

## The Influence of Academic Discipline and Service Quality on Library Use

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### Abstract

The paper examined the influence of discipline and quality of service delivery as they affect academic library use. The study was carried out in three academic libraries in Cross River State. A total of 500 copies of questionnaires were distributed, to sampled students under the survey and distributed as follows: The University of Calabar, 250 Cross River University of Technology, Calabar Campus 100 and the Federal College of Education Obudu, 150, data collected was analyzed using simple linear regression to test the hypothesis. The finding shows that there is significant influence of student's disciplines or area of study and quality of library service on use being made of the library. It is strongly recommended that academic library managers must strive to constantly provide current and high quality books, journals and other library materials especially in student's disciplines/area of study to sustain and promote effective use of the library. Also, they must be guided by users' disciplines in providing all library services.

### Introduction

It has been emphasized that libraries are essentially a service institution that are usually established to achieve the objectives of the institutions/organizations that own them. Udofia [1] notes that academic libraries cater for the learning, teaching, research and academic needs of students and in fact the entire academic community. According to Whittaker [2] taking all fields of learning into consideration, more research is done in libraries than laboratories. He stressed that research no matter whatever scale and dimension demands knowledge of what facts and ideas are

already known, these are essentially found in libraries. Libraries are expected to provide quality services to their users. Satisfying user's needs in academic libraries should be the primary objective of providing its services. Simmonds [3] observed that when academic library users are dissatisfied with their libraries, they may resort to using other libraries if there are any which might not quite satisfy their needs or academic work suffers as a result of failure to provide adequate resources and service. Earlier Whitlatch [4] had in the same light opined that the library's failure to meet user's basic needs accounts for their irrelevance, disuse and organizational decay.

Osundima [5], observed that there is high dependence of university students on their academic libraries in Nigeria. This he claims is so because the book markets in Nigeria are few and that students lack the necessary funds to purchase all the books and other materials provided by libraries. Since library services are critical to academic work, this study is an attempt to determine the influence of academic discipline and library services on library use.

## Objective of the Study

1. To determine the influence of academic discipline and quality of library services on library use.

## Hypothesis

1. Students use of their academic libraries is not significantly influenced by the quality of the library services
2. Students use of their academic libraries is not significantly influenced by their academic discipline/area of study

## Research Methodology

The study was a survey research. The instrument used for the survey was self-reporting questionnaire. The survey was carried out in three academic libraries in Cross River State. The University of Calabar, the Cross River University of technology, Calabar and the Federal College of Education, Obudu. A six-point liker-type questionnaire was designed to assess students' disposition towards the use of their libraries based on discipline of study and the service provided in these libraries. Five hundred questionnaires were randomly distributed to students in the library and their department. Four hundred and sixty five (465) of them presenting ninety three percent (93%) were returned. These questionnaires were collected and analyses using sample linear regression analysis.

## Literature Review

### a. Services in Libraries

Ehigiator [6] citing summarizes the range of service and facilities provided by libraries and information centers to include circulation services, reference bibliographic and guiding users on literatures search and use. Other services involve creation of databases and provision of internet/online services.

It is important to discuss the quality of a library collection when evaluating library services to its users. In academic libraries, the quality of a library's collection border on the variety of reading materials it provides their currency and relevance to users especially in their areas of study or need. Simmonds [3] concluded from her study that collection and a variety of other resource materials were the key factor in judging the adequacy of a library by users. Also, La Trobe University library [7] in its area of study, research and teaching was rated as being very users in the top five priority list.

Discussing development in library services, Chapin [8] examined changes that have taken place in the content and format of library collections. He noted that CD-ROMs, internet and online services have revolutions-arise the librarians work. In the same light Cullin R [9] observed that academic libraries are facing two major threats: a global digital environment and increasing competition. He pointed out that they must improve their service quality in order to survive. The issue now is what type of library service is needed to satisfy user's needs? Daniels and Mathew [10] highlight library networks, resources sharing, World Wide Web (www), website creation and maintenance, electronic mail services (E-Mail) online public access catalogue (OPAC) and internet as key services that must now be provided. Stressing the relevance of these new resources, Colvin and Keene [11] found that effective collaboration between academic and library staff, the timely embedding of e-journals induction into the learning process and association with assessment process can significantly enhance the learning of students. It is important to incorporate all these materials and services in libraries to sustain user's needs hence user satisfaction is a significant factor in library use.

### b. Academic Discipline and Library Use

Whitlatch [4] reported declining use of academic libraries. He attributed this to increase in enrollment in Universities and Colleges in the professional fields of science, engineering and business which rely less on literature and more on experience and handbooks. He also claimed that courses that required skills development required materials that are accessible to classroom, laboratories or workshops and less emphasis in libraries. In another related work, Tenopir [12] conducted a study on the use of electronic resources by academic. He found that user's disciplines and those institutional contexts strongly affected the use of electronic resources and that these were typical most widely used in natural and technical sciences than humanities and social sciences.

Also, Heterick [13] studied faculty attitude towards electronic resources use. He found that the way students used libraries and literature varied with subject area and study experience. He observed that consisted with the view of online catalog, humanists seen to utilize and rely on the library much more for research (80%) rating library as starting point for research as being very important to them as against only 48% of economists.

Much view has been expressed by professionals and academics about the future of traditional library use by scholars and other people alike. However, justifying the need to patronize and use libraries, Liokey P [14] expressed the view that despite the availability of online resources, there exist valuable research materials only available in academic libraries or research facilities. He stressed that whether students are taking short-cuts in their research strategies due to conveniences or access restriction, the library remains a key component of quality education. Torma and Vakkari [15] carried out a study on discipline, availability of electronic resource and the use of Finish National Library, FinElib. They found that perceived availability of key e-resources by researchers was a stronger prediction of frequency and purpose of use of its library services than users' disciplines.

