

EXTENT INFORMATION RESOURCES PROVISION OF NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA MEET INFORMATION NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

¹Ndu Maria Ogonna, ²E. S Anaehobi (Phd), ³Ifeyinwa B. Okoye (Phd),
⁴Abanum Rosemary C.

¹Federal University of Technology, Owerri

²Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

³Federal University of Technology, Owerri

⁴Federal University of Technology, Owerri

Abstract: This work examined the extent Information resources provision of National Open University of Nigeria meet the information needs of their students in Southeast Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 42,200 NOUN Students from four study centers in southeast out of which 2111 were sampled. Random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Its reliability was established using Cronbach alpha. Data collected was analyzed using arithmetic mean. From the analysis, given that the various information resources needed by students are to a high extent, more so the provided information resources by NOUN to its students to meet their information need are to a low extent. However these were not without challenges ranging from poor funding, inadequate provision of information resources, and irregular power supply and so on but they further highlighted some solutions to the challenges. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the stakeholders should oftentimes conduct a resources verification exercise on the resources and facilities of the NOUN programme and they should also ensure that the policy and the vision statement that established the NOUN programme are strictly followed.

Keywords: Information resources provision, National Open University, NOUN Students, NOUN programme,

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the bedrock of any country and on it lies the development programmes that breaks bond of barriers to the Nations progress and prosperity. This therefore implies that any country that worth it “salt” should not toil with Education, consequently one cannot separate quality education from Library, “they walk hand in hand”. Given the importance of education, Nigerian government has therefore enlarged its coast by the establishment of the National Open University and this programme has brought opportunities to all her intending citizens that wish to and have the capacity to acquire and advance ones learning and knowledge. However National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is a type of distance education that aims at meeting the needs and aspirations of people that are not opportune to attend the face to face conventional system of education. Students oftentimes receive lectures at home or in convenient places through the

use of technology as a means of interaction between learners and facilitators. NOUN (2011), stated that there are 49 study centers in the country.

According to Alaezi (2005), Open Learning is one of the most recent manifestations of a gradual trend towards the democratization of education. Distance learning on the other hand, stresses the physical distance which does not allow direct interaction between the teacher and the learner. The NOUN is designed to increase access to education in a manner convenient to the circumstances of all Nigerians. Many adults cannot attend traditional education because they have work and family obligations to cater for. Some of the difficulties being experienced are poor public transportation systems in many parts of the state and the type of jobs they do and sometimes they live in locations without convenient access to traditional classes and as such, they learn more effectively from video, audio and web based media (Darco, 2012).

This explains why Akintayo and Bunza (2012) described some of the characteristics of distance learners, as adults with professional responsibilities (jobs), social responsibilities, study part time, take control over their learning, self-directed, study on independent basis, learn in a variety of ways and often experience a feeling of isolation and remoteness from other students and more so, adults are prime targets for distance learning.

Given the pivotal role Libraries play in knowledge acquisition at various institutions and academic programmes, it then becomes paramount that its establishment should not be overlooked. Mabawonku and Mcisaac (2004) agree that the library is the nerve centre of any education as it promotes the acquisition of reading, inquiry and independent thinking through the provision of resources in support of teaching and learning activities. This idea therefore can be achieved by the establishment of world class library to meet the information needs of local, national and international scholarly community. Such libraries can support the university mission and contribute to the development of the society through the pursuit of teaching, learning and research. Spinger (2011) sees information resources as communication media that carries information. He further stressed that the communication media could be print, non-print or interactive.

In furtherance to this, institutions are expected to provide or secure convenient, direct access to library materials in appropriate formats that will meet all students needs in fulfilling course assignments, enrich the academic programs, meet teaching and research needs, support curricular needs and facilitate the acquisition of life-long learning skills. All in the bid to take education to the doorstep of students with quality information resources (both print and non-print).

NOUN (2017) states its vision in providing first class information resources that will enhance and enable all forms of research for the pursuit of knowledge which in turn, contributes to the developments of the university and society. Similarly, NOUN (2012-2015) exposes that in its headquarters, it has library resources room, book factory, mini recording studio, a REPRODA (knowledge warehouse and data processing center), audio/video production room, editing studio, and material warehouse. This action ensures library importance as a livewire of education in the country. However, to meet the need of a standard library, NOUN (2014), further posits that it has libraries for students use and these libraries are stocked with information resources such as journals, pamphlets, reference materials, newsprints, past question papers, among others.

