

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Awareness, access and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria

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This study aims to investigate the awareness, access and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law of Osun State University Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used in the study. The population of the study comprises of forty-five undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University. A structure questionnaire was used to collect data. Simple percentage and frequency was also used to analyze the data. The study aims to reveal the response of the respondents, 40% of the respondents were aware of user education programme and 4.0% of the respondents were aware of information brochure. Similarly, 47.0% of the respondents were able to access the library catalogue through the use of author access point, and 44.4% of the respondents agreed that both awareness and access brings speed access to information. Therefore, the study concludes that the awareness programme and access points contribute immensely to the utilization of library catalogue.

**Key words:** Library catalogue, programme, access points

## INTRODUCTION

With the age of information explosion, there is growing concern about the use of reliable information retrieval tools, such as catalogue, abstract, indexes, bibliographies and citations. The library having been described as the heart of learning community is supposed to provide a place for the students to carry out their research and advance their information retrieval skills.

Therefore, awareness of the library catalogue is the ability of the students to have communication and consciousness of its essence, its retrieval technique as

well as their relevance to the information user. Students' skills in search catalogue can be created through library tours, orientations, seminars, lectures, library staff, hand-books and use of library studies.

Although, much awareness of the retrieval tools may be created in the libraries, it does not necessarily mean its accessibility, not to speak of its use. The major importance is that they help library users to locate and retrieve the information materials they need.

Generally, these access points are the means through

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which library users gain access to materials available in the library. They are important in the library services, since many users are not aware of the bibliographic information materials they are looking for. Awareness and accessibility are propelling factors to effective utilization of library catalogue (Obichere and Amaechi, 2008). The need to facilitate access over the years has not been given utmost concern which has in turn placed low use of catalogue and inaccessibility of her resources by students. This will directly or indirectly have tremendous impact on library services.

To this end, library catalogue has created wider range of information resources availability of libraries in general and academic libraries in particular. Generally, they are an interface of information retrieval system which assists information searchers to access resources of libraries using several access points.

Edoka (2000) affirm that they appear to be the most extensively tools use for information search and retrieval, because of its bibliographic details and its reliance in quick access and usage. Furthermore, Ola (2011) assert that the catalogues are mostly seen in academic libraries because of their method of arrangement which could either be in the dictionary or classified order, and in the dictionary arrangement all entries that is; title, subject, author and added entries are combined and arranged in alphabetical file or sequence. While classified arrangement are filled according to the classification number or any other symbol assigned to the materials, as a representative of the subject. Library catalogue exist in different form. Like the card catalogues, sheaf catalogues, books, machine readable catalogues (MARC) and online public access catalogues (OPACs).

With emphasis been placed on library resources, and users been more interested in access rather than awareness, libraries are facing low use of the catalogue and lack of adequate knowledge on how best they can be used for information acquisition. These hinder effective library services and in turn affect library users. By providing adequate awareness programmes and satisfactions to users, students can understand the techniques required in information access and use.

However, with the numerous retrieval tools and improper organization of information resources, the role of librarians towards ensuring such knowledge has been too slow towards ensuring information access. It is against this reason that this seeks to explain awareness, access and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the Faculty of Law, Osun State University.

Osun State University is also known as (UNIOSUN) was established by Osun State Government pursuant to the University Establishment Law passed by the State House of Assembly in December, 2006 and signed into law by the then state Governor, His Excellency, Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola. The National University Commission having reviewed the requisite documents,

granted approval and formal recognition to Osun State University as the 80th university in Nigeria and 30th State University.

Osun State University is set up as a conventional, multi-campus university charged with the production of high quality, well-rounded, globally competitive and entrepreneurial graduates who are catalysts for rapid and sustainable socio-economic development of Osun State and Nigeria. Although the university is intended to be a conventional university, it shall optimise the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in its teaching, learning and research activities.

There are six campuses that comprise of the Osun State University such as the College of Science, Engineering and Technology Osogbo as the main campus, College of Management Science Okuku, College of Education Ipetu-Ijesa, College of Agriculture Ejigbo, College of Art and Humanity Ikire, and College of Law Ifetedo. Furthermore, each campus was established with their libraries that contain stocks and collections on various disciplines based on the establishment of the colleges.

