

LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES ENGAGEMENT BY PART-TIME STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZARIA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

Emmanuel Oluwaseun Ajayi
Library and Information Science Department
Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Email: oluwaseuntweetajayi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Access to information resources plays a pivotal role in academic performance, especially for part-time students juggling multiple responsibilities. This study aimed to assess the use of library resources and services among Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) part-time students at the Federal College of Education, Zaria. The cross-sectional survey, involving 250 questionnaires distributed across various departments, revealed that textbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopedias were the most relevant and accessible resources, while conference proceedings, abstracts, and bibliographies were less utilized. Over 75% of respondents reported easy access to print resources but limited access to electronic resources, potentially due to insufficient ICT skills. Part-time students expressed high satisfaction with book loan and reference services but dissatisfaction with internet services, photocopying, and selective dissemination of information, possibly due to a lack of awareness or inadequate ICT competencies. The study highlights the need for interventions to enhance part-time students' information literacy, optimize electronic resource deployment, foster resource utilization through assignments, and offer tailored online support services.

INTRODUCTION

Access to information resources is a vital stimulus in academic success especially in today's knowledge-driven society. Part-time student's educational journey can be greatly impacted by making effective use of library information resources and services. While they balance several responsibilities. To enhance their learning experiences and create a conducive environment for their academic endeavors, it is imperative to understand how Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) part-time students utilize library resources. According to Onifade, Lawal, and Bello (2019), Students who attend classes part-time often face unique challenges in managing their academic commitments alongside those of their families or employment. They could therefore only have a short window of opportunity to use the library's online resources or pay a visit in person on campus. The significance of offering adaptable and easily accessible library services to meet the requirements of this student body is highlighted by this circumstance. They may not be able to completely make use of the plethora of materials found in the library's digital and physical places due to time limits and conflicting demands. As a result, finding pertinent materials, using online databases, or asking library staff for assistance may be challenging for part-time students, which could impede their academic progress.

Studies in the past according to Akpojotor, (2016) have demonstrated the important role libraries play in fostering academic success and personal development. Student's comprehension of course material can be considerably improved and their perspectives expanded by having access to relevant resources such as books, journals, databases, and digital assets. Additionally, according to Ogbomo & Muobike, (2017), library services such as information literacy education, reference assistance, and research support can provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively utilize the information resources and navigate them successfully. As such, libraries foster information literacy and research competencies, enabling students to become independent students proficient in analyzing and interpreting information from a range of sources.

However, there remains a dearth of information regarding the use of the library's resources and services by part-time NCE students at the Federal College of Education in Zaria. Therefore, It is critical that the libraries understands the distinct needs, preferences, and challenges of its clients

in order to tailor its services and formulate approaches that promote increased engagement and usage. The library may be unable to offer information resources and services that can adequately meet the needs of this group of student population if it does not have a thorough knowledge of their peculiarities. This could potentially hinder their academic progress and overall scholarship experience.

Furthermore, it is impossible to overestimate the value of libraries in educational institutions because they act as information archival centers, giving users access to a multitude of data from a variety of academic fields. Libraries today offer online databases and electronic resources to supplement their physical collections in the era of digital transformation, having adjusted to accept technology (Aina, 2014). Nevertheless, the sheer presence of resources does not ensure their efficient use. It is crucial to comprehend the distinct obstacles encountered by diverse student demographics, including part-time learners, and to devise tactics that cater to their particular requirements, guaranteeing fair access to the library's resources.

