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Information Literacy Skills Level and Library Use by Students of Tertiary Institutions in the Buea Municipality, Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the information literacy skills level and use of library information resources by students of tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality, Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon. The main objective of the study was to determine whether there exists a relationship between information literacy and library resources used by students in these tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality. A survey research design was used in the study, and a stratified sampling technique was employed to collect data from a sample of 352 respondents from 4 tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality. The main instrument for data collection was a Likert scale questionnaire, which had some open-ended questions at the end to get in-depth views on difficulties encountered when using library information resources and other ways through which library information resources use could be improved. Data were analysed using SPSS software version 21. Precisely, descriptive statistics was used to analyse data in

an attempt to answer the research questions while the Spearman's two tailed correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The results indicated that there exists a significant positive relationship between information literacy skills level and library information resources used by students of tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality ($r_{xy} = .474$; $p < 0.01$). Findings also indicated that there are differences in students' information literacy skills level between the tertiary institutions involved in the study. Also, findings revealed some difficulties faced by students in using library resources such as lack of skills, lack of books and limited access time. Following these findings, it was recommended that authorities of tertiary institutions should consider partnering with stake holders like the Ministry of Higher Education, to initiate courses in basic library skills in tertiary institutions. Also, library professionals should come up with outreach programmes such as seminars on literacy skills.

Keywords: Information Literacy Skills, Use of Library Information Resources, Tertiary Institutions, Buea Municipality

Introduction

Most tertiary institutions' libraries nowadays identify information literacy (IL) instruction as one of their core mandates, and this mandate is supported by international standards including the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education (ILSHE). Due to the information overload and sophistication of information technology for storage and retrieval, students are confronted with the task of finding effective ways to access, evaluate and use the various formats and channels of information. Information can be retrieved from the library shelves or from home or office workstation. Nevertheless, retrieving information from any source requires an understanding of how the information was organised, accompanied by skills to retrieve and use it effectively. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information therefore pose great challenges for students in tertiary institutions. Information literacy has formed the basis of learning processes which could be practiced in all disciplines, in all learning environments and at all levels of education that enable learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning (Lamnyuy, 2019) [8].

Adam and Wood (2006) [1] stated that lack of information literacy was partly the cause of under-utilisation of existing ICTs and information resources. According to Ojedokun (2007) [13], since Information Literacy is a critical component of higher education, individuals in any field should be able to define a problem; initiate a plan to find information; locate and access resources; use information; synthesize information; and carry out some form of evaluation. There is a need for the students to identify, critically interpret and utilize IL to fulfil their coursework requirements. According to Morocco World News (2015) [10], Information literacy has thus evolved gradually from a problem-solving tool approach from private sector, into a major

influence. It has been embraced by the library sector and academia, and later changed into a main concept strongly linked to information technology, electronic databases, and technical expertise. Librarians and Academics have embraced it and set it as their important objectives.

Statement of the Problem

In every tertiary institution, academic libraries are established to support research and academic activities of students, lecturers and other respective communities. The quality of teaching, learning and research activities in any tertiary institution greatly depends on the quality and quantity of information resources and services that are made available to users. Academic libraries therefore are responsible for providing relevant, comprehensive and up-to-date information to diversified users and the *raison d'être* of these libraries is defeated if they are inadequately patronized.

It has been observed that a large number of students especially young undergraduates in Cameroonian universities make very little use of the information resources and services offered by tertiary institutions libraries. Some students use the library only as convenient reading space. There are periods when the only persons present in the library arena are library staff. Despite attempts by some of these libraries to provide necessary information resources in both print and electronic formats, and to organise programmes aimed at helping students make maximum use of information resources provided, the frequency of use is generally low as compared to student population.

With the rapid advancements in technology and the escalating complexity of the environment, individuals are faced with diverse and abundant information choices in their academics, work place and personal lives. The existence of several platforms through which information is made available and the multiple formats of information raises questions about the ability of information seekers in tertiary institutions to source and make use of library information resources for acquisition of knowledge. Students may be ill-equipped with requisite information literacy skills and this could affect their ability to access the right information resources that could satisfy their information needs. There is therefore the need to evaluate the information literacy skills of students in tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality. The problem of this study posed as a question is: What is the relationship between Information Literacy Skills Level and Library Resources Use by students in tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality, Fako Division of the South West Region of Cameroon?