Further more the libraries are usually assumed to have standard and quality information resources and some information resources are CD-Rom, internet, online data bases, computer, radio and televisions. Students are therefore expected to log in online to these libraries in order to access and retrieve information for assignment and research purposes. Notably, NOUN (2014) also employ a range of course delivery methods that suit asynchronous learning which distance learning requires. Given the role libraries play in linking distance learners to information despite physical location, it is advised that any distance learning centre should be evaluated by its ability to meet the information needs of its students. The effective meeting of students' information needs involve ensuring that the students are not faced with challenges in the course of making use of the provided information resources. The sole objective of provision of these information resources is to meet the information needs of its students. Students cannot excel academically if these information resources are not adequately provided. This study therefore, aims at determining the extent information resources provision of NOUN in meeting the information needs of their students in Southeast Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The paramount idea of providing information resources to students is to satisfy their information curiosity and once this was not achieved the purpose has automatically failed. Similarly, any Library that fails to fulfil its mandate in support of learning, teaching and research has also failed. Given the distance learning structure and its formation as regards to the

provision of information resources to her Learners, the big question is whether they have being able to do the needful or otherwise despite its challenges in fulfilling students information need. Again, there were speculations that distance learning centres provide information resources and facilities to their students. In the view of the foregoing, this study seeks to find out the extent of information resources provision of NOUN and how it meet the information needs of students in Southeast Nigeria and challenges associated with it.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to information resources provision and the extent it is meeting the information needs of NOUN students in Southeast Nigeria. The centers covered in this study are those in Enugu, Anambra, Imo and Abia states. It would investigate the extent the provided information resources meet the information needs of distance learners, to find out challenges encountered by students in using the information resources provided and to proffer solutions to the identified challenges.

Objectives of the Study

- (1) What are the extent the provided information resources meet the information needs of National Open University of Nigeria students?
- (2) What are the challenges encountered by students in using the information resources provided by National Open University of Nigeria?
- (3) What are the solutions to those challenges encountered by the students in using the information provided by National Open University of Nigeria?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Some of the replicated literature reviewed shows some similarity and differences as regards to information resources and information need of students of distance learning programmes at various places in the world.

Regarding this study, information resources are information bearing materials which could be both in print and electronic formats which NOUN students access, in order to gather information that can enable them perform task, take decisions as regards their class work, assignments and researches so that their information needs can be met. Bell (2012) opines that learning using computers, allows individuals to carry out their research and create handout/posters. These information resources support learners who are completing their course through online distance learning methods. Altama and Ezema (2012) categorized the resources of academic libraries into books which consist of a set of printed sheet held together along one of the four edges and enclosed within protective cover to form a volume. Others are pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers and magazines. Chernik (2002) stressed that serials are one of the resources of university libraries and care is usually taken in their selection, acquisition, and preservation.

The retrieval of information from these information resources vary as the case may be. Most distance learners according to Mabawonku (2004), access materials in the library through using the provided catalogues to search for relevant journals, textbooks, newspapers, reference materials, bulletins and pamphlets. On the other hand, others log on to the provided databases to retrieve information. In agreement, Sacchanand (2009) observes that distance learners access information resources in various ways. Access can be direct like face to face or mediated by printed materials like manuals, brochures, or mediated by technology using a variety of media such as telephone, radio, internet and others. Direct access is characterized by flexibility, reliability, user friendly, portability, efficiency and service ability.

The information needs of distance learners are determined by many factors. Berge in Al-fadhli (2009) sees computer competency and technological factor as factors that greatly determine the information needs of distance learning students. He defines computer competency as a judgment of one's information technology capabilities. A student's computer competency is measured by the frequency of computer use, knowledge of software, frequency of internet use and type of internet used. These concepts are believed to have roles in the success of the distance learning models. Downey as in Al-fadhli (2009), notes that, students with good computer literacy will likely have a positive disposition and tendency towards a distance learning environment. Berge as in Al-fadhli (2009) defines computer competence as a judgment of one's information technology capabilities. These concepts are believed to have important roles in the success of the distance learning models. Hypothetically, a student, with good computer literacy will likely have a positive disposition and tendency towards a distance learning environment.