### **Statement of the problem**

Awareness of information resources arises from the need to utilize needed information from large volume of acquired materials through the catalogue. Which access can easily be gotten through awareness? Traditionally, the catalogue gives bibliographic details of information resources of the library.

Inability to use the catalogue for information access may arise due to low awareness and inability to have access through it. University libraries are responsible for creating awareness and access to students in their academic pursuit and information quest. The use of library catalogue as a major information retrieval mechanism has brought many changes, making information access easier, better and accurate. However, even with this relevance, most libraries still lack the basic skills and awareness programmes for its effective utilization of the library catalogue. This leads to difficulty in accessing information resources, chaos and inability to use the library catalogue in retrieving information resources by undergraduate students. Students often prefer to browse directly through the archive, as they felt it guaranteed quick and easy access to information resources.

Thus, every student information desire is to achieve results and satisfaction of his/her information needs. This cannot be met when access and utilization is not satisfied with library resources and services due to awareness effect. It therefore becomes pertinent to ask how awareness programmes, access points and effects of library catalogue hamper undergraduate student's utilization of library catalogue. This study is an attempt to

finding plausible answer to these questions.

### Objectives of the study

1. To examine the influence of awareness programme on utilization of the library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo.
2. To ascertain the influence of access point on utilization of the library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo.
3. To investigate both the influence of awareness and access on utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo.

### Research questions

1. Is there any influence of awareness programme on utilization of the library catalogue on undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?
2. Is there any influence of access point on utilization of library catalogue on undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?
3. Is there any influence of both awareness and access on utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A catalogue is a record or list of books, periodicals, journals, pamphlets, monographs, audio-visual aids and other materials of a particular library, or a group of libraries (when union catalogue), or a private collection containing specified items of bibliographical information, namely author, title, edition, imprint, collation, etc.

In automated, microfiche, card or printed form arranged in classified or alphabetical order according to any standard catalogue code of rules that is, Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR), American Library Association (ALA), Library of Congress (LC), etc. (Rowley, 1998). A library catalogue serves the same purpose. It is a file of records for a library's collection (List, 1998; Ojedokun, 2007). It is important to both library users and library staff. Its functions include giving comprehensive record of materials owned by the library, listing to what the library possesses by a certain author, on a given subject, and with a certain title, and enabling library materials to be located easily (Clark, 2000). The catalogue provides multiple access point to the library's collection (Osiole, 1987).

To use available information resources in the library a

user must be able to know the existence of the type of information search and retrieval tool used (that is, catalogue). Awareness implies having knowledge or realization of a particular thing (Hornby, 2010). Ishola (2005) in his work affirm that the awareness of library catalogue is the ability of the user to have the knowledge of the existence of the various access points and retrieval technique as well as their relevance in solving their information needs.

Umesh (2012) pointed out that for effective use of library catalogue and her services, awareness programme must be incorporated into the library, which include, book display programme, orientation programme, information brochures, user education and library instruction. However, these programmes help the students to know the various types of information resources available on a particular subject and on different authors. And also to know the particular titles of information materials that library acquired.

Moreover, Ishola (2005) also stated that the awareness of the library catalogue is a necessity, which should be done in form of user education in Nigeria higher institution of learning as most students come into higher institution without orientation or background. Chinyere (2014) confirm that user education is one of the major way of creating awareness to students, as it is been designed to teach library users on how to effectively utilize library resources and its services.

In university libraries, several approaches have been developed for information search. According to Unagba (2010), access points are entry printed on the catalogue that libraries arranged alphabetically and made available in drawers. Each drawer in the catalogue cabinet has a label telling what letters are included in it. In the same vein, Nwokocha (2010) asserts that access points are the most frequently used and are the means through which library users gain access to materials available in the manual library.

Catalogues are important in library services since many users, especially freshmen are not actually aware of bibliographic information of the material they are looking for. A review of related literature reveals that undergraduate students are the most frequent users of library catalogue mainly for educational purposes. Nwezeh (2010) highlighted that the catalogue is used for searching for information on a specific subject, title or author, as a result of tremendous diversity and volume of information contained.