The following specific research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do students make use of library information resources?
2. What level of ability in information literacy skills do students have and it impacts on their use of information resources?
3. Are there any differences in the information literacy skills level of students when grouped by institution?
4. How can library information resources usage by students be improved in tertiary institutions?

The null (H_0) and alternate (H_a) hypotheses of this study are:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between information literacy skills level and library usage by students of tertiary institutions.

H_a : There is a significant relationship between information literacy skills level and library usage by students of tertiary institutions.

Justification of the Study

This study is justified by the fact that research work in this area of study in Cameroon as a whole is very scarce. Very little literature on information literacy skills level and library information resources use has been found in the context of Cameroon. This study is also justified in that many countries in the developed and developing parts of the world have recognized the importance of information literacy among their citizens and have implemented programmes to inculcate the information literacy competencies and skills among students at all levels. There is therefore an increasing global recognition of the importance of information literacy skills, both personally and professionally, particularly in the learning environment. This study may be of significance to all stakeholders: library users, library professionals, universities or higher institutions and policy makers.

Scope of the Study

Geographically the study focuses on library resources use and information literacy skills level of students in tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality. The study is limited to four tertiary institutions with acceptable library facilities. There are over 29 tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality. The institutions chosen represent a cross section of the various types of tertiary institutions in this Municipality (public and private). Buea has become one of the busiest hubs of academic activities in Cameroon and is host to quite a high number of tertiary institutions in the country.

Content wise, this study is delimited to examining the relationship between library usage and information literacy skills level of students. Demographic variables examined in the study are age, gender, level of study, area of study and type of institution only. It covers graduate, undergraduate, HND students and students reading other professional courses. The study does not include other library users like lecturers, instructors, adult and children literacy library programmes.

Methodology

A survey research design was used in this study. The reason for choosing the survey design was because the population was large and needed to be sampled for convenient data collection through questionnaire. It is a flexible medium that can measure attitudes and is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist between knowledge and preferences. It is a standardized method which makes it less susceptible to error, easy to administer, and can be tailored exactly to the phenomena you wish to study.

The area chosen for the study was the Buea Municipality because it is one of the hubs of intense academic activities of tertiary institutions in Cameroon. The Buea Municipality has a cross section of all types of tertiary institutions which include private and public tertiary institutions like the University of Buea (public university), Biaka University Institute (private university), Pan African Institute of Development West Africa (private tertiary institution), and Saint Monica University (private university). These are the only institutions with well-equipped, organised libraries having both print and electronic resources suitable for this

study.

The target population of this study was students of the 29 tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality, South West region of Cameroon. The accessible population for this study was 25,125 from the 4 institutions in the Buea Municipality and 352 students were sampled proportionately following the required sample size proportion suggested by the Krejcie and Morgan table of 1970.

A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, with two open-ended questions included for in-depth information. The questionnaire was organised into various sections in alignment with the research objectives of this study. The first part was an introduction of the research topic and assurance of confidentiality followed by questions which were grouped into sections A to D, and two open ended question included at the end. Each student was required to register his/her opinion on each item on a 5-point Likert scale continuum of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

In order to ensure validity, the instrument was given to three experts for examination. They identified areas of weaknesses and comments were used in amending the questionnaire. The errors in grammar, punctuation, presentation, and other suggestions were used to upgrade the instrument. The direct delivery method was used to distribute 378 questionnaire copies in order to provide clarifications where necessary. Data were collected from 352 students from the 4 tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality (University of Buea, St Monica Institute, Biaka University Institute and Pan African Institute) registering 84.4% return rate.

The descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed for data analyses. Descriptive statistics made use of descriptive tables showing the frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. This was meant to illustrate the proportion and average of responses to questions from each institution pertaining to each of the research questions. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21 was used for the analysis. It facilitated the testing of hypothesis using Spearman Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) analysis in order to establish potential relationship between library information resources usage and information literacy skills levels.

Ethical practices in relation to research of this nature were appropriately carried out. A letter of authorisation introducing the research and stating the purpose of the study was forwarded to BUIB, PAID-WA, SMU and UB. This gave the researcher permission to carry out the study. Participants were also informed on the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of data collected from them. Also, they were allowed to participate freely and not against their will. Another ethical practice ensured was that all ideas gotten from other works were recognized to avoid plagiarism.

Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Data collected for each of the research questions are presented and interpreted in this section.

Research Question 1: To what extent do students make use of library information resources?

Table 1: The extent to which students make use of library information resources

Item	Response	Alternatives % of Respondents					N	Mean	SD	Rank
		VR	R	A	O	VO				
Library Information Resources Use	Academic Resources (Print Books)	30.4	16.8	14.5	13.4	25.0	352	2.86	1.582	3
	Databases	41.5	21.3	14.2	9.4	13.6	352	2.32	1.435	5
	Request for Assistance	26.1	13.4	15.1	17	28.4	352	3.08	1.577	1
	Internet	60.5	14.2	11.1	10.2	4.0	352	1.83	1.207	7
	Information Resources through Card Catalogue	59.4	20.5	8.5	4.5	7.1	352	1.80	1.209	8
	Reference Resources	22.7	19.6	20.7	13.4	23.6	352	2.95	1.478	2
	Electronic Devices (CD)	42.9	15.9	10.2	21.3	9.7	352	2.39	1.452	4
	Serials Resources	48	25.3	15.6	4.3	6.8	352	1.97	1.193	6
	Aggregate Score	40.43	18.37	13.73	11.6	14.77	352	2.41	1.391	

NB: VR=Very Rarely; R=Rarely; A=Average; O=Often; VO=Very Often; SD=Standard Deviation (#); N=Number of Respondents

The mean scores from the responses indicated that tertiary institution students occasionally use the library print resources, rarely accessed library’s database, often asked a librarian for assistance, very rarely use the library internet, occasionally use library reference resources, rarely use library electronic devices like CDs, very rarely use the library serial resources, and students rarely use the card catalogue. Generally, students of tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality were found to rarely use

library information resources ($\bar{x} = 2.41 \pm 1.39$).

What are the difficulties faced by students in making use of library information resources?

The following table presents data in relation to this research question:

Table 2: Difficulties faced by students in making use of library information resources

Item	Response	Respondents							
		BUIB (n=60)		PAID-WA (n=18)		SMU (n=54)		UB (n=220)	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
What are the difficulties faced by students in making use of library information resources?	Lack skills in searching, retrieving process	27	45.0	12	66.7	45	83.3	115	52.3
	No library photocopies	37	61.7	8	44.4	14	26.0	147	66.8
	Difficulties in locating information	54	90	16	88.9	42	77.8	126	57.3
	Poor network connection	50	83.3	14	77.8	36	66.7	189	86
	Lack of relevant books for study	47	78.3	12	66.7	32	59.3	84	38.2
	Limited access time available to user library	37	61.7	10	55.6	30	55.6	42	19.1

With respect to difficulties faced by students in making use of library information resources, data collected from the four institutions show that they lack skills in the searching and retrieving process, they need library photocopies, they have difficulties in locating information, there is poor network

connectivity, they lack relevant books for study and there is limited library access period to users.

Research Question 2: What level of ability in information literacy skills do students in tertiary institutions have?

