

## **CHALLENGES FACING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN UTILIZING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the challenges facing students of Business Education in utilizing academic libraries in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze. Specifically, the study investigated challenges associated with library staff services, library resources, physical environment as well as measures for improvement. A descriptive survey research design was employed. The population of the study comprised 239 library staff and final year students of Business Education students. No sample was drawn due to the size of the population. The researchers used questionnaires to elicit information from respondents. Data collected were analysed using the mean. The study found among others, that challenges associated with library staff services and the physical environment of the library affect students of Business Education studies. Library resources however posed minimal challenges. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that to improve the academic library there is the need for maintenance of the catalogue system, equipping the library with the latest and relevant books. Also, library staff should be oriented towards a more friendly approach to clientele, and so on.

**Key Words:** Academic libraries, Information, Business education students

### **Introduction**

The academic environment is a place for teaching, learning, and research as well as knowledge creation. In every institution of learning there are facilities other than classrooms that contribute in no small measure to the teaching and learning process. For meaningful learning to take place, learners must have access to necessary materials, information and resources such as provided in academic library (Adefokuna & Bashir, 2018). The library is a vital facility for enhancing learning, teaching, and research; and as the hub of all academic activities, it is established for provoking intellectual excellence. The library is an information resource centres that provides and enhances personal and academic development, so as to influence students' overall academic achievement. Effective utilization of information resources in the academic library therefore is critical to students' overall academic achievement. Fayose (2011) points out that academic library resource is essential to any educational development. Availability of adequate library facilities encourages

passionate study behaviour in students early in life. It also helps students to imbibe the attitude of self-inquiry and self-development (Fayose, 2011).

In fact, academic libraries came into being to provide a central location for hard-to-find, scarce, expensive or unique material which students need (Robinson, 2016). The main functions of the academic library are to provide support in research and resource linkage for students and faculty staff of the educational institution. Specific course-related resources such as copies of textbooks are usually provided by the academic library. Academic libraries also offer workshops and courses outside of formal, graded coursework, which are meant to provide students with the tools necessary to succeed in their programs (Peterson, 2010). In addition, academic library provides a quiet study space for students on campus; it may also provide group study space, such as meeting rooms. Nowadays moreover, academic libraries are becoming increasingly digitally oriented. They provide a "gateway" for students and researchers to access various resources, both print/physical and digital. Academic libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. They are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing material accessible by electronic means, and by providing the assistance of librarians in navigating and analysing very large amounts of information with a variety of digital tools (Ukachi, 2010).

Academic library is particularly important for students of business education who need vast information to match the advancement in the world of business. As businesses advance as a result of technological innovations, business education students are challenged to explore information in this area in order to remain effective in the learning process. Business education is defined as that education that provides skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific business occupations (Udo, 2012). Business education students therefore need the academic library to meet their information needs.

In the recent times however, information needs of students of Business education have not be wholly attenuated by academic libraries due to some challenges in the provision of information. These challenges are wide-ranged. Ch, Hina and Abid (2017) however, have classified challenges of information provision in academic libraries into three, namely challenges associated with library staff services, library resources and physical environment of the library. According to them, students are confronting numerous issues in libraries like absence of material, untrained library staff, restricted opening hours, absence of client mindfulness about ICT, constrained electronic assets, absence of fitting direction from library staff, absence of advanced libraries and physical environment of libraries.

In an earlier study, Gojeh, Dutse and Daudu (2013) found that students face human and physical environmental challenges. Human factors were categorized as students' poor attendance at library user education, improper organization of library materials, shelf guidance and arrangement,

insufficient and unfriendly staff attitude, users' attitude, insecurity of students' properties, unfavourable rules and regulations for readers, crowded students timetable and lack of students' encouragement by lecturers. Physical factors on the other hand were identified as inadequate books loaned out, inadequate facilities and equipment, students' preference of hostel use than library, poor maintenance of facilities and untidy environment.

The above challenges however were reported on different contexts. It is not known whether these challenges are universal or differ from place to place. In addition, students of various disciplines differ in their information needs and these differences may mean divergences in the challenges confronting them. This study therefore seeks to investigate challenges of academic libraries in the provision of information to students of business education studies in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze, Anambra State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Academic libraries are provided to provide both students and the academic community the necessary resources needed for effective teaching and learning. Business education students particularly need the academic libraries for accessing vast information needed for them to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitude in their discipline.

It has been identified however, that academic libraries are constrained by some challenges bordering on library staff services, library resources and physical environment of the library (Ch, Hina & Abid, 2017). These challenges may likely to undermine the effective utilization of the library resources by Business Education students if not placed under check. Since challenges of academic libraries may differ from place to place, it is important to investigate challenges peculiar to academic libraries in providing information to Business education students. The problem of the study, put in question therefore is: what are the challenges of academic library on the provision of information to students of Business education studies in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to find out the challenges of academic library on the provision of information to students of Business education studies in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate:

1. Challenges associated with library staff services on the provision of information to students of Business Education;
2. Challenges associated with library resources on the provision of information to students of Business Education;
3. Challenges associated with physical environment of the library on the provision of information to students of Business Education.

