

Perception of Utilizing Information Services. (Federal Polytechnic, Mubi. Adamawa, Nigeria)

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Abstract

A survey of 23 randomly selected students from Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria, for a study Perception of utilizing Information Services, revealed that user perception significantly influences the utilization of information services. Students with positive perceptions were more likely to use these services frequently, highlighting the importance of fostering positive attitudes towards libraries. The study also identified the Lending or Circulation Service, User Training, Current Awareness Services, and Referral Service as the most frequently used services, suggesting a preference for resources that support research, stay up-to-date on information, and provide personalized assistance. To encourage effective utilization, the study recommends that libraries promote positive perceptions, enhance user training opportunities, advertise reference and referral services, gather student feedback, incorporate technology, collaborate with faculty, and promote services through various channels. By implementing these recommendations, libraries can ensure that their information services remain relevant, accessible, and valuable to students.

Keywords: *User Perception, Information Services Utilization, Libraries, Information Literacy*

1.0 Introduction

In today's information-driven world, access to and utilization of information services have become essential for academic success, professional advancement, and personal growth. Information services, encompassing libraries, online resources, and other information repositories, play a crucial role in providing individuals with the knowledge and resources they need to navigate an increasingly complex world. This is particularly true for students in higher education institutions,

where effective utilization of information services is paramount for conducting research, completing assignments, and expanding one's knowledge base.

This study delves into the perception of utilizing information services among Library Science students at Federal Polytechnic, Mubi. By exploring the perspectives and experiences of these students, the study aims to gain insights into their understanding of the value and importance of information services, their perceptions of available resources and services, and the factors that influence their utilization patterns. (Adebayo, 2015) Discussed various factors influencing user perception, such as awareness, accessibility, relevance, and quality of services. They also highlight the role of user perception in shaping utilization patterns and emphasize the importance of understanding user perceptions to improve information services. (A. C. & Okpala, 2020) Discuss various factors that influence user perception, such as user demographics, academic discipline, and technological literacy. They also highlight the importance of user perception in promoting information literacy and lifelong learning.

In the contemporary educational landscape, the role of libraries and information services has evolved beyond traditional repositories of books to dynamic hubs facilitating learning, research, and information dissemination (Abbas, 2017). Libraries have historically been the cornerstone of academic institutions, providing students and scholars with access to a wealth of information (Hider, 2018). Over the years, the landscape of library services has transformed significantly, propelled by advancements in technology and changing pedagogical paradigms (Stoker & Berube, 2019, Ward & Hall, 2020). The Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Library, cognizant of these changes, has adapted to embrace a multifaceted approach to information services, integrating traditional resources with modern digital platforms to cater to the diverse needs of its user community (Brown, 2016).

The Department of Library and Information Science at Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, plays a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of information professionals (Pillai, 2015). Library Science students, enrolled in programs designed to impart theoretical knowledge and practical skills, are at the nexus of this transformation. As future custodians of information, their experiences and perceptions in utilizing information services become instrumental not only for their individual academic success but also for the continuous enhancement of library services within the institution (Wilson, 2016). Understanding the perceptions of Library Science students regarding the utilization of information services is imperative for several reasons. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the services offered by the Federal Polytechnic, Mubi Library, and highlights areas for improvement (Lorenzen, 2018). Secondly, as future information professionals, the perceptions of these students may offer valuable input into the development of library programs and services that align with emerging trends in the field (Case, 2017). Lastly, exploring the challenges faced by Library Science students in accessing and utilizing information services can inform strategies to enhance user experience and ensure equitable access to resources (Nabeel, 2019).