Table 3: Level of Ability in Information Literacy Skills of Students in the Institutions

Item	Response	Alternatives % of Respondents					N	M	SD	Dec.
		SD	D	N	A	SA				
Level of ability in information literacy skills of students	1-No Diff locating through card catalogue	134 38%	81 22.9%	46 13.1%	48 13.6%	40 12.4%	352	2.34	1.57	D
	2-Not confused with format	130 36.9%	113 32.1%	49 13.9%	38 10.8%	36 10.3%	352	2.37	1.40	D
	3-Have personal electronics	59 16.8%	46 13.1%	39 11.1%	66 18.8%	142 40.3%	352	3.52	1.25	A
	4-Mastered library search	178 50.7%	101 28.7%	36 10.2%	37 10.5%	35 9.9%	352	1.90	1.37	D
	5-Determine relevant lib resources	130 36.8%	138 39.2%	19 5.5%	35 9.9%	30 8.5%	352	2.13	1.24	D
	6-Access through internet	79 22.5%	51 14.6%	60 17%	70 19.9%	91 25.9%	352	3.11	1.42	A
	7-Ease of identifying	74 26.1%	61 17.2%	60 17%	87 24.6%	71 20.1%	352	3.06	1.37	A
	8-Ease of locating	67 19.1%	63 17.9%	65 18.5%	73 20.7%	84 23.8%	352	3.12	1.41	A
	9-Ease of accessing	64 18.3%	65 18.4%	45 12.8%	96 27.4%	82 23.2%	352	3.19	1.22	A
	10-Ease of understanding	129 36.6%	82 23.4%	58 16.5%	41 11.6%	42 11.9%	352	2.38	1.40	D
	11-Knowingthe audience	108 30.7%	136 38.6%	37 10.5%	33 9.4%	38 10.8%	352	2.30	1.37	D
	12-Master library print resources	124 35.2%	100 28.4%	63 17.9%	29 8.1%	37 10.5%	352	2.13	1.35	D
	13-Organise print resources	107 30.4%	95 26.9%	65 18.5%	50 14.2%	35 10%	352	2.46	1.49	D
	14-Use of electronic/ Boolean	188 53.4%	52 14.8%	60 17%	31 8.8%	21 6.0%	352	1.99	1.26	D
	15-Spot inaccuracy/errors	90 25.6%	130 36.9%	64 18.2%	38 10.8%	30 8.5%	352	2.39	1.22	D
	16-Interpreting results	103 29.4%	108 30.8%	54 15.3%	42 11.9%	45 12.7%	352	2.48	1.29	D
	Aggregate score	31.6%	25.24%	14.56%	14.43%	13.85%	352	2.56	1.35	D

NB: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree; M=Mean; SD (#) = Standard Deviation; N=Number of Respondents; Dec.=Decision

The analysis of data on information literacy skills level of students in tertiary institutions revealed that they encounter difficulties locating the information they need through card catalogue in the library, they get confused because of the many different formats (prints, electronics) in the library while making use of library information resources. They have personal electronic gadgets connected to the net which gives them easy access to information for their academic pursuits. The students have not mastered the library search skills, and cannot determine the relevant library resources for their academic pursuit. They agreed that they have high skills in retrieval and use through the Internet, can easily identify problems when carrying out research work, can easily of locate information resources needed in carrying out

research, and assess the information they need for their academics or research at ease.

The students do not easily understand information they get through search, they are unable to know their audience to information when they retrieved it, cannot easily of handle print library resources, they have little mastery in organising library materials. They cannot use the electronic and Boolean operators, they cannot confidently spot inaccuracy/errors, and do not master interpreting results they get from their search.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between information literacy skills level of students and types tertiary institutions?

Table 4: The relationship between information literacy skills level of students and types of tertiary institutions

