning, research and knowledge dissemination in the parent institution. Sequel to this, University of Uyo library has acquired several information resources to make their services available for student use.

It is however not clear whether student characteristics towards the utilization of information resources in the University of Uyo Library are encouraging. This is consistent with Lippincott (2011) when he noted that it is the student's characteristics that determine the utilization of information resources in the academic library. Many reasons have been stated for this gap, while some are of the conception that student characteristics have negative effect on utilization of information resources in the academic libraries, others are of the opinion that students' characteristics have positive effect on utilization of information resources. It is against this contradiction that this research is conducted to examine students' characteristics and information resources utilization in the University of Uyo library.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to examine students' characteristics and information resources utilization in the University of Uyo library. Specifically, the following objectives will guide the study:

1. To determine the relationship between age and students' utilization of University of Uyo library information resources.
2. To determine the relationship between gender and the students' utilization of University of Uyo library information resources.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What is the relationship between age and students' utilization of resources in University of Uyo Libraries?
2. What is the relationship between gender and students' utilization of University of Uyo Library information resources?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between age and students' utilization of University of Uyo library information resources.
2. There is no significant relationship between gender and students' utilization of University of Uyo library information resources.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Students characteristics and utilization of library information resources**

The academic library provides very useful information materials, both in soft and hard copies to satisfy the information needs of its community. The library can be a very important part of the life of every tertiary student if the characteristics of a tertiary student who grew up in a heavily technology exposed environment are well understood and well responded to. The understanding doesn't only relate to the physical facilities that the library offers but everything else it encompasses, such as content, services, access and the variety of collections it holds (Lippincott, 2011). With the fast advancements of ICT, libraries have been adjusting to the wide choices ICT brings with it. The library nowadays be it public or academic provides its patrons access to the internet, updated networks and virtual in-person services, although some students are still not connected due to some extraneous factors, this increases utilization by the students.

Tertiary students of the net generation usually approach Google and similar search engines as the point of entry to information gathering, and don't usually think of library resources as their aid to collecting information. This is usually because library databases don't aggregate content on a particular subject area. Moreover it is time consuming as students have to conduct a number of searches using the different databases provided via the library website, after deciding which database may be more relevant than others. In addition, library resources don't always provide full text information, which is seen as an obstacle. It is important to understand that students of the net generation require fulfillment of their information requests on the spot if possible (Lippincott, 2011).

### **Age and Students Utilization of Information Resources**

Net Age students prefer more diverse forms of communication and reported that they are easily bored with the traditional learning techniques (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005). Although the Net Age students tend to be more independent while seeking for information, they lack information literacy and do not necessarily understand how the internet actually affects their learning capacities and habits of seeking information in difference ways. They confirmed the point that

technological revolution has not improved the information literacy of the digital generations (Nicholas, Rowlands, & Williams, 2010).

Having being raised in a media and digital era, the new generations, or the “NetGeners” as describes by Nicholas et al (2010) developed a techniques of thinking, communicating and learning, and they tend to be more independent in a way they learn and seek information. This introduced the variety of educational options and activities, bringing in a whole of different questions of what, where and how younger generation learn, instead of only focusing on what kind of education they obtain.

Age is one variable that correlate with the characteristics and use of information resources. The invention of computers has really affected the younger generations in term of information resources utilization. They express their needs of immediacy which educational institutions may not be able to serve these learning needs. Student of the net age use the World Wide Web to seek immediate answer to their questions, which influence their learning expectations and made them more independent when obtaining information, differentiating them from their predecessors that acquired information from education and library (Tapscott 2009). Library use is one of the essential activities expected of serious minded students. They are expected to be in constant utilization of information resources in university libraries. Students’ frequent use of library information resources helps to be able to evaluate, and use information within their stipulated time without delay and roaming aimlessly in the library. It is good to note that user that has need for information must know how to use the library and have certain skills on how to locate the required needs. At all times, students must know how to use different types of tools provided by the librarians such as catalogue card, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), Abstracts, Indexes and Library Repository. They need to know how to use library because the current trends for the information age is adequate information literacy, as the necessary skill that is important in any organization. Osinulu and Uhegbu (2011) noted the significance of information in the society relating to human use of information resources in their daily activities. Pinto and Maria (2013) proposed on how to create concept that will help students on information literacy skills.

Bello (2003) corroborated the view of Fjallbrant, by stating that library use education is a device by the librarians to educate users on how to use the resources available in the library in a result -oriented ways. According to Osagie (2003) the objectives of the library use education are as follows:

1. To enable users to know how to use the library catalogues independently in any library with particular references to the Author/Title and Subject catalogues.
2. To enable users to understand the classification of any library so as to enable them locate materials (books, journals, audio visual materials etc) with little or no problem,
3. To be able to see library catalogues as indexes to the entire collection and use them as such, and
4. To enable the users to see the library as a repository of knowledge that determines the success of the students academic programmes because it is not possible for an individual to have the collection of a library.