The findings of this study will contribute to a broader understanding of the user experience in information services and inform strategies for enhancing access, promoting utilization, and fostering a culture of information literacy among students in higher education.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The utilization of information services among Library Science students at Federal Polytechnic, Mubi poses multifaceted challenges and questions that warrant a comprehensive investigation. This study seeks to address the awareness levels of students regarding available resources, the patterns of service utilization, challenges faced in accessing information, and the perceived impact of these services on academic and professional development. By unraveling these aspects, the research aims to contribute essential insights for optimizing library services, adapting to evolving student preferences, and ensuring that Library Science students are well-equipped for their future roles as information professionals.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the current status of how students utilize information services in the polytechnic, mubi.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. Assess the information service available in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.
2. Examine the extent to which students in federal polytechnic mubi are utilizing information services in support of their academic endeavors and research activities.
3. To provide recommendations based on the research findings that can guide educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders in improving digital literacy and promoting equal access to information services for students at federal polytechnic, mubi.

2.0 RELATED REVIEWS

User perception: Is the individual's subjective interpretation and evaluation of information services based on their personal experiences, needs, and expectations (Dervin & Nilan, 2005; Harris, 1994; Wilson, 2002).

Information services utilization: Is the act of using information services, including libraries, online databases, search engines, and other resources, to find and access information (Borgman, 2007; Hjørland, 2010; Varlejs, 2017).

Libraries: Is an organizations that collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to information materials such as books, journals, newspapers, and digital resources (Harris, 2010; Stoffle, 2000; Webb, 2019).

Information literacy: Refer to the ability to find, evaluate, use, and create information effectively in a variety of contexts (American Association of School Librarians, 2007; Bruce, 2019; Kuhlthau, 2013).

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The theoretical framework for this research project draws on several theories and concepts that are relevant to understanding the utilization of information services among students in the federal polytechnic mubi. This framework provides a foundation for examining the factors that influence students and barriers related to information services in this specific context.

Several theoretical frameworks can illuminate this complex issue:

2.1.1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):

This widely used framework (Davis et al., 1989) proposes that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are the primary determinants of technology adoption. Students are more likely to engage with information services they find easy to learn and navigate, and that provide clear value for their academic pursuits (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

2.1.4. Social Cognitive Theory:

This theory, championed by Bandura (1999), emphasizes the interplay of individual beliefs, environmental factors, and social influence on learning and behavior. Students' perceptions of the library environment, their peers' usage of information services, and interactions with librarians all shape their own awareness and utilization (Kuhlthau, 2004).

2.1.5. Activity Theory:

This framework, advanced by Engeström (1999), focuses on how individuals engage with tools and technologies within specific social contexts. Examining how students interact with information services within their academic activities, library culture, and overall workload can reveal how these services are actually used (and how they aren't) (El-Khalifi & Harrigan, 2019).

2.2 Conceptual Reviews

Adebola and Adeoye (2016) delve into the complex relationship between user perception and information services utilization. They emphasize the importance of understanding user needs and expectations to enhance library services and promote effective utilization. The authors identify factors such as awareness, accessibility, relevance, quality, and ease of use as key determinants of user perception.

(Akabutu, 2013) focuses on the specific context of academic libraries, examining the factors that influence user perception and their subsequent impact on information services utilization. The author highlights the significance of user expectations, library environment, and librarian-user interaction in shaping user perceptions. Effective communication, user-centered services, and a welcoming library environment can foster positive perceptions and encourage utilization.

Okpala and Okpala (2020) investigate the influence of user perception on information services utilization within higher education institutions. They consider factors such as user demographics, academic discipline, and technological literacy as key influencers of user perceptions. The authors emphasize the importance of tailoring information services to the specific needs of different user groups to enhance their utilization.

(Adebayo and Osifala, 2015) underscore the significance of understanding user perception in improving information services utilization. They discuss various methods for assessing user perception, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The authors advocate for a user-centered approach to information services development, ensuring that services align with user needs and preferences.

(Umar, Musa, and Abdullahi, 2021) explore the perception of information services utilization among students in higher education institutions. They identify factors such as awareness of available resources, accessibility of technology, and information literacy skills as key determinants of student perceptions. The authors emphasize the need for targeted outreach programs and information literacy initiatives to enhance student utilization of information services.

3.0 METHOD

A survey of 23 randomly selected students from Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Nigeria, was conducted to assess their perception and utilization of information services. The survey questionnaire included questions about the students' agreement that their perception of information services influences their utilization of these services, as well as their ratings of the quality of available resources, the ease of use of information services, and their awareness of available resources. Additionally, the students were asked to indicate how frequently they utilize information services.