## Research Questions

The following research questions are posed in the study:

1. What are the challenges associated with library staff services on the provision of information to students of Business Education?
2. What are the challenges associated with library resources on the provision of information to students of Business Education?
3. What are the challenges associated with physical environment of the library on the provision of information to students of Business Education?

## Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study is Federal College of Education (Technical) Umuze, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study is 239. This comprises 53 library staff (12 professional librarians, 17 para-librarians and 24 supportive staff) of Ben Nwabueze Library Complex, and 186 final year students of the School of Business Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umuze. The study did not draw a sample due to the size of the population. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled 'Assessment of Challenges Faced by Academic Libraries in the provision of Information to Business Education Students Questionnaire (ACALPIBES)', comprising two sections (A and B). The instrument (ACALPIBES) was validated by three experts in Business Education from the School of Business Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze. Data obtained from field study were analysed using the mean.

## Results

**Table 1: Mean Ratings on Challenges Associated with Library Staff on the Provision of Information to Business Education Students (N= 186)**

| S/N | Items                                                                                          | SA  | A  | D  | SD | $\bar{X}$ | Remark |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|-----------|--------|
| 1   | Library staff are not always willing to assist students in accessing information.              | 121 | 42 | 9  | 14 | 3.45      | Agreed |
| 2   | Some library staff lack relevant knowledge to assist students.                                 | 133 | 18 | 21 | 14 | 3.45      | Agreed |
| 3   | Library staff do not work extra hours to satisfy students quest for information in the library | 86  | 54 | 34 | 12 | 3.15      | Agreed |
| 4   | Library staff do not cooperate with students.                                                  | 98  | 33 | 43 | 12 | 3.17      | Agreed |
| 5   | Staff exhibit unfriendly attitude towards students.                                            | 111 | 32 | 44 | 1  | 3.38      | Agreed |

|   |                                                                                |     |    |   |   |      |        |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---|---|------|--------|
| 6 | Library staff do not keep students informed about new services and collection. | 176 | 10 | - | - | 3.95 | Agreed |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|---|---|------|--------|

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of respondents on challenges associated with library staff services on the provision of information to students of Business Education. All the items were rated from 3.15 to 3.95 which are above the cut-off mean of 2.50 required for agreement. This indicates that respondents agreed to all the items as challenges associated with library staff services on the provision of information to students.

**Table 2: Mean Ratings on Challenges Associated with Library Resources on the Provision of Information to Business Education Students (N= 186)**

| S/N | Items                                                                           | SA | A  | D   | SD | $\bar{X}$ | Remark    |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|-----|----|-----------|-----------|
| 7   | Business Education textbooks are not adequate for students' use.                | 12 | 21 | 76  | 77 | 1.83      | Disagreed |
| 8   | Internet facilities are not available in the library.                           | 22 | 32 | 65  | 67 | 2.05      | Disagreed |
| 9   | It is difficult to locate Business Education resource materials in the library. | 3  | 11 | 89  | 83 | 1.65      | Disagreed |
| 10  | Business Education journals are not available for students' use.                | 22 | 32 | 56  | 76 | 2.00      | Disagreed |
| 11  | Students do not access past examination papers on Business Education.           | 2  | 3  | 123 | 58 | 1.73      | Disagreed |

|    |                                                                                                           |     |    |     |     |      |           |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|-----|------|-----------|
| 12 | Students have no access to reference books, monograph.                                                    | 12  | 14 | 122 | 38  | 2.00 | Disagreed |
| 13 | Library resources are irrelevant and not up to date.                                                      | 1   | 8  | 67  | 110 | 1.46 | Disagreed |
| 14 | Retrieval tools such as reading list, index, abstract, library catalogue, search engine are not adequate. | 33  | 31 | 54  | 68  | 2.16 | Disagreed |
| 15 | Students are not allowed to borrow books.                                                                 | -   | 4  | 87  | 95  | 1.51 | Disagreed |
| 16 | Time allowed for students to return loaned books is not adequate.                                         | 4   | 54 | 59  | 69  | 1.96 | Disagreed |
| 17 | Students do not have access to reprographic equipment like photocopier in the library.                    | 159 | 26 | 1   | -   | 3.85 | Agreed    |

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of respondents on challenges associated with library resources on the provision of information to students of Business Education. Item 17 was rated 3.85 which is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicates that respondents agreed that only that item constitute challenge associated with library resources on the provision of information to students of Business Education. The rests of the items were rated from 1.46 to 2.16 which were below the cut-off point. It therefore indicates respondents' disagreement with the items as challenges.