In order to close this gap, this study will investigate how much part-time NCE students at the Federal College of Education, Zaria, use the materials and services provided by the library. Through understanding their expectations, challenges, and experiences, the study aims to offer suggestions for improving library services and creating a more favorable learning environment for this group of students. This study aims to find areas for development, such as expanding operating hours, introducing more user-friendly systems, or providing customized seminars and training sessions to meet the needs of part-time students, by carefully examining their involvement levels.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess use of the library information resources and services among part time NCE Students at Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State. In view of this, the study set out to:

- i) identify library information resources and service available to part time NCE students in F.C.E., Zaria Library.
- ii) find out the level of relevancy of the available library information resources and services to part time NCE students in F.C.E., Zaria Library.
- iii) determine the level of accessibility of library information resources and services to part time NCE students in F.C.E., Zaria Library and
- iv) examine part time NCE students in F.C.E., Zaria Library level of satisfaction with the available library information resources and services.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study. The target populations of the study were part time NCE students in F.C.E., Zaria, Nigeria. The study made use of primary data and questionnaire as instruments for data collection. The primary data obtained from F.C.E., Zaria, library included the total number of collections of books and journals, some electronic resources available and services provided by the library. These include the technical section, Serials section, circulation section, reserve section and the ICT/Multimedia section. The College offers part time NCE programmes in the School of Arts and Social Science, Education, Science, Special Education, Languages, Vocation and technical education, and Early Childcare and Primary Education. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of a validated questionnaire, demonstrating a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.75, were distributed among part-time students at the Federal College of Education. The sample encompassed students from NCE 1 to NCE 4. Of the distributed questionnaires, 230 were returned, yielding a response rate of 80%. Among the returned questionnaires, 200 were deemed usable. Subsequently, the collected data underwent collation and coding, utilizing frequency counts and percentages for analysis.

Results

Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the respondents by age, gender and level of study. The finding as shown in Table 1 revealed that 50 (25.0%) of the respondents are below 20 years of age, 66 (33.0%) are aged between 21 – 25 years old, 42 (21.0%) are between 26-30 years, 38 (19.0%) are between 31-35 years of age and only 4 (2.0%) are between 36 years and above. The finding further indicated that young individuals (between 16 years to 25 years) are in the majority. This negated the principle of distance learning / education which was meant for the working class and matured individuals. 72 (36.0%) of the respondents are male while the remaining 128 (64.0%) are female. The table further indicate that 46 (23.0%) of the respondents are NCE 1 students, 34 (17.0%) are NCE 2 students, 64 (32.0%) are NCE 3 students and 56 (28.0%) are NCE 4 students.

The study's objectives included identifying library resources and services available to part time NCE students at F.C.E. Zaria, Library. The findings are reported in Table Two below

Table 2: Library Resources and Services Made Available to NCE Part Time Users

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 20	50	25.0
	years21-25	66	33.0
	26-30	42	21.0
	31-35	38	19.0
	36-40	04	2.0
	Total	200	100.0
Gender	Male	72	36.0
	Female	128	64.0
	Total	200	100.0
Level of Study	NCE 1	46	23.0
	NCE 2	34	17.0
	NCE 3	64	32.0
	NCE 4	56	28.0
	Total	200	100.0
S/N	Library Departm ent	Resources	Services / Activities
1.	Technical Section	The College Library has 111, 456 volumes of print resources comprising textbooks, research/technical reports, monographs, bibliographies, abstracts, indexes and reference materials in all programs offered by the College	▪ Selection, ordering and purchase of recommended textbooks and other print resources ▪ Stamping, Accessioning and Listing of all acquired (purchased and donated)