Nnadozie (2007) opines that the students utilize the catalogue so as to save themselves the trouble of going through the shelves and to facilitates their idea about a given resources in a given field. Ebiwolote (2010) maintains that the reasons why undergraduate students prefer using the catalogue is because it provide access to information from multiplicity of choices, and also to motivate them to learn. Therefore searching through library catalogue is not just a popular activity but an

important skill needed to obtain information, thus understanding information searching processes is a relevant issue.

Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) observed that students use catalogue mostly for educational purposes and have really helped in conducting and disseminating information resources in the library. In essence, students use the catalogue to enable them conduct research in the library. Akande (2003) confirm that the catalogue has opened up the numerous possibilities for accessing and retrieving information and information on latest journals, books and other resources which are discovered.

Furthermore, the effect of library depends to a very large extent on its organization. Obichere and Amaechi (2008) examined library catalogue as it correlates its awareness and usage among students in higher institutions. The study made use of Federal Polytechnic Nekede, South-East, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used and a sample of one hundred and fifty-five (155) students was selected from the polytechnic. The study made use of sixteen (16) questions of which the first four (4) were personal data and the remaining twelve (12) is to elicit information for analysis.

Data were analyzed using figures, tables and percentages inferences and the study found a significant relationship between library catalogue awareness and its usage. The study also found out that students are aware of the existence of the library catalogue. The knowledge of which came from the library staff that rank highest in their source of knowledge.

Similarly, Oni (2011) conducted a survey of catalogue patronage for information retrieval by undergraduate students in the Nigeria libraries using a case study of Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) library. Data were collected using questionnaire and analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics that is based on frequency table and percentage distribution. The study administered questionnaire to three hundred (300) students. The result of the study showed that the awareness of the catalogue for information retrieval led to some other identified causes of low usage of catalogue in information search and retrieval. The study recommended that library management should proffer solutions to the problems of low patronage of students' use of library catalogue, in their quest for information retrieval.

## METHODOLOGY

Using a survey research design, data were collected using a questionnaire with items relevant to this study. Simple percentage and frequency were used to analyze data. The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo that stood at forty-five (45).

A structured questionnaire was distributed among the selected students. The questionnaire was made up two sections, that is section A and B. Section A of the questionnaire sought the name of the students, age, level and gender while section B was made up three variables such as awareness programme, access point, and utilization of library catalogue. Each variable was measured with

five items. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents and they were retrieved the same day.

Forty-five (45) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and successfully retrieved thereby giving hundred percent (100%) return rate. The analysis of the distribution was presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows the obtained responses from the respondents indicating their gender. The table also shows the total number of male and female response of the students in the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo. Therefore, the results show that female respondents (89.0%) were more than the male respondents which had 11.0%. The result shows that there are more female undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo than the male undergraduate students.

Research question 1: Is there any influence of awareness programme on utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?

Table 2 shows that awareness programme and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students are mostly done through user education which has 18 response that is representing 40.0%, followed by orientation programme which has 12 responses, representing 27.0%, library instruction has 9 responses, representing 20.0%, while book display programme has 4 responses, representing 9.0%, and information brochure had 2 responses, representing 4.0%, it will be deduced that user education, orientation programme, and library instruction are the common awareness programme in the institutional library. Therefore, the result here means that there is relationship between awareness programme and utilization of library catalogue.

Research question 2: Is there any influence of access points and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?

Table 3 shows that responses towards access points and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students which indicate 21 respondents admitted that they use author access point to retrieve information in the library with 47.0%, while 13 respondents that represent 29% indicated that they use subject access point to retrieve information in the library. While 11 respondents that is representing 24.0% indicated that they use subject access point for their information retrieval and search. None of the respondents indicated classified access point. Therefore, there is a relationship between access point and utilization of library catalogue.

Research question 3: Is there any influence of both awareness and access on the use of library catalogue by undergraduate students of College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo?