Item	Response	Type of Tertiary Institution				Agg. Mean Score
		UB	BUIB	SMU	PAID-WA	
		N=220	N=60	N=54	N=18	
		Mean Score				
Relationship of information skills level of students by type of institution	1- I do not encounter difficulties locating the information through card catalogue	2.59	2.77	2.50	1.48	2.34
	2- I do not get confused because of the many different formats	2.48	1.96	2.23	2.78	2.37
	3- I have a personal electronic gadget	3.97	3.25	3.78	3.06	3.52
	4- I have mastered library search skills	2.68	1.73	2.08	1.09	1.90
	5- I can determine a relevant library information resource in my field of study	2.47	2.90	1.94	2.90	2.13
	6- My level of information retrieval, access and use through the internet is very high	3.40	2.58	3.32	3.14	3.11
	7- The ease with which I identify a problem is high	3.25	2.76	3.35	2.86	3.06
	8- The ease with which I locate the sources of information is high	3.51	2.77	3.44	2.75	3.12
	9- The ease at which I access the information is high	3.36	3.06	3.29	3.04	3.18
	10- The ease at which I understand information is high	2.24	2.61	2.36	2.29	2.38
	11- Know audience to address information to	2.86	1.64	1.95	2.74	2.30
	12- I have mastered how to handle print library resources	2.60	2.17	2.13	2.34	2.31
	13- I have mastered organization of library materials	2.11	2.16	2.61	2.95	2.46
	14- I can operate Boolean operators confidently and use truncation to search	2.27	1.57	1.99	2.13	1.98
	15- I can confidently spot inaccuracy in the information I accessed	2.19	2.80	2.76	1.79	2.39
	16- It is easy to interpret the results of my search	2.45	2.29	2.64	2.52	2.48
	Aggregate mean score	2.77	2.43	2.63	2.30	2.54
	Rank	1	3	2	4	

NB: N=Number of Respondents

The mean values of the information literacy scores for each institution were calculated from the entire data set indicates that the University of Buea, Saint Monica University ranked second, Biaka University Institute came third and Pan African Institute for Development (PAID-WA) was fourth.

Research Question 4: How can library information resources usage by students be improved in tertiary institutions.

Table 5: Ways to improve library information resources use by students of tertiary institutions

Item	Response	Alternative % of Respondents					N	Mean	SD (#)	Rk
		1	2	3	4	5				
Ways Library Use can be improved	More Lib. Instructions on information literacy	3.1	3.7	8.8	17.6	66.8	352	4.41	1.009	6
	More seminars on Lib. Importance	2.3	2.8	6.8	20.2	67.9	352	4.49	0.912	4
	Equipped with IL skills	2.6	1.4	10.8	17.9	67.3	352	4.46	0.927	5
	Reference Librarian	2.0	1.7	9.9	18.5	67.9	352	4.49	0.890	3
	Relevant Lib. Resources	2.0	2.0	6.5	20.7	68.8	352	4.52	0.860	1
	Up to date Lib. Resources	2.6	2.0	6.5	19.3	69	352	4.51	0.904	2
	Aggregate % score	2.4	2.3	8.2	19	68	352	4.48	0.917	

NB: N=Number of Respondents; SD (#)=Standard Deviation; Rk=Rank

From the table above, students feel that more library instructions on information literacy skills will enhance their use of library resources, more programs such as seminars on the importance of library information resources will increase their use of library information resources, they will make more use of library resources if equipped with information literacy skills to enable them carry out efficient library resources retrieval, access and use. Also, the students declared that if a reliable reference librarian is put in place,

they will be sure of directives in accessing, retrieving and using library resources. Similarly, relevant library resources in their area of study will facilitate their use of library information resources. Finally, up-to- date library resources in their area of study will facilitate their use of library resources.

What other ways can library resources usage by students in tertiary institutions be improved?

Table 6: Other Ways to Improve Library Information Resources Usage

Item	Response	Respondents							
		BUIB (n=60)		PAID-WA (n=18)		SMU (n=54)		UB (n=220)	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
How can library information resources usage by students be improved in tertiary institutions?	Acquire skills in searching, retrieving and accessing should be improved through training	30	50	14	66.7	47	87	100	45.5
	Need of library photocopies	35	58.3	8	44.4	15	27.8	150	68.2
	Strategies in locating information sources by students should be improved	55	91.7	15	83.3	40	74.1	110	50
	Fast internet network connectivity should be provided	45	75	14	77.8	35	64.8	200	91
	Relevant books should be provided to students	50	83.3	14	77.8	30	55.6	85	38.6
	Library opening hours should be extended	39	65	10	55.5	31	57.4	45	20.5

From the responses gathered, respondents suggested the need to acquire searching, retrieving and accessing skills through training, the need for library photocopies, strategies in locating information sources by students should be improved, fast Internet network connectivity should be provided, relevant books should be provided to students and

library opening hours should be extended.