			books ▪ Soliciting for book donations
2.	Serials Section	The Serials Section has ▪ 15, 500 volumes of journals covering all academic disciplines offered by the College. ▪ Subscribes to daily newspapers and ▪ weekly Magazines	▪ Soliciting for journal donations ▪ Selection, ordering and purchase of recommended journal titles ▪ Stamping, Accessioning and Listing of all acquired (purchased and donated) books ▪ Purchase and stamping of newspapers and magazines ▪ Recent Accession Displays ▪ Selective Dissemination of Information ▪ Current Awareness Services ▪ Reference Services ▪ User Education
3.	Circulation/Reader's Section	The Readers' Services houses all fully processed print resources available in all academic disciplines run by the College. This includes: ▪ Textbooks ▪ Research / Technical reports ▪ Monographs ▪ Reference materials ▪ Projects and Long Projects ▪ Abstract and Indexes ▪ Bibliographies ▪ Literacy Skills ▪ Conference Proceedings	Services to Part time learners include: ▪ Registration of users ▪ Lending services ▪ Recent Accession Displays ▪ Book Reservation Services ▪ Selective Dissemination of Information ▪ Current Awareness Services ▪ Referral Services ▪ Bindery Services ▪ Reference Services ▪ User Education ▪ Clearance Stamp ▪ Photocopy Services
4.	ICT Section	The ICT/Multimedia houses the Internet facilities and resources such as the ▪ Computers and Laptops ▪ Free e-resources such as and ▪ Subscription-based e-resources such as, AGORA, JSTOR, ELSEVIER, SCIENCE Direct and NEXIS LEXIS. ▪ LAN ▪ WAN	▪ Internet services ▪ Networked access to free databases Networked access to subscription-based databases ▪ Information literacy training ▪ Photocopying services

Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the primary data and information obtained from the questionnaire directly from the librarians in charge of the university library departments that deal directly with student's resources

and services with student's resources and services. The table revealed the various resources and services provided to the part time NCE students by the various departments of the College as shown above.

The study's objectives also included finding out the level of relevancy of available library resources offered to part time NCE students at F.C.E. Zaria, Library. The findings are reported in Table Three below

Table 3: Level of Relevancy of Available of Library Resources

Resources	Relevant		Not Relevant		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	200	Percentage	
Textbooks	190	95.0	200	0.5	200
Dictionaries	185	92.5	200	7.5	200
Encyclopedias	150	75.0	200	25.0	200
Newspapers and Magazines	135	67.5	200	32.5	200
E-resources	130	65.0	200	35.0	200
Journals	120	60.0	200	40.0	200
Indexes	90	45.0	200	55.0	200
CD-ROM databases	80	40.0	200	60.0	200
Abstracts	70	35.0	200	65.0	200
Bibliographies	70	35.0	200	65.0	200
Conference Proceedings	60	30.0	200	70.0	200

Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 indicates that the most pertinent library materials in the chosen College library are textbooks (190), which account for 95.0% of the collection, dictionaries (185) for 92.5%, and encyclopedias (150) for 75.0%. The respondents stated that the least relevant library resources were abstracts (70) for (35.0%), bibliographies (70) for (35.0%), and conference proceedings (60) (30.0%). The results validated the information collected, which showed that the quantity of conference proceedings, abstracts, indexes, and bibliographies is insufficient and that the majority of them are out of date. The findings align with the observations by Akussah and Bansah (2021), who noted that a majority of surveyed students utilized the library for reference searches and found the print resources relevant, though internet access was inadequate. However, this contradicts the findings of Agyeman and Agyeman-Duah (2020), which revealed that part-time students at the University of Cape Coast's College of Distance Education relied exclusively on course materials and lecture notes, neglecting library resources to enhance their studies.

The level of accessibility of library resources and services to part time NCE students at F.C.E. Library were determined. The results are shown in Table 4a below.

Table 4a: Level of Accessibility of Library Resources to Part Time NCE students

Items	E.A		O.A		N.A		Total
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Textbooks	170	85.0	30	15.0	-	-	200
Newspapers and Magazines	182	91.0	22	11.0	-	-	200
Journals	159	79.5	30	15.0	11	5.5	200
Encyclopedias	130	65.0	45	22.5	25	12.5	200
Dictionaries	187	93.5	10	5.0	03	1.5	200

Bibliographies	160	80.0	20	10.0	20	10.0	200
Indexes	160	80.0	30	15.0	10	5.5	200
Abstracts	160	80.0	20	10.0	20	10.0	200
Conference Proceedings	130	65.0	40	22.5	30	10.0	200
CD-ROM databases	60	30.0	60	30.0	80	40.0	200
E-resources	70	35.0	35	17.5	95	47.5	200

