# Survey of Availability of Information Resources in Faculty and Departmental Libraries: a case study of Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Abia State University, Uturu

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Abstract
*This study examines the availability of information resources in the Faculty and Departmental libraries of Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) and Abia State University (ABSU). FUTO has four faculty/departmental libraries likewise ABSU The study identifies the type of information resources that are available in these libraries and their functionality. Survey research design was adopted, interview method was also used. The population for the study is eight (8), drawing one librarian from each faculty/departmental libraries. Data collected was analyzed using percentages and the following were recorded: that there are existing faculty/departmental libraries in FUTO and ABSU, that departmental libraries in ABSU and FUTO mostly have more print materials than non print materials. It is only in the school of Agriculture FUTO, that their e-resources are relatively functional. Based on these findings, recommendations were made.*

Keywords: Library, Academic Library, Faculty/Departmental Library, Library Resources.

## Introduction

Library activities in the university system are focused on providing information services to its user community. A well developed library can be summed up to be one that collects, organizes and makes available for use both print and non print materials. The university library does not only organize and provide documents and items of information they also purify and filter knowledge and extract the more useful from the less useful information through the process of cataloguing and classification, indexing, circulation, abstracting, lending among others to satisfy the information needs of the users. Library is the bedrock of knowledge and once library is mentioned all minds go to books and other reading materials especially in an academic environment.

Iloeje (2014), in a keynote address emphasized that no nation can attain significant development in the absence of a qualitative reading culture and effective reading habit. A study by Ibe (2014), states that education is the greatest investment any nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, social as well as human resources and the library is positioned and statutorily empowered to deliver in these respects without discrimination. Today, the library is conceived not as an archive or a reading room but as according to Eze (2013), a "foyer of living ideas - ideas that permeate and animate all aspects of national life".

According to the manual of Accreditation Procedure (1999), departmental/faculty library is one of the main areas assessed during accreditation of academic programmes in universities and most universities fail accreditation because of the inadequacy of their libraries. In addition, a number of programmes in some Nigerian universities are known to have failed in the 2007 accreditation exercise purely because of the inadequacy of their libraries. It was also revealed that each institution should have a total overall score of 70% and above, at least in each of the core areas of staffing, academic content, physical facilities and library. In most cases institutional libraries cannot provide the depth of books required by individual departments as a result of this, there is need for the establishment of departmental/faculty libraries.

Again, a manual from National Universities Commission (1989) has directed that every law faculty should have a law library which should be separate and distinct from the main university library. Such a library should be seen as "lawyers" laboratory and should be taken as a library for "policy makers". In view of this, Aina (2007) emphasizes that departments in the higher institutions should have a resource centre that would also serve as their own laboratory as well.
Sequel to these, it has become necessary to decentralize the library.

Decentralization of the University library could be seen as taking information resources to the readers rather them expecting them to come to the main library for the materials. Decentralization of the University library bring about subject specialization as each faculty/department acquires books most suited for their own academic programmes and courses they offer and this could help students to have materials for intensive

and in-depth studies in their chosen fields of study. In the faculty/departmental libraries, resources are most of the times tailored towards the satisfaction of the intellectual needs of a particular group of people which make up the academic unit they are meant to serve. Reitz (2004) views faculty/department libraries as a unit of academic library that serves the needs of a specific department within an institution of higher learning.

**Literature review**

According to Bozimo (1992), an academic library is the heart of the learning community as it provides a place for students and faculty to do research and advance their knowledge. In this regard therefore, the librarians and staff provide numerous services to users by addressing their diverse information needs, characteristics and interests. With the population explosion of staff and students as well as the growth and development of the universities, the main libraries could no longer be able to provide all the needed resources to the users adequately, this in turn calls for the development of departmental and faculty libraries. Faculty/department libraries maintain collections consistent with the functional needs of that department and could be considered as complementary to and not competitive with the institutional library. In view of this, Badger (2013) in his study on undergraduates use of library states "We are losing our clients and that students are not actually coming to study and make use of the library materials but only to socialize with their friends". Despite this, managers of the libraries have gone further to provide users with the right information materials irrespective of those that come to library to socialize, and this is achievable through the establishment of these libraries, that is taking small unit of libraries to the users' door step.