## Gender and Student Utilization of Information Resources

Gender comprises a range of differences between men and women extending from the biological to the social roles a mother have to play like taking care of the children, cooking, fetching waters and firewood, in addition to cultivation. Women who do not have access to the key productive resources such as capital, as well as being underprivileged in education and knowledge. Nagata (2004) observes that a technological change is not usually aimed at women at all, and that large-scale development project and their technology rarely include policy regarding women. The sexiest bias was the most importance factor explaining the inability of women to take advantage of new technology offered. He further contained that appropriate technology programmes revealed that many projects do not achieved positive results for women lives that in many projects, even technology introduced for the benefit of women have been co-opted by men for their own use.

Gender is a relevant factor in examining use of the information resources in the library. The attitudes of the student toward information resources utilization is tend to vary by gender. While the gender gap relating to information resources utilization seem to be shrinking, several studies have found that there is gender gab when considering the utilization of information resources, and that gender is a major predictor of information resources utilization and the attitude of males seem to utilize information resources at will (Hog, 2012). Gender comprises a range of differences between male and female extending from the biological to the social roles and females have to play like caring for the younger siblings, cooking, fetching water and firewood, in addition to cultivation. Such role may hinder her from easily adopting the accurate utilization of the information's resources. The marginalization of the female in regard to technology adaptation and transfer is reinforced by the Africa cultural system which requires the female to remain at home while male attend seminars (Kuhlthau, 2010). The socio-economic status of most students in the higher institution does not facilitate the acquisition of the computer communication technologies for the utilization of information resources. Scientist suggested that the brains of the new generation have been "rewired" as a result of growing up in a digital environment, if this is true, then the existing institutions such as schools, universities, libraries and other educational institutions have to undergo a fundamental change or face marginalization (Mabawonku, 2004).

According to Adio (2006) the history of development of user education is not recent and that it has been traced to 1960s, particularly the use of academic libraries. This was in line with the view of Akande (2002) that library instruction movement as we know it today, and the controversies which surround it came to maturity in 1960s. Among the information goals of university libraries as stated by Adio (2006) are;

- To contribute to the realization of the aims of the University with regard to teaching, learning and research, by acquisition of materials (both print and non-print) necessary to cover present day and future information needs;
- To organize the materials acquired in such a way that it is not only permits but actively stimulates the use of the materials through formal orientation.
- To adapt these information resources and services to the ever-changing needs of the University, and the society,

- To contribute to the integration of both National and International information resources within the university.

There are different services and facilities offered to clientele by libraries in order that the quest of the prospective users might be met. Since personal assistance to readers is the centre of these services, it appears in different forms. As stated by Harrison, et al, (1981), resources in the library can also be grouped according to formats. The main format includes:

- Printed materials
- Non-printed materials
- electronic materials

Printed library materials/resources are made up of all items that are printed on paper through moveable type. This consists of books, periodicals, government publications, graphics and other illustrative materials such as maps and atlases. Books may be written by one or several authors and may come in a single volume or in multiple volumes. Periodicals/serials come at regular or irregular intervals and are meant to continue indefinitely. They are characterized with distinct titles and several authors or contributor contributing to each issue. Other printed materials include judicial publications, indexes and abstracts, legislative publications, Ephemerals etc.

Non-printed materials or media are often referred to as audio visual resources. They are the products of advanced technology, some of which require special equipment to operate. Non printed media can grouped into three:

- (a) **Audio:** This has to do with learning. They are sound recordings produced on magnetic tapes. Only the auditory senses are required for their appreciation. Examples are MP3, CD audio, etc.
- (b) **Visual:** This appeal to the eyes. Materials in this group include photographic, three dimensional objects, painting and other information bearing resources that the eye can focus on and abstract information.
- (c) **Audio-Visual:** These combines both the auditory and the visual. Sound, film, and slides, video tapes, video cassettes, video compact disk (VCD) etc.

Other non-printed resources in the library include microforms which can be sub-divided into microfilm, microfiche and micro card.

## METHOD

### Research Design

An Expost-Facto design was used for this study. In this type of design the researcher cannot manipulate the effect on the dependent variable but just obtain the effect already existing in the natural course of events.

### **Area of the Study**

The research area for this study was University of Uyo community in Uyo Metropolis.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprised all the 9694 registered undergraduate users of Nyong Essien library from the twelve faculties such as faculties are Education, Social Science, Pharmacy, Basic Medical Science, Arts, Clinical Science, Sciences, Law, Agriculture, Environmental Studies, Engineering and Business Administration (Nyong Essien Registration Unit (2013/2014 Academic Session).

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A simple random sampling technique was used to draw the 484 respondents derived from 8 out of 12 faculties of the university. This formed 5% of the population of the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The main instrument used in this study was questionnaire titled “Students’ Characteristics and Information Resources Utilization Questionnaire” (SCIRUQ). The questionnaire was made up of two sections, (sections A and B). Section A was used to collect information on personal data of the respondents while section B of the questionnaire was made up of utilization of resources by the students measured in with “Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree”. The obtained data was coded statistically before the statistical analysis of the data.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

The instrument passed through face and content validated by the experts in test and measurement in the University of Uyo.