**Table 3: Mean Ratings on Challenges Associated with Physical Environment of the Library on the Provision of Information to Business Education Students (N= 186)**

| S/N | Items                                                            | SA | A  | D  | SD  | $\bar{X}$ | Remark    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----------|-----------|
| 18  | Noise often distracts students who come to study in the library. | 45 | 28 | 50 | 63  | 2.30      | Disagreed |
| 19  | Seats in the library are not adequate to accommodate students.   | -  | -  | 28 | 158 | 1.15      | Disagreed |

|    |                                                                  |     |    |    |    |      |           |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|------|-----------|
| 20 | Library is not well ventilated.                                  | 165 | 20 | 1  | -  | 3.88 | Agreed    |
| 21 | Lighting is not enough in the library.                           | 32  | 44 | 67 | 43 | 2.35 | Disagreed |
| 22 | Air conditioner is not available in the library.                 | 166 | 20 | -  | -  | 3.89 | Agreed    |
| 23 | There is no stand-by power-generator for the library.            | 3   | 2  | 86 | 95 | 1.53 | Disagreed |
| 24 | There is inadequate toilet facility to serve the number of users | 144 | 20 | 26 | -  | 3.70 | Agreed    |
| 25 | Opening hours of the library are inadequate.                     | 123 | 33 | 23 | 7  | 3.46 | Agreed    |

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of respondents on challenges associated with physical environment of the library on the provision of information to students of Business Education. Items 20, 22, 24 and 25 were rated 3.88, 3.89, 3.70 and 3.45 respectively. The ratings are above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicates that respondents agreed that these four items constitute challenge associated with library physical environment of the library on the provision of information to students of Business Education. The rests of the items (18, 19, 21 and 23) were rated 2.10, 1.15, 2.35 and 1.53 respectively which were below the cut-off point. It therefore indicates respondents' disagreement with the items as challenges associated with library physical environment of the library on the provision of information to students of Business Education.

### Discussion of Findings

The study sought to investigate challenges of academic library on the provision of information to students of Business education studies in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze. Specifically, the study sought to determine challenges associated with library staff services, library resources and physical environment of the library. It also determined measures to improve academic library in the provision of information to Business Education students.

The finding of the research question one was that library staff constitute a challenge to the provision of information to Business education students. The study found that library staff are not always willing to assist students in accessing information; some lack relevant knowledge to assist students. They do not work extra hours to satisfy students' quest for information in the library and do not cooperate with students. Moreover, staff exhibit unfriendly attitude towards students and do not keep students informed about new services and collection.

It is important that staff cooperate with students for effective utilization of library resources. Where staff display unfriendly attitude, students may not find the library a veritable sanctuary for serious study. The findings of the study is consistent with the earlier related study. In a study, Gojeh, Dutse and Daudu (2013) carried out a cross-sectional survey on human and physical environmental factors affecting students' utilization of library and information services in colleges of education

libraries in Nigeria and found that students face human challenges. Human factors such as improper organization of library materials, shelf guidance and arrangement, insufficient and unfriendly staff attitude. It is the role of the library staff to avail students of shelf guide and arrange the materials in a way that is user-friendly. They also need to see users as customers who should be treated well for continual patronage.

In the research question two, it was found that challenges associated with library resources are minimal. Students do not have access to reprographic equipment like photocopier in the library. Apart from this, generally, library resources do not constitute challenges. Reprographic equipment enables students to photocopy needed materials. Where this is not available, the students will rely on hand-copying or use of phone camera. In extreme cases, students tear out the needed portion, an act which is unethical and punishable. Provision of reprographic equipment therefore is required for students to utilize the library very well. The finding of the study agreed with Echem and Udo-Anyanwu (2018) who investigated information retrieval tools and library environment as correlates of library utilization by students of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and revealed that there is a very strong and positive relationship between information retrieval tools available and students' use of the library.

In the research question three, the study found that challenges associated with physical environment of the library include: poor ventilation, lack of air conditioner in the library, and inadequate toilet facility to serve the number of users. Also, opening hours of the library are inadequate. These are some of the conveniences that will enable students to feel free in the library while they engage in academic activities. In the absence of these therefore students may not feel comfortable staying in the library. The finding is in line with Ch et al (2017) in a study to explore the problems and issues faced by the students of University of the Punjab, regarding library usage. The study found that students felt satisfied with the library only when the physical environment of the library is satisfactory.

## **Conclusion**

Libraries face some challenges in the provision of information to Business Education students. The challenges as found in this study are three-dimensional, namely those associated with library staff services, those associated with resources and those associated with the physical environment of the library. The challenges associated with the library resources however are comparably minimal. There is the need therefore to improve library staff services by training and orienting them on best practices as well as improving the physical environment of the academic library.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the findings and implications of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Library staff should make proper arrangement of books and materials in the library through the provision of cataloguing and subject-wise book arrangement.

2. Librarians should consult with teachers and students while selecting Business education books; and number of latest books, other material and research journals for Business education students should be made available in the library.
3. Library should be equipped with latest and relevant books and computer and internet so that students may get latest information to enhance their learning. Also, effort should be made to upgrade the digital library system to be more user friendly so that it will be easier to use by students.
4. Library staff should be oriented towards more friendly approach to clientele.
5. Business education students should be trained at least once in a semester on library usage.
6. Management should provide generator as an alternative source of power supply in the library.

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