Table 4 shows that the influence of both awareness and access of library catalogue with undergraduate students shows higher responses of library catalogue result in its speed of information access with 20 respondents that is representing 44.4% while 12 respondents representing 27.0% indicated that both awareness and access enhance information search to be very easy, while 7 respondents, representing 15.6% indicated that it assists in the discovery of same work by the author. Then, 4 respondents that represented 9.0% indicated that it saves the time of the user, while those that indicated that it helps to narrow the user search were 2 respondents that represented 4.0%. Therefore, awareness and access has strong influence on utilization of library catalogue.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of data analysis in Table 1 shows that female

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents by gender.

<b>Sex</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage distribution</b>
Male	5	11.0
Female	40	89.0
Total	45	100

**Table 2.** Awareness programmes on utilization of library catalogue.

<b>Awareness programme</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage distribution</b>
Book display programme	4	9.0
Library instruction	9	20.0
Orientation programme	12	27.0
User education	18	40.0
Information brochure	2	4.0
Total	45	100

**Table 3.** Access point on utilization of library catalogue.

<b>Access point</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage distribution</b>
Author	21	47.0
Title	13	29.0
Subject	11	24.0
Classified	-	-
Total	45	100

**Table 4.** Both awareness and access on utilization of library catalogue.

<b>Influence of library catalogue</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage distribution</b>
It enhance information search to be very easy	12	27.0
It assists in the discovery of same work by same author	7	15.6
It brings speed access to information	20	44.4
It saves time of the library user	4	9.0
It helps to narrow the user search	2	4.0
Total	45	100

had the highest number of respondents (89.0%), than the male with 11.0%. This implies that the female ranked highest in the College of Law, Osun State University, Osogbo; who in turn utilize the library catalogue more than the male.

The result of Table 2 shows that the influence due to the fact that the awareness programme increases knowledge of the best form and easy means utilizing the catalogue. User education had the highest response with 40%. The influence of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Chinyere (2014) who noted that the user education is one of the major way of creating awareness

to students, as it is been designed to educate library users on how effectively one has to utilize library resources and services, thereby encouraging students to develop logical, creative and critical approach to the subject they study. It therefore means that user education of library catalogue is important, as it ensure high utilization of library retrieval tools and her resources.

The result of the data analysis in Table 3 shows that the highest access point in library catalogue has been use by undergraduate students, at which the author access point ranked the highest with 47.0%, this implies that the influence between access point and utilization of

library catalogue.

The results of data analysis in Table 4 were effective because of the combined influence of both awareness and access, at which it brings speed access to information with 44.4%. This implies that there is effect between both influence of awareness and access of library catalogue. The influence of the study is in agreement with the opinion of Ugah (2008) who observed that more knowledgeable and information user is, the more accessible an information retrieval source will be likely to her. It therefore means that awareness of library catalogue, will definitely lead to access of her resources, in order that the user might know how to consult in their quest for information retrieval.

In this study awareness, access, and utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students of the College of Law, Osun State University Osogbo was examined. Based on the literature review, research objectives and research questions were formulated and analyzed. Students at the College of Law, Osun State University were used for collection of data and used the questionnaire as the data collection instrument for the study. Simple percentage and frequency table was used in analysing the data collected. From the analysis, the following findings were advanced, that awareness programmes, access point and combined awareness and access have influence on utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students.

## Conclusion

It has been investigated in this study that awareness programmes play a crucial role in the utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students. In the same vein, access points have contributed immensely to the utilization of library catalogue by undergraduate students. Also, the research revealed that these variables mentioned had a remarkable influence with the utilization of library catalogue. Conclusively, the research observed that in fairness to undergraduate students, it is imperative that their use pattern should be identified together with library usage activities to discourage them from not using library resources and her services. Because undergraduate students have varying needs and expectations and strive to meet them so as to facilitates effective use of the library.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. There should be constant awareness programme in university libraries which should be organized to inform undergraduate students of the information retrieval tools, not just the catalogue but all the information, retrieval tools available in academic libraries.
2. Use of library should be embedded in the curriculum, so that undergraduate would be conversant with the various information retrieval tools and equally make use

of them.

3. There should be an organised training for library staff on the use of information retrieval tools so as to efficiently assists students in accessing and retrieving information for research.
4. There should be proper orientation for the new students on how to make use of the library.
5. Necessary instruction should be given to the students about their attitude to the library staff, information materials and other library collections.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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