Uhegbu (1989) highlights the following reasons for establishing faculty/departmental libraries:

- Struggle towards subject specialized collection for effective accessibility of information;
- Geographical distance between various schools and departments within an institution due to expansion;
- General increase in the total population of students admitted,
- Proliferation in the number of departments being created.

Anyanwu & Ogu (2005) posit that one of the specific purposes of the faculty library is to provide appropriate reading materials for every course in the curriculum. Eze (2013) describes faculty/departmental library as a branch charged with the responsibility of locating, selecting, organizing and disseminating whatever information discovered in those fields in line with the faculty curriculum or the faculty/department where they are established. The reason for this type of library is to facilitate the physical access of information resources to students, lecturers and other staff of the same department/faculty where they are located.

Edoka (2000) and Ola (2004) categorize the resources of faculty/departmental library into print and non-print materials. The materials include magazines, newspapers, textbooks, television sets, films, projectors, slides, film step, internet services and educational objects such as regular computer assisted instructional aids and other reference materials. Dike (2010) and Edoka (2000) have identified functions of university library to include conservation of knowledge, promotion and dissemination of knowledge through pure applied and developmental oriented programmes. They went further to enumerate the functions of university library as a place of development for human resources to meet manpower needs, promote social and economic modernization and provide specialized information services to the appropriate segments of the wider community. Consequently, the faculty/departmental library is also established to provide a wide range of materials for research, study, learning, conflict resolution as well reading for pleasure. It also plays an indispensable role in the fulfillment of the university mission and goals.

**Statement of the problem**

Academic libraries usually serve as a workshop for the entire university community, as well as maintain large collections of detailed research materials for staff, students and scholars. In order to fulfill the university mission and action plan for effective professional programmes, separate libraries are essential apart from the central library to specifically serve faculties and departments. Given that the library occupies a significant place in the university, some members of the university community have argued that faculty/departmental libraries established in various universities are not functional as a result of inadequate information materials. Hence this research is set to assess the resources of these libraries to find out if the speculations are true or not.

**Research objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

To identify the type of information resources available in FUTO and ABSU faculty/departmental libraries.

1. To establish if the available e- resources are functional in these libraries.
2. To find out the problems as regards to the

availability of the information resources.

3. To proffer possible solutions to the identified problems.

**Methods**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The research employed the use of questionnaire and interview for collection of data. Eight (8) departmental/ faculty libraries were studied. One Contact person was interviewed for each library. The use of simple frequency counts and percentages were adopted for analysis of data.

From the above table, the type of resources that are available in FUTO departmental/faculty libraries as represented are as follows; textbooks, journals, newspapers, encyclopedia, projects, school handbooks and e-resources from School of Agric technology Library (SAAT). While in ABSU departmental/faculty libraries their resources as represented in Table 1 above includes textbooks, journals, newspapers, dictionary,

Research Question 1

Table 1:Type of Information Resources

| Resource | FUTO | | | | ABSU | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SAAT Library | Erosion Library | Petroleum Library | SOET Library | Agric Library | Law Library | French Library | Lib and inform service L ibrary |
| Textbooks | | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| Journals | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| Newspapers | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| Encyclopedia | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| E-resources | V | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Internet | V | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| OPAC | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dictionary | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| Gov Publication | V | - | V | - | V | - | V | - |
| Past Question papers | - | - | V | - | - | - | - | - |
| Project & Thesis | V | V | V | V | V | V | V | V |
| Specialized dictionary | - | - | - | - | - | - | V | V |
| Lab manuals | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| School handbooks | V | - | - | V | - | - | - | - |
| Novels | - | - | - | - | - | - | V | V |

specialized dictionaries and novels. Interview report from various departmental/faculty libraries confirm that none of these libraries have e-resources except school of Agriculture in Federal University of Technology Owerri (SAAT).

**Research Question 2**

Table 2: The Functionality of the E-resources in Faculty/Departmental Libraries.

| E-resources | FUTO | | ABSU | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SAAT Library | | Departmental Library | |
| | Functional | Non functional | Functional | Non Functional |
| Internet Facilities | V | | -V | |
| OPEC | - | V | - | V |
| Computer | V | - | V | |
| CD-Rom | V | - | - | V |
| Flash drive | V | - | - | V |
| Diskette | V | - | - | V |
| TEEAL (data base) | V | - | - | V |

From the Table 2 above, it can be seen that School of Agric Technology Library (SAAT) (FUTO) has e-resources that are functional which include internet facilities, computers, CD-Rom, flash drives, diskettes and TEEAL (database) but all other faculty/departmental libraries in FUTO do not have any of these e-resources. Interview report from ABS proves that Law library, Agric Library and French Library have computers but

they are not functional.