Al-fadhli (2009) observes that Information needs of distance learners depend on technological factors. The use of ICT in a distance learning environment suggests that, ICT has played and will continue to play a significant role in this field. This will be especially true as proliferation of ICT, other technologies and computer technologies evolve. This prolific and rapid evolution has been acknowledged by distance learning professionals and institutions alike as an opportunity to conduct virtual class settings and deliver course materials. To buttress this Rowland (2015) stresses that developing countries, still lack the technological factors necessary to implement distance learning systems especially since the IT infrastructure in these countries pale in comparison to those developed nations. The efficient and effective use of IT in delivering distance learning based components of an online course is not only critical to students acceptance of distance learning but also, important to the success of student's learning.

Extent of Information Resources Provided to Distance Learners

The peculiar characteristics of distance learners make the provision of information resources to meet their information needs eminent. As students are living away from school, they need to make use of information resources despite their locations. To this, different universities offering distance learning programs have their peculiar way of providing information resources to their distance learners.

Athabasca University Canada Open University (AUCOP) employs a broad spectrum of distance learning methods and relies on a variety of information technologies to deliver course materials and instruction to students. These include the use of multi-media, online databases, print material, web, internet, CD- Rom, computer software, audio/videotapes, television and radio. Each course uses a combination of information resources. This is enhanced by the use of computers, with internet combination (Athabasca University 2015).

According to Prince William College (2013), it distributes course materials to its distance learners via videotapes, audio cassettes, textbooks, and online activities using standard internet access tools. In addition, telephones, radio, CD- ROMs and CDs are also used as sources of information to its distance learners.

In Kansa State University, Bohn (2006) asserts that distance education in the university has the same courses offered on campus with the same instructors and curriculum. The information resources used include the use of CD-ROMs Videotapes, audiotapes, online databases, microfilms, textbooks, and reference materials. Studying is made easy with these information resources in that, the number of distance learners grow yearly with an increase of about 10% yearly. This is evident of the rise from 68 to 89 graduates from 2005-2006.

To provide adequate collections for its distance learners, University of Western Australia (2015) posits that its library has an impression collection of books, non-print items in a wide range of format. Its e-resources include e-journal, databases, onlinecourse materials, and past question papers. Finally, its special collections are rare books, manuscripts, maps, microfilms, microfiche, thesis collections, reference collection and university collections.

At Florida Gulf Coast University, the information resources include recorded knowledge, data and information in a variety of formats. Printed works include books, journals, newspapers and maps. E-resources include e-books, e-journals, research and databases. Audiovisual and multimedia resources include DVD, video and CD-ROMs. Inclusive also are microfilm and microfiche (FGCU 2015).

Sam Houston State University (SHSU 2015) stresses that its library has books, bound volume of periodicals, government documents, newspapers, multimedia and sound recordings for its distance learners.

NOUN (2014) stresses that students do not attend lectures in the normal classroom situation. NOUN rather, teaches through the provision of a specialized study material on the basis of self-learning. Printed materials remain a major instructional mode until such a time that information for total online teaching becomes available. Each course has a study material, written specifically for the course and which students are expected to study prior to being examined. In addition to printed materials, audiotapes are used in recording some courses to be played over and over and listened to as often as possible in whatever environment is convenient for the play backs. It affords the opportunity of storing a vast amount of information which could be carried around. This could be audio and visual.

Furthermore, some courses are broadcast on radio and television. This is usually well organized and arranged by a timetable which will be widely published for the concerned students. Recent innovations in the field of communication

technology are being explored to make the delivery of instruction even more effective. Learning at a distance becomes more enabling with the use of internet.

Availability or non-availability of library information resources and its effect in the use of library has received attention of library scholars in recent times. According to Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), the lack of availability of information resources is attributed to the steady proliferation of universities along with increase in students and faculty. They also attribute it to the diversification of courses and academic programs without adequate information sources to meet the actual information needs. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), see availability of information resources as ensuring their presence in the university library for use.