What is the Relationship between Information Literacy Skills Level and Library Resources Use by Students in Tertiary Institutions?

Table 7: Relationship between Information Literacy Skills Level and Library Information Resources Use

Items	Library use	Information literacy	Mean	SD (#)
Library use	Pearson Correlation	1	.474**	19.20
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	352	352	
Information literacy	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1	53.85
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		9.83
	N	352	352	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

R= relationship = .474; N=number of respondents; p0.01= Level of Significant

The analysis showed that library use has a significant positive correlation with information literacy at $r = .474$, $n = 352$ and $p = 0.01$ showing a two tailed correlation. The correlation is significant at 0.01 levels. So, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis retained.

Discussion of Findings

To What extent do students make use of academic library information resources?

Findings show that students in tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality rarely make use of library information resources. The reason for this may be that they have

alternative electronic sources in acquiring necessary information for their academic purposes which may be user friendly or that they lack the requisite library skills to make use of these resources. In line with low use of library information resources, Shrestha (2008)^[16] found that a large percentage of students are still motivated to learn about accessing their present library resources. With such a strong bias among students towards using the web as their primary research tool, library instructions should therefore be considered a crucial means of introducing students to electronic resources of the library, beside the print. Mohd, Nor and Zainab (2006)^[9] also argued that due to the information overload and sophistication of information technology for storage and retrieval, students are confronted with the task of finding effective ways to access, evaluate and use the various formats and channels of information. The reason for this may be that they may not know how to search for information in the library and the benefits of using library sources of information over other potential sources. The fact that a majority of students in these institutions seek for assistance from the librarian seems to suggest that they do not yet master how to use library resources effectively.

A very high percentage of respondents said that they very rarely use the library internet or other online library resources. This is because the students affirmed that they have personal electronic gadgets connected to the net which gives them easy access to information they need for their academic pursuit. They can identify, locate, access, retrieve, understand and use information without mention made to library. The SCONUL Seven Pillar Model of information literacy for information problem solving emphasises the need for a person to have both skills in traditional and electronic formats of information searches and effective use to enable effective problem solving. This may, as earlier stated, corroborate the reason why there exists low library information resources usage in this area of study.

What are the difficulties faced by students in making use of library information resources?

The findings revealed the difficulties students encounter when using library information resources which include skills in searching, retrieving, accessing, lack of library photocopies, difficulties locating information, poor network connection, lack of relevant books for studies and limited work time schedule in the library. There is no doubt that difficulties in library use are a hindrance to the students in having the relevant information they need for their various academic purposes. This is because academic library serves as a repository of knowledge in supporting students' academic achievements. Oburaimo and Oyefeso (2013) examined the challenges students face while using library resources, reasons for use of those resources and how they carry out search and found that most resources were outdated and students had little reading space. It is very difficult to have a library without challenges but it is very necessary to improve on library services to a certain level so as to keep users' academics going.

What level of ability in information literacy skills do students in tertiary institutions have and the impact on information sourcing.

The findings indicated that students in tertiary institutions in the Buea Municipality possess low information literacy

skills. It may be deduced from these results that students in tertiary institutions in this area are not given requisite training in information literacy skills in general and library literacy skills in particular as opposed to digital or ICT literacy skills. There is reason to believe that they have low library information literacy skills as compared to their ICT information literacy skills level. This may explain why they visit the library rarely because they think they can get the very information from their personal home ICT gadgets. There seems to be a marked difference therefore between their library information literacy skills level and digital literacy skills level of the students under study.