## Research Question 3

Table 3: Problems affecting the availability of information resources in Faculty/Departmental Libraries

| Options | FUTO | | | ABSU | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Response | | | % Response | | % | |
| | Yes | No | No % | Yes | % | No | % |
| Inadequate manpower to man Resources | 3 | 75% | 1 25 | 1 | 25% | 3 | 75 % |
| Lack of internet facilities | 4 | 100% | - 0% | 4 | 100 % | | 0% |
| Inadequate funds for the acquisition of the information Resources | 4 | 100% | - 0% | 4 | 100 % | | 0% |
| Epileptic power supply | 4 | 100% | - 0% | 4 | 100 % | | 0% |
| Inadequate resources to match Population | 4 | 100% | - 0% | 4 | 100 % | | 0% |
| Inadequate seat and environment % | 3 | 75% | 1 25% | 3 | 75% | 1 | 25 |

The table above reveals that 3 respondents representing 75% from FUTO Libraries and 1 or 25% from ABSU Library assert that inadequate man-power to man the e-resources is one of the problems confronting faculty/departmental libraries. All the respondents from both FUTO and ABSU Libraries representing 100% state that lack of internet facilities, lack of funds, poor power supply and inadequate resources to match the population of the users are problems affecting faculty/departmental libraries. In FUTO libraries 3 respondents representing 75% prove that their seats are grossly inadequate while one respondent states that their seats are adequate. In ABSU, one of the departmental/faculty libraries stated that they have enough seats.

## Research Question 4

**Table 4: Possible Solutions to the Identified problems.**

| Options | FUTO | | | ABSU | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Responses | Yes % | NO % | Responses | Yes % | No % |
| Provision of trained persons to man the e-resources Adequate | V | 100 | -0 | V | 100 | - 0 |
| internet facilities be provided | V | 100 | -0 | V | 100 | - 0 |
| Efforts should be made to fund the faculty/departmental libraries | V | 100 | -0 | V | 100 | -0 |
| Provision of adequate power supply | V | 100 | -0 | V | 100 | - 0 |
| Adequate resources to match the population of the intended users | V | 100 | -0 | V | 100 | -0 |
| Provision of adequate seats | V | 100 | - 0 | V | 100 | - 0 |

Given the data collected in table 4, all the respondents are in agreement with all the measures stated on that table as possible solutions to the identified problems.

## Summary of Findings and conclusion

The objective of this study is to ascertain the availability and functionality of the resources in faculty/departmental libraries in FUTO and ABSU. Four objectives were investigated on the libraries of these two higher institutions. The findings of the study are as follows.

- The research found that these libraries have textbook, journals, newspapers, encyclopedia, dictionaries projects and novels and some other resources as stated in Table 1.
- It was identified that the information resources available in FUTO and ABSU faculty/departmental libraries does not include e-resources that are functional except in School of Agric Technology library (SAAT) in FUTO. In ABSU, Law library, Agric library and French library have computers but they are not functional.
- The research identified problems associated with availability of these resources as inadequate funds, lack of trained personnel to man e-resources, poor power supply, and inadequate resources to match the population of the users and inadequate seats to accommodate the population that come to the library.
- The study also found some possible solutions to the identified problems which include as follows: provision of trained staff, provision of internet facilities to various departmental/faculty libraries, provision of constant power, adequate provision of information resources to match the population of the users and provision of adequate number of seats in these departmental/faculty libraries.

## Recommendations

- The managers of these libraries should ensure that all the needed information resources that will at least cover the subject area where the departmental/faculty libraries are located are adequately provided for use.
- There should be annual resource verification by the National University Commission (NUC) in the various faculty/departmental libraries - this will in turn motivate University authorities to fund these libraries adequately in other to excel in accreditation exercises.
- Librarians should avail themselves of the opportunities to acquire knowledge and training on Information Communication and Technology so as to be able to handle problems that are associated with ICT when the need arises in various departmental/faculty libraries.

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