### **Reliability of the Instrument:**

Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. In the trial test, a total of 40 respondents who did not form part of the main study were randomly selected from a faculty that did not form part of the main work. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.87 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

### **Procedure for Collecting Data**

A letter of introduction was written by the researcher. This letter was to introduce the researcher to the chief librarian and other departmental heads in the library. The questionnaires were issued and retrieved 3 days latter from each respondent.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) for research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis for hypotheses. Test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels with 482 degree of freedom.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS****Research Question 1****Table 1: Relationship between Age and Student' Utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library**

S/N	Age and Students' Utilization of Information Resources	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1.	Students between 18-25 years are more eager to utilize information resources in the library than the students that are above 25 years	484	6.52	4.72	Agreed
2	Students above 25 years are pre-occupied with other extra-curricular activities at the expenses of their studies	484	3.82	4.11	Agreed
3	Students between 18 – 25 years are more conversant with the utilization of information resources in the library	484	3.64	2.96	Agreed
4	Students above 25 prefer information utilization from the internet than that of the library	484	6.11	3.52	Agreed
5	Students of all levels tends to appreciate information resources utilization from their peers groups	484	5.64	3.28	Agreed

Table 1 shows the summary of the mean and standard deviation of Age and Students' Utilisation of Information Resources in the University of Uyo Library. The results shows that all items have mean responses above 3.0, which is the cut off mean. This means that there is a significant relationship between Age and Students' Utilization of Information Resources of Uyo Library.

**Research Question 2****Table 2: Resources between Gender and Students' Utilization of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library**

S/N	Gender and Students' Utilization of Information Resources	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1.	Female students utilize information resources in the library than their male counterpart	484	3.32	2.46	Agreed
2.	Female students are found to always be in the library in search of information resources than their male counterparts	484	3.49	2.51	Agreed
3	Male Students prefer information resources from the internet to that of the library	484	5.61	3.16	Agreed
4.	Female students response more to users education on information resources need than the male counterpart	484	3.11	1.52	Agreed
5	Male and female students welcome the utilization of information resources in the library	484	6.64	3.28	Agreed

Table 2 shows the summary of the mean and standard deviation of Gender and Students' Utilization of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library. The results showed that all items have mean responses above 3.0, which is the cut off mean. This means that there is a significant relationship between gender and students' utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library.

### Testing of Hypotheses

This section presents testing of the hypotheses and its related interpretation. Two Hypotheses were postulated for the study and they were tested as follows:

#### Hypothesis 1

**Table 3:**

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Age and Students' Utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library**

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r-ratio	Remarks
Decision	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$			
Age (x)	7587	105967	104066	1.86	Significant
Students' Utilisation (y)	7467	102623			

**Level of Significance 0.05, df=484-2, critical r value 0.098**

The data in Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.86 at 482 degree of freedom, while the critical t-value is 0.098. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between Age and Students' Utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library. The study showed that students of the University of Uyo between 18-25 years of age utilize the library more than students above 25 years of age due to preoccupation of other curricular activities. Basically, older students have a preference of internet resources to using library resources

#### Hypothesis 2

**Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between gender and Students' Utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library.**

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r-ratio	Remark
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$			
Gender (x)	5486	95967	94066	1.45	Significant
Students' Utilisation (y)	4417	92621			

**Level of Significance 0.05, df=484-2, critical r-value 0.098**

The data in table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.45 at 482 degree of freedom, while the critical t-value is 0.098. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between gender and students' utilisation of Information Resources in University of Uyo Library. The study showed that female students of the University of Uyo utilize library resources more than their male counterparts. It was also revealed in the study that male students prefer internet resources from cybercafés and other ICT centres to using library resources. The result from this study agrees with an assertion by Nagata (2004) who noted that technological changes are not usually aimed at women at all and that large scale development project and their technology rarely include policy regarding women. The author further states that sexist bias was the most important factor explaining the inability of women to take advantage of new technology offered.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that student of all ages and gender utilizes information resources in the library. Also, there is a significant relationship between age and students' utilisation of information resources in University of Uyo Library. Students of the University of Uyo between 18-25 years of age utilize the library. Female student of the University of Uyo were more involved in utilization of the library resources than their male counterparts, while male student prefer internet resources from cybercafés and other ICT centres to using library resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are deemed necessary:

1. It is pertinent that government should formulate a workable policy that will ensure that students are introduced to the use of library right from the Nursery and Primary and Secondary school levels. This will help create the knowledge of the library and its resources early enough and therefore make part of them before they get to Tertiary education level.
2. The university management and government should make provision of current books and computer system to facilitate and encourage the students for more accessibility and utilization of information resources in the library.
3. Students should be given adequate accessibility to the resources in order for them to consult reference resources in the library while ensuring that controlled accessibility is there in case of library resources that are not available so as to preserve the little one available in the library.
4. University libraries need to adopt the computerize method to access and utilize information resources in the library.
5. Awareness seminars should be organized for students on the use of computer, while policies on computer literacy should be made as one of the before students during admission.

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