This seems to corroborate Baro, Endouware and Ubogu (2010, P. 109)^[4] who stated that, "students are ill-equipped with requisite information literacy skills such as the ability to identify, locate, review, select and apply information needed for their studies and had difficulties in using relevant tools to locate information and knowledge". Obasuyi and Otabor (2012)^[11] in surveying Internet literacy skills among Physical Science Undergraduate of the University of Benin discovered that the students are computer; Internet and ICT literate as majority of the students possess most of the required Internet skills. Teaching of Internet and ICT literacy courses to new undergraduates in the university through orientation and workshop was recommended. Similarly, Dorvlo and Dadzie (2016)^[5] conducted a study to investigate the information literacy levels among postgraduate students of the University of Ghana. Their results showed that most students knew how to identify concepts whereas most of them were not skilled in the use of search strategies, search tools and the evaluation of information. However, some of them knew about copyright issues. This result shows that the majority of the postgraduate students are not information literate.

Being an information literate in just one aspect such as digital literacy does not necessarily make one an information literate person especially in the 21st Century. This is in line with the SCONUL Seven Pillars model (1999)^[17]. This model emphasises the need for a person to develop both library (information handling) and Information Technology (IT) skills and digital literacy in order to become information literate person.

Does information literacy skills level of students differ between tertiary institutions?

Findings of this study show that despite the generally low information literacy skills level of students for all the institutions taken as a whole, comparatively students in public tertiary institutions have high information literacy skills level than those in private tertiary institutions. The reasons for these differences may stem from the fact that public university libraries are well stocked, well equipped and adequately staffed than their private counterparts. The University of Buea employs professional staff, have library instructions as part of their curriculum, have well equipped libraries with electronic and print resources than the other three institutions. The implications for this study are that if academic libraries are well equipped, staffed with professional librarians and library instructions given some importance, students would acquire more information literacy skills under these conditions.

Adekannbi and Oluwayinka (2016)^[2] investigated the differences in the cognitive abilities, information literacy knowledge and skills, as well as information retrieval skills

between students in public and private universities in Nigeria. Results of this study showed no significant difference in the cognitive abilities, information literacy knowledge and skills of students in public and private Universities. However, a significant difference was observed in information retrieval skills of the students. Students of Babcock University, a private institution had higher level of information retrieval skills than FUNAAB students, a public university. The study recommended that library and information professionals in public universities should be encouraged by administrative heads of such institutions to periodically organise practical workshops on information retrieval skills for students. This study differs from the present study in that private tertiary institutions have high information literacy skills than public and vice versa.

How can library information resources usage by students in tertiary institutions be improved?

A majority of students indicated that there is need for libraries to improve their strategies towards improving library resources use and services. The students wished for more library instructions on information literacy, more seminars on library importance, enhancement of their information literacy skills, employment of reference librarians, acquisition of relevant, up-to date library resources. These may be the reasons for their low library information resources use.

Other ways library information resources usage by students can be improved in tertiary institutions ranged from skills in searching, retrieving and accessing information should be improved through training, need for library photocopies, strategies in locating information sources by students should be improved, fast network connectivity should be provided in the libraries, relevant books for study should be provided to students in the libraries and need for library work time be extended so that enough time is given to students in the library.

Kumar and Kumbar (2013) pointed out measures to improve library use such as the provision of different types of materials and sources, sound personality traits, packaging and repackaging of their information collection. He opined that students with average creative abilities would be able to formulate models to facilitate their information use pattern. The implication is that any library especially the 21st century library should search for ways to enhance library use especially information literacy skills due to huge amount of unfiltered information available through so many information medias brought about by modern ICTs. This will enable mastery of strategies to sort relevant information resources for quality academic performances.

What is the relationship between information literacy skills level and library resources use?

Findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between information literacy skills level and library resources usage. In other words, low information literacy skills level may result to low library usage and vice versa. Although the relationship is not particularly very strong, results point clearly to the fact that high information literacy skills level could result in high or more frequent library usage. The implications for this study are that since there is a linear positive relationship between these variables, if students are equipped with information literacy

skills especially library information literacy, they are more likely to use library resources frequently than is the case now, where only few students make use of these resources. In a similar study by Issa, Amusan and Daura (2009) [6] came up with similar results in their study in Ilorine University. There was a significant relationship between these two variables. Results from testing the hypothesis therefore confirmed that there is a significant positive relationship between information literacy skills level and library information resources usage by students of tertiary institutions. Okon, Elijah and Akpan (2014) to examined information literacy skills and information use by students in the Universities of Uyo and Port Harcourt Libraries. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses; the results indicated that these variables tested correlated significantly. The study recommended that students should be taught how to use both print and electronic information resources and preferably in the early part of their university education amongst others. The SCOUNL's view supports this. Adeleke and Emeahara (2016) [3] surveyed the relationship between use of electronic information resources and information literacy skills of students in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Results revealed low use of electronic resources in line with information Literacy skills of students.