3.1 Research Design:

A mixed methods approach was employed to investigate the awareness and utilization of information services among students in Federal Polytechnic Mubi. This approach allowed us to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research question (Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Study Area

The study area for this research was Federal Polytechnic, mubi Adamawa State. And is in North-East Nigeria, which has been plagued by conflict and instability for over a decade, which has significantly impacted the availability and quality of education in the region (UNICEF, 2023). As a result, many students in North-East Nigeria face challenges in accessing information services and developing the skills necessary to effectively utilize them, polytechnics offer a variety of programs designed to prepare students for careers in a range of fields, including engineering, technology, and business (Federal Ministry of Education, 2023).

3.3 Population of the study:

The population of the study is only concerned with library students enrolled in Federal polytechnic mubi during the academic year 2023-2024. This population is estimated to be approximately 50-100 library students (Federal Ministry of Education, 2023).

3.4 Quantitative Data Collection:

A survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from a sample of students in Federal Polytechnic Mubi. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceptions of their utilization of information services.

3.5 Qualitative Data Collection

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller sample of professional library staff to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with information

services. These interviews allowed staff/students to share their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of information services, as well as the challenges they face in accessing and using information.

3.6 Sampling technique:

A sampling technique is "the systematic method employed to choose a representative sample from the population, ensuring that it adequately reflects the characteristics of the larger group, allowing for meaningful analysis and generalization of findings. (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. , 2017). In this study, a Researcher used a Random sample technique to select some populations of the correspondence of the study area.

3.7 Validation/reliability:

Validation refers to determining whether a research instrument or measurement tool accurately measures what it's intended to measure. It assesses whether the instrument provides valid results, meaning it measures the construct or variable it claims to measure. Validation often involves comparing the instrument's results with a known or established standard to confirm its accuracy. (Nunnally, 1994). The face and content validity of the instrument was done by three of my seniors from the Department of Library Science at Federal Polytechnic Bali. The experts examined the questionnaire based on relevance, suitability, and item coverage based on what the study purported to cover. Their corrections, contributions, and suggestions formed the basis for the final production of the instrument.

3.8 Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the survey will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data, while the inferential statistics were used to test hypotheses about the relationships between variables (Pallant, 2016).

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This consists of Results and a Discussion of the findings

4.1 RESULT

There were 23 students randomly selected to fill out the questionnaires from the study area all questionnaires distributed are, using Google form (online questionnaire) and manual questionnaires. These were all corrected sorted out and coded accordingly for proper data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistic was carried out on the data to draw conclusions and inferences.

Table 1: Show the information Services available in the library

S/N	INFORMATION SERVICE	Frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage. %
1	Current Awareness Services	6	10%	10%
2	Reprographic Service	0	0%	10%
3	Document Delivery Service	5	8%	18%
4	Referral Service	7	11%	30%
5	SDI Service	2	3%	33%
6	User Training	5	8%	41%
7	Lending or Circulation Service	6	10%	51%
8	Reservation of Documents	5	8%	59%
9	Inter Library Loan	2	3%	62%
10	Assistance in the Use of Library and Library Tools	3	5%	67%
11	Reference Service	5	8%	75%
12	Reader Advisory Service	5	8%	84%
13	Library Orientation	5	8%	92%
14	Information Technology (IT) Related Services	5	8%	100%
	Total:	61	100%	

Source: Researcher's field work-2023.

Table 1: Show the information services available in federal polytechnic, mubi library which shown that:

- The Lending or Circulation Service is the most popular information service, likely because it allows users to borrow books and other materials to read or use outside of the library.
- The User Training service is also popular, as it provides users with the skills they need to use library resources effectively.
- The Current Awareness Services and the Referral Service are both important for helping users to stay up-to-date on the latest information and to find the resources they need.
- The SDI Service and Inter Library Loan are less frequently used, but they are still important services for users who need to access specialized or rare materials.