Field Survey, 2024 Key: EA = Easily Accessible; OA = Occasionally Accessible and NA = Not Accessible

Table 4a showed that the most easily available library resources for part-time students were dictionaries (187, 93.5%), newspapers and periodicals (182, 91%) and textbooks (170, 85%). The least easily accessible resources were CD-ROM databases and electronic resources. In general, it may be inferred that part-time NCE students have great accessibility to existing library resources. According to the survey results, NCE students enrolled part-time are entitled to utilize the print and electronic materials as well as the library's services free of charge once they have registered. Additionally, the results supported those of Kwadzo (2014), who assessed sandwich students at the University of Ghana's access to library resources.

The results showed that most students make use of the campus library to read and conduct Internet searches, proving that they have access to the library. One likely explanation for the low degree of access to information technology resources (electronic materials and CD-ROM databases) is that students do not have the necessary ICT skills. The findings of Adetimirin and Omogbhe (2011) on distance learners in two particular faculties at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, are corroborated by the low degree of access to CD-ROM databases and electronic resources. The studies discovered that although distance learners could access and use library resources, most students hardly ever visited the library because of their busy schedules, insufficient search skills, and lack of borrowing privileges. In contrast to previous studies such as Mabawonku (2018), Owusu-Ansah and Bubuma (2020), and Afful-Arthur (2022), which found that many institutions and libraries' distance learning programs do not adequately address the information needs of part-time learners, the current results suggest a different perspective. Similar to the findings of Busayo (2019), indicating that part-time students at Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria had specific information demands that were overlooked, hindering their optimal utilization of library resources and services, this study highlights the persistent challenges faced by part-time learners in accessing relevant information and support within academic settings.

Table 4b: Library Services Available and Accessible to Part Time Students

Service s	Available and Accessible		Not Available and Not Accessible		Not Sure	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Book loan services	150	75.0	30	15.0	20	10.0
Reference services	120	60.0	50	25.5	30	15.0
Internet services	54	27.0	130	65.5	16	8.0
Photocopying services	45	22.5	155	77.5	-	-
Selective dissemination of information	35	17.5	140	70.0	25	12.5
User education programs	30	15.0	70	35.0	100	50.0

Table 4b reveals that book loan services (150; 75.0%) and reference services (120; 60.0%)

emerged as the most widely available and accessible among all the surveyed services. Conversely, selective dissemination of information (35; 17.5%) and user education programs (30; 15.0%) were reported as the least available and accessible, according to respondents. However, primary data obtained from the college library affirmed the provision of all services identified in the study to both students and staff. The observed lower responses may stem from a lack of awareness among part-time NCE students regarding certain library services. These findings are consistent with more recent studies on the underutilization of library resources by distance learners. Salubi et al. (2018) attributed the non-use of library resources to low awareness and limited access due to geographical barriers. Similarly, Okiki and Mabawonku (2021) found that distance students in Nigerian universities faced challenges in accessing library services, which adversely impacted their academic performance. Furthermore, Kamba (2020) highlighted the need for increased information literacy training for distance learners to enhance their library usage skills, as inadequate exposure to library resources during their formative years was a contributing factor to low utilization rates. NCE part time student's level of satisfaction with the available library resources and services at the F.C.E. Zaria Library was investigated. The outcomes are outlined in Tables 5a and 5b below:

Table 5a: Level of Satisfaction with Library Resources

Resources	HS		S		NS		Total
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Dictionaries	160	80.0	30	15.0	10	5.0	200
Textbooks	142	71.0	56	28.0	02	1.0	200
Encyclopedias	90	45.0	60	30.0	50	25.0	200
Bibliographies	80	40.0	40	20.0	80	40.0	200
Indexes	70	35.0	75	37.5	55	27.5	200
Newspapers and Magazines	68	34.0	60	24.0	76	38.0	200
Journals	68	34.0	98	49.0	34	17.0	200
Conference Proceedings	60	30.0	20	10.0	120	60.0	200
Abstracts	50	25.0	45	22.5	105	52.5	200
CD-ROM databases	34	17.0	20	10.0	146	73.0	200
E-resources	29	14.5	33	16.5	138	69.0	200