Conclusions

This research was triggered by the observation that library information resources seemed to be inadequately used by students of tertiary institutions in Cameroon. It was hypothesised that this low information resources use could be caused by low level of information literacy by students of these tertiary institutions.

Findings to this study revealed that information literacy skills level has a positive significant relationship with library resources use. This implies that low information literacy skills level could result to low use of library resources and vice versa. Findings also revealed that students seem to be better in digital literacy skills but lack library literacy skills. This seems to explain why they resort to their personal electronic gadgets to search for the information they need for their academic purposes rather than making use of library information resources. It was also discovered that information literacy skills levels differ between respective tertiary institutions, public university registering higher literacy level than private universities.

This study very much agrees with all theoretical information literacy problem-solving models which state that to make effective use of library information resources one must acquire the necessary skills. This study is significant in that it has thrown more light on the nature of relationship on library information resources use and information literacy skills level of students in tertiary institutions in Buea Municipality, Fako Division of the Southwest Region of Cameroon.

Recommendations

The findings of the study show that for students to make effective use of library information resources, they should have mastery in information literacy skills. In this regard, the study recommends that the authorities of tertiary institutions should consider partnering with stake holders such as the government (Ministry of Higher Education), decision makers, companies, private individuals and other

relevant stakeholders to initiate courses in basic library skills at all levels of studies in tertiary institutions in Cameroon as a whole in order to equip students with such skills. This would go a long way in improving students' information literacy skills level, especially in private tertiary institutions where it seems not to be considered very important.

The study also recommends that authorities of tertiary institutions, including decision makers, educators and librarians should take library and information skills orientation programmes for the students seriously by providing the forums or enabling environment to have such orientations, orienting them on different ways students' library use would be improved. This can be done beginning with lower levels of studies so that students would progressively master such skills as they advance in their studies. This would increase students' levels of information literacy skills, which would in turn improve students' academic achievements, facilitating successful achievements of the objectives of the libraries and the goals of their respective institutions.

The study further recommends that library professionals should come up with outreach programmes such as seminars on information literacy skills, the importance of the use of library information resources and exhibitions on relevant books available in libraries in fields of study offered in their respective institutions of learning. These outreach programmes should be carried out time and again to make students master skills to search and make use of library resources, and for students to know the values of their respective libraries. This would enable them perceive the need for use of library information resources and improve on their library information resources usage.

In line with the findings, the study recommends that educating the library users on the use of the libraries through comprehensive and systematic library instruction programmes may facilitate students' use of library information resources especially in private tertiary institutions where it seems more lacking. Library instructions on information literacy skills should be put in place by library professionals so as to facilitate the use of library resources by students and reduce the work of reference library professionals since student would know how to go about their information needs with little difficulty.

Findings of this study also revealed some difficulties they encounter in making use of such resources. The study recommends that network connectivity in libraries should be improved to make fast access to e-resources. Beside these, work scheduled in libraries should be done in sessions to enable workers stay longer in the libraries so that students have maximum time for effective library use since students can only use the libraries during working hours. A liable reference librarian should also be put in place to ensure directives in facilitating library use by students with difficulties.

Also, in the light of solutions and difficulties highlighted, the study recommends that the Government of Cameroon and the authorities of private institutions should provide funding to enable provision of photocopies and other needs in the libraries. This would enable students to have easy access to information they need and in turn encourage the use of such resources. The Government should also encourage through funding the provision of relevant books

in all fields of study in libraries to enable students find what they need always, thereby encouraging them to use those resources.

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