Buckland (2002) provides a lucid analytical framework for diagnosing frustration felt by users who fail to locate on the library shelves the information resources they want. He outlined four basic relations between the user and information resources availability which are

- (1) For any given period, the chances of a copy of information source being on the shelves when sought varies with the popularity. The greater the popularity, the lower the immediate availability.
- (2) For any given popularity, the length of the loan period and the immediate availability are inversely related. The longer the loan period, the lower the immediate availability, the shorter the loan period, the higher the immediate availability.
- (3) For any given level of immediate availability, the popularity and length of the loan period are necessarily also inversely related. The greater the popularity, the shorter the loan period has to be and less the popularity, the longer the loan period can be.
- (4) Increasing the number of copies availability through duplicating, shortening the length of the loan period, increases the immediate availability.

A study by Marama and Oguumbi (2003), on availability of Library and Information Science (LIS) collections in Nigerian university libraries, to distance learners confirmed high unavailability rate of library and information science collections in most libraries. This has affected the use of information resources in the libraries studied. The effect is that, faculty members cannot conduct quality research while library students, cannot even use the library. Okiy (2004) conducted a study on assessing students and faculty use of academic library of Delta State University, Abraka to distance learners and found out that unavailability rate of information resources ;in the library was a serious factor in the non-use of library by most patrons. Oyediran – Tidings (2004), in her study on the information needs and seeking behavior of library users at the Yaba College of Technology Lagos, identified low patronage of the library by the students which was attributed to the expressed unavailability of desired information resources. Ugah (2008) conducted a research on the scarcity of books in Nigeria and the threat to academic excellence to distance learners she was able to establish that non-availability of information sources has led faculty and students not to use library resources.

Information resources may not be available to users because, of some technical issues. To confirm this, Adeoye (2011) posits that information resources are not available to users either because they are not acquired or are waiting in the processing unit of the library. He recommends that effort be made to acquire specific information sources that the users need which are not available in the processing unit of the library. He also emphasizes that such materials if acquired should be processed and made available to users without delay.

The extent the provided information resources meet distance learners' information needs

It is obvious that information resources have the potential of providing students with high quality of learning experience. The sole objective of any distance learning institution is to ensure that student's perception of the provided information resource is positive. This is achieved by putting all structures in place to ensure that these information resources meet distance learners information needs. The extent at which any information resource is considered fit in meeting distance learners information needs greatly depends on how effective the information resource provided, meet students' information needs.

The provided information resources to distance learners can be considered adequate and beneficial in meeting students' information needs. Whne in Johnson (2004) opines that the provided information resources to distance learners saved their time, and enabled them research more materials for class work. To bultress this, Okpeke (2004) observed that, with the use of electronic information resources, the problem of accessing information lessened and the constraint of time and

space was removed. In addition, Adeotia in Etim (2014) asserts that the internet resources, are regarded flexible, efficient and effective in the access of information. With the internet, access to online books, journals, conference papers and international libraries for content has been made easier.

There are some negative impacts the provided information resources have in meeting students' information needs. Alijam (2015) opines that students are not familiar with the concept of digital library. This plays a negative role towards students' access of information for research purposes. To buttress this, Tyler (2011) opines that though the library campus website was used for assignment however, students found it difficult to complete assignments and indicated issues with ease of information accessibility. Furthermore, Slade as in Johnson (2004) observed that distance learners do not have direct access to the full range of library materials and opines that the goal of equity makes it necessary that librarians provide materials that are more personalized than might be expected on campus.

Information resources maybe available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one's subject of interest but, the user, may not be able to lay hands on them. One may identify citations in indexes but may not have access to sources containing the relevant articles.

For the purpose of this study, if NOUN students are able to have a positive perception of the information resources provided for continuing education program, regarding its accessibility, design and content, then, they would be able to perform well in quizzes, assignments and examination. This certainly will lead to sustainable meeting of their information needs.

Challenges encountered by distance learning students in using information resources provided to them

Orr's utilization theory of information resources opines that the access to information and its use is equal to all. However, the capacity for its effective provision differs among individuals. According to him, this is determined by occupation, gender, environment, culture and others. In essence, the extent at which information is provided depends on environment, culture, mental status, age, and exposure of an individual. These factors can pose challenges to the effective provision of information to distance learners.

Many writers have identified a number of challenges to information resources provision to distance learners. Poor electricity supply and poor Internet connectivity pose great challenges in the provision of information resources to distance learners. In line with this, Ejibuwa (2005) asserts that, the absence of electricity necessary for Information Communication Technology (ICT) growth, lack of facilities for Internet resources sharing were impediments to the provision of information resources to distance learners. To buttress this, Okonkwo (2012), stressed that power outage and slow access to online sources are worsened by transportation and traffic problems in Lagos metropolis where staff spend more than two hours on way daily. This leads to substandard output.