Field survey 2024 **Key: HS = Highly Satisfied; S = Satisfied and NS = Not Satisfied** **Source**

Table 5a highlights the predominant utilization of textbooks (198; 99.0%), dictionaries (190; 95.0%), and journals (166; 83%) among part-time students for their academic pursuits. Conversely, CD-ROM databases (54; 27.0%) and e-resources (62; 31.0%) were less frequently utilized for academic activities. This suggests a higher satisfaction level among students with the availability of textbooks, dictionaries, and journals in the library. These findings are consistent with those of Afful-Arthur (2022), indicating a preference for print resources over online materials among sandwich students at the University of Cape Coast due to perceived inadequacies in internet access.

Table 5b: Level of Satisfaction with Library Services provided

Services	HS		S		NS	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Book loan services	116	58.0	54	27.0	30	15.0

Reference services	114	57.0	50	25.0	36	18.0
User education programs	60	30.0	20	10.0	120	60.0
Internet services	33	16.5	12	6.0	155	77.5
Photocopying services	17	8.5	23	11.5	160	35.5
Selective dissemination of information	10	5.0	38	19.0	152	76.0

Field Survey 2024
Satisfied

Key: HS = Highly Satisfied; S = Satisfied and NS = Not

Table 5b demonstrates high satisfaction among NCE part-time students with book loan services (170; 85.0%) and reference services (164; 82.0%) provided by the college library. However, internet services, photocopying, and selective dissemination of information were deemed inadequate to meet the needs and expectations of part-time students. Data from the college library confirmed the availability of all identified services, with the exception of photocopying, which is irregular. The low response to certain services may stem from either a lack of awareness regarding selective dissemination of information and internet services or insufficient ICT skills necessary to utilize the internet effectively. This finding aligns with Omeluzor et al. (2017), who found that limited ICT skills and lack of awareness were barriers to effective use of electronic resources among part-time students in Nigeria. Similarly, Okiki (2019) highlighted the need for information literacy training to enhance part-time students' ability to access and utilize digital resources effectively.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Part-time education emphasizes student-centered learning, which necessitates regular accessibility and utilization of information resources and library services for both libraries and students. Consequently, to achieve quality education, academic excellence, and foster research, part-time learners must have timely access to scholarly information resources and services. Although college libraries provide resources and services without discrimination, the mere availability of these offerings does not guarantee full accessibility and usage by students. Therefore, internet resources and services should be reliable and continually improved to serve as a gateway for delivering library resources and services directly to part-time students. Additionally, the digitization of all library resources would enable students to search the college library databases without the need to physically visit the library when necessary. It is crucial for college libraries to ensure that part-time students are information literate, enabling them to overcome challenges associated with accessing, locating, retrieving, and utilizing information from various sources, including the web. In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The college library should actively participate in orientation programs for new part-time students. This will raise awareness and encourage part-time students to utilize the library's resources and services effectively.
2. Information literacy courses should be integrated into the part-time study curriculum and made mandatory for all part-time students. These courses should be taught by competent and experienced librarians to ensure effective knowledge transfer.
3. The college library management should prioritize deploying more electronic facilities, particularly internet services and resources, to the various departmental libraries. This will

enable more students to access electronic resources and scholarly databases conveniently.

4. Library registration should be made compulsory for all part-time students. Additionally, lecturers should assign projects and assignments that require students to utilize the library's resources, services, and interact with library staff, fostering a culture of library usage.

5. The college library should provide online bibliographic instruction, online reference services, online literature searches, and document delivery services tailored to meet the diverse information needs of part-time students, ensuring seamless access to resources and support.

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