Reacting to the view that before long computers, internet and electronic, computer based archives and databases will allow academic conduct much of their research without setting a fool on the library, Heterick [13] found that the weight of the statement varied by faculty members. Fifty-four percent (54%) of economists indicated that the state described their view very well as compared to 22% humanist. Despite these contending views, there seems to be a general agreement that academic discipline has influence on library use and other resources. Also the fact that the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) is becoming crucial in library information services delivery is equally being under-scored. The focus in providing library services is its users. It is important to study user's background and know how they feel about the services provided in libraries in order to guide libraries to provide the right services needed.

## Data Analysis, Findings and Discussions

### Hypothesis I

The null hypothesis states that student's use of academic libraries is not significantly influenced by the services rendered by their libraries. To test hypothesis, linear regression analysis was done. This is presented in Table 1

**Table 1:** Analysis of Variance (Anova) Presentation of the Regression on Library Use Based on Services Provided

Variable	Symbol	N	Mean	S.D
Library use services	Y	465	40.60	9.44
	X	465	14.46	4.24
Source of variation	SS	Df	Ms	F
Regression residual total	3294.50	1	3294.50	39.99
	38143.30	463	82.38	
	41437.80	464		
r 0.2820	R <sup>2</sup>	0.0795		
A 31.55	B	0.627		

Significant at 0.05 level df (1,463); critical f=3.84

Since the circulated F-Value (39.99) is greater than the critical F-value (3.85) in 1,463 degree of freedom (df). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This means that students use of the library depend significantly on the level of services provided by the library. Also, a correlation coefficient of 0.2820 giving an  $r^2$  of 0.0795 was observed. This means that about 7.9% of the total variation in students' use of library is accounted for by the level of services it provides.

## Hypothesis 2

The null hypothesis states that student' use of academic libraries is not significantly influenced by their academic disciplines of study. To test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done involving the computation of means, standard deviation and total sum of square, sum of square due to group influence, error sum of squares and the mean squares. F-Ratio test was used for decision making. The summary of the results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Analysis of the influence of academic discipline on student's use of their library Academic

Discipline	N	Mean	Sd	
Art/Edu	204	42.46	8.21	
Engineering	40	30.23	15.92	
Science	221	40.76	7.43	
Total	465	40.60	9.44	
Sources of variation	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between groups	5013.93	2	2506.90	31.80**
with groups total	36423.87	462	78.84	
	41437.80	465		

Significant at 0.5 level; df=2,462; critical f=3.00

Since the calculated F-value (31.80) is greater than the critical F-value (3.00) in 2,462 degree of freedom (df), the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This means that students' use of their library is influenced by their academic discipline.

To detect where the difference lays a pair-wise comparison of group means using fishers modified t-test was used (see Table 3)

**Table 3:** Fisher's pair-wise modified t-test comparison of the influence of students' academic discipline on use of the library

Group	Art n = 204	Engineering (n 221)		
Art/Edu	0.001	12.23	1.70	
Engineering	7.965*	0.000	10.53	
Science	1.972*	6.902	0.00	

\*significant at 0.05 level. MSW 78.84; critical t =+1-96

**N/B** Differences between mean are above diagonal;

Calculated t-value is below diagonal.

It is observed that art/education students significantly use the library more than science and engineering students. Also science students significantly use the library more than engineering.

## Discussion

Service provided to students in libraries is varied. These include circulation of documents and referral services, multi-copy services, photo duplication, reading guidance, online/internet services and inter library loan services.

Liokey P [14] observed that in order for students to have access to complete educational experience, library resources and services must be available. The findings in this work show that there is a significant relationship between use made of the library and the quality of services it provides.

The finding supports the views of Simmonds [3] which showed that users in academic libraries have a high expectation of their library services and that receiving competent services is also important to them. Equally revealing from the work is the fact that users will generally form an impression of the level of services they get starting from their encounter with library staff to various other services they may require. This also agrees with Gullion observation that a combination of factors ranging from one's encounter in the library to the services it provides can produce negative or positive results that can influence patron's use of the library. Furthermore, Simmonds [3] and Daniels and Mathews [10] equally observed that the provision of active and continuous service was a firm foundation for ensuring user satisfaction. It is generally accepted in the literature that user satisfaction is an important factor in library use or patronage.

On Academic discipline, the students were categorized into three main grounds comprising art/education, science and engineering. This study supports the claims that academic discipline and areas of study significantly influence use made of the library by students.

The findings in this work are also in consonance with Torma S & Vakkani P [15] and Tenopir C [12] whose

studies claim that user's disciplines and institutional context strongly affect the use of library resources by students.

As earlier observed, art/education students significantly use the library more than science and engineering students. Also science students use the library more than engineering students. This is understandable as Whitlatch [4] observed that students whose courses of study are workshop/laboratory based were less likely to use the library than their arts and humanist counterpart. This may explain why engineering students scored the least mean average to use the library in this study.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This study revealed that the quality of library services as well as the academic discipline of students has significant influence on their use of academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria. It can also be concluded that a very strong factor that determines student's use of the library is the quality of services it can provide. It is the view of this library by library staff and students' academic discipline should be taken very seriously in the planning and organization of academic library services in order to promote and sustain effective use of the library.

It is recommended that there is the need to always update and maintain a variety of services to users. Some of these services should include photo-copying services, internet/online services, subscription to educational databases outside the library and current information services. Information awareness services must be provided in order to promote and keep students aware of library's collection and resources status.

Also, academic library managements and libraries should strive to constantly provide current and high quality collections to meet students learning and research needs. These collections should be provided in various formats and should be adequate to support the students' specific academic disciplines. As earlier noted, this requirement forms the core of what students expect from their libraries.

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