Fabian (2010) points that the University of Zambia does not have regional libraries to cater for those students living in far places. The study also reveals that very few reforms have taken place in the library to improve distance learner's access to information. Fabian states that the library has almost no cooperation with other libraries in the country and only coordinates with Directorate of Distance Education (DDE). As a result, distance learners depend largely on printed teaching materials and book extracts prepared by their lecturers.

It has been observed that no information on library use courses is offered to distance learners. This makes it difficult for students to search for information independently. To buttress this, Oladukun (2006), opines that lack of library use instruction and time allotted for library use affects the extent to which information resources are provided to distance learners. Oloajo and Akewukere (2004) in their study of distance learner's study habit reported that distance learners are not enticed into developing a good reading habit because, the resources of the libraries are never accessible to them. Boadi and Leesolo (2004) after an investigation on the information needs and seeking behavior of distance learners reported that distance learners, use the campus library resources less because access to them is not easy. In line with this, Mirtz (2010) declares that, indeed, the resources of the library seem misplaced, ignored and forgotten. This is because a greater proportion of distance learners are not aware of library information resources because they do not have access to them.

Furthermore, the use of the library does not only lie on student's using the information resources it also involves lending out these sources of information to students at any given time they request for them. However, this desire is usually, unfulfilled. Omogbhe (2011) stated that apart from the benefits enjoyed by the distance learning students from using the

library, the most significant of challenges facing them is their inability to borrow books which could aid their independent study.

Incompetency of lecturers hired for distance learning invariably affects the provision of information resources to them. In most universities, lecturers do not have background in education of instructional learning methodology. They rather have degrees in various subjects and are hired by universities on that basis. Basaza (2006) opines that some lecturers have obtained guidance about how to teach in a face to face setting from colleagues but very few have experiences with distance education instructions and teaching strategies in relation to the use of information resources. Their inadequacy is reflected in the lack of quality learning information material and lack of students support strategies. Students are frustrated with this lack of support and are also challenged by the mode of information resources presentation. Summarily, Aramide (2010) opines that the major constraints hindering the use of a virtual and electronic response include poor power supply, poor infrastructure lack of adequate skill, high cost and unavailability of information resources.

The inability of distance learners to effectively make use of computers in accessing information poses a great challenge in meeting their information needs. To buttress this, Ugwu (2017) opined that the greatest of the direct factor underlying student's challenges with the use of online information include: lack of browsing skills, insufficient Information Communication Technology (ICT) coupled with the out datedness of virtual libraries. On the other hand, the indirect factors include lack of reference materials, Internet

access reluctance at home in the use of online information and majority of student's inability to purchase a personal laptop. To buttress this, Kamaj (2015) stresses that teachers who enroll in Open and Distance learning face challenges relating to failure of students to receive training materials on time.

In developing countries, Kamaj (2015) further opines that distance learners are faced with a new challenge of technical competence needed to have effective access to hardware and software of ICT including the skills of using networking systems to access and share information. Lack of these skills is a critical challenge as learners may fail to use the various physical, digital and human resources involved in ICT. These challenges prompt many problems in distance learning. Among these problems are high rate of student drop-out and late programme completion.

Damilola (2013) after x-raying the use of information resources for distance learner stated that most distance learners are not computer literate. This greatly affects their access to information resources. He stressed the need for adequate computer literacy in order for them to be successful in their course.

Good Internet resources are the basis of any distance learning program. This is because; most learners are workers and might not be opportune to attend a face to face conventional education. The standard of internet resources must be upgraded to a good standard. To this, Illorah (2009) opines that, the media of instruction required for distance education especially the internet must be provided. This gives students and facilitators access to use numerous databases available online through the internet. To, buttress this, Abdulkreem, Afolabi and Olorisade (2012) stated that access to the internet will provide access to a number of information required by students and facilitators.

The information needs of NOUN students

Omogbhe, (2011) carried out a study to investigate distance learners Information needs, library habit, and factors affecting use of Libraries in the University of Ibadan. The study recommended that the maximum use of the library can only be obtained when these students are allowed to borrow library materials and given library use instructions as their full time counterpart.