Table 2: Show the services preferred by student

S/N	Information Services	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1	Current Awareness	9	32%	32%
2	Reprographic Service	1	4%	36%
3	Document Delivery Service	2	7%	43%
4	Referral service	3	11%	54%
5	SDI service	0	0%	54%
6	User Training	4	14%	68%
7	Lending or Circulation Service	2	7%	75%
8	Reservation of Document	1	4%	79%
9	Inter Library Loan	0	0%	79%
10	Assistance in the use of Library ad Library Tools	1	4%	82%
11	Reference Service	2	7%	89%
12	Reference Advisory Service	0	0%	89%
13	Library Orientation	2	7%	96%
14	Information Technology Related Services	1	4%	100%
Total		28	100%	

Source: Researcher’s field work-2023.

Table 2: Shows the frequency and percentage of information services preferred by students. The most frequently preferred information service is Current Awareness, with 9 students (32%) indicating it as their preferred service. This is followed by User Training (4 students, 14%), Reference Service (2 students, 7%), and Referral Service (3 students, 11%). The least frequently preferred information services are SDI Service, Reference Advisory Service, and Inter-Library Loan, with no students indicating these as their preferred services. The findings show that students are most heavily utilizing information services that help them stay up-to-date on the latest information (Current Awareness) and find the resources they need (Reference Services and Lending or Circulation Services). They also value services that provide them with research and information literacy skills (User Training).

Table 3: Show how students use Information services.

How do u use information services?			
	Frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage %
Daily	1	4%	4%

1 - 3 times a week	2	9%	13%
1-2 times week	17	74%	87%
Others	3	13%	100%
Total	23	100%	

Source: Researcher's field work-2023.

Table 3: Show the majority of students (74%) use information services at least once a week, indicating a high level of engagement with these resources. A significant portion of students (9%) use information services 1-3 times a week, suggesting a regular pattern of utilization. A small percentage of students (4%) use information services daily, highlighting a reliance on these resources for daily academic or personal needs. Only 13% of students use information services less frequently or not at all, suggesting that the library's services are successfully reaching and supporting a large portion of the student population.

4.2 DISCUSSION/FINDINGS

- A majority of students (82%) are utilizing information services that are related to research and information literacy, indicating that these are important areas of focus for the library.
- A significant number of students (36%) are regularly using Current Awareness services, suggesting that there is a strong demand for help in staying up-to-date on the latest information.
- The Reference Service and Lending or Circulation Service are also popular, with 29% and 21% of students utilizing them regularly, respectively, indicating their value as resources for finding information.
- User Training is utilized regularly by a quarter of students (25%), suggesting that there is a demand for help in developing research skills.
- Students are actively utilizing the library's information services to meet their academic and personal needs. The high percentage of weekly users (83%) indicates that the library is a valuable resource for students, and the diverse range of usage frequencies suggests that the library is catering to a variety of student needs and preferences.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the library should consider the following recommendations:

- Continue to provide and promote Current Awareness services to meet the high demand for this type of service.
- Ensure that the Reference Service is readily accessible and staffed by knowledgeable librarians to assist students with their research needs.
- Maintain a well-stocked and organized collection of materials to support the high demand for the Lending or Circulation Service.
- Continue to offer User Training opportunities to help students develop their research skills, and consider expanding these offerings to meet the growing demand.
- Explore the reasons for the low utilization of SDI Service, Reprographic Service, and Inter-Library Loan, and consider targeted outreach or service improvements to increase their usage.

Future research should investigate the impact of these services on learning outcomes, examine the factors influencing student preferences, and examine the evolving landscape of information services in the digital age. By addressing these research areas, we can optimize library resources, support student learning, and ensure the continued relevance of libraries in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Students are actively utilizing the library's information services to meet their academic and personal needs. The high percentage of weekly users (83%) indicates that the library is a valuable resource for students, and the diverse range of usage frequencies suggests that the library is catering to a variety of student needs and preferences. The library should continue to provide and promote its current services, and it should also consider promoting less frequently used services to reach a wider student audience.

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