Extent of provision of information resources to distance learning students

Msuya and Malo (2002) carried out a study on the provision of library and information services to distance learners in the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and the study recommended for provision of adequate information resources and up-to-datedness of these resources. Oladokun(2014) carried out a research on the perception of distance students on their information environment in the Department of Library Science in the University of Botswana Gabonne. The study aimed at finding out how accessible the provided information resources were to distance learners. Among other things, he recommends that the university library should go into collaborative partnership with branches of the public libraries spread all over the country, establish more branches of its own library and install computers with internet access in the identified regional centers across country

Challenges encountered by students in using information resources.

Masingafi (2015) carried out a research on challenges for Open and Distance learning students in Zimbabwe Open University. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges facing Open and Distance learning students at the Zimbabwe University. The study was conducted at ZOU Masvingo Regional Campus. It was further recommended that ZOU should strive to achieve effective and balance teaching and learning system that satisfies the desire of the learners to the extent that they would wish to come back to the institution of further studies and feel proud to recommend the institution to others who are seeking for knowledge. Abdulkareem (2012) carried out a study on students and facilitators perceptions of problems in Open University system Oyo and Kwara States Nigeria. However, the study found out that there was no significant difference between facilitator and students perception of the problems associated with resources allocation. It was therefore recommended among others that adequate funds should be made available by the government.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive survey research design and the study area is Southeast Nigeria. The four centers in Southeast studied include Abagana, Umudike, Enugu and Nekede. They are situated in Enugu, Anambra, Imo and Abia States in Nigeria, with the population of 42,200 students consisting of 13550, 4750, 13200 and 10,700, in Enugu, Nekede, Umudike and Abagana NOUN study centers respectively (NOUN, 2016). The sample for the study is 2111 comprising 678 (Enugu), 238 (Nekede) 660 (Umudike) and 535 (Abagana). Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the aid of research assistants, two research assistants for each of the four selected NOUN study center libraries. The collected data were analyzed using arithmetic mean.

Very high extent/Highly Needed -3.50-4.00

High Extent/Needed – 2.50 – 3.49

Low Extent/Rarely Needed – 1.50 – 2.49

Very Low Extent Not Needed 1.0 – 1.49

A higher value will indicate a positive response than a lower one .The mid- point is

$$2.50 \text{ i.e } \frac{1+2+3+4}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

This means that items up to the values of 2.50 and above were rated positive while items below the values of 2.50 were rated negative.

Items up to the value of 2.50 were rated Agree while those less than 2.50 were rated Disagree.

4. RESULT

Research Question 1: To what extent do the Provided Information Resources meet the information needs of NOUN students in southeast Nigeria?

The table below shows the analysis of data from 1794 respondents on the extent the provided information resources meet NOUN students' information needs.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of the extent to which the Provided Information Resources meet the Information needs of NOUN Students

		N	Mean	Remark
	Text books	1794	2.18	Low Extent
	Journals	1794	2.05	Low Extent
	Newsprints	1794	1.88	Low Extent
	Reference materials	1794	2.19	Low Extent
	Pamphlets	1794	2.44	Low Extent
	Bulletins	1794	2.44	Low Extent
	Thesis & Dissertation	1794	2.19	Low Extent

	Students projects	1794	1.88	Low Extent
	Past question papers	1794	1.94	Low Extent
	CD-Rom	1794	1.99	Low Extent
	Internet	1794	3.72	Very High Extent
	E-resources	1794	3.70	Very High Extent
	Online databases	1794	3.63	Very High Extent
	Videotapes	1794	2.47	Low Extent
	Audiotapes	1794	2.41	Low Extent
	Information resources from Television	1794	1.93	Low Extent
	Information resources from Radio	1794	1.81	Low Extent
	Grand Mean		2.40	Low Extent

As shown by the grand mean score of 2.40 in Table 1, the extent to which the provided information resources meet the information needs of NOUN students is low. The analysis of the individual items shows that out of the 17 information resources listed, 14 meet the information needs of NOUN students to a low extent. They include: Textbooks, Journals, Newspapers, Reference materials, Bulletins, Pamphlets, Theses & dissertations, Student projects, past question papers, CD-ROMs, Videotapes, Audiotapes, Television and Radio. Their mean score range from 1.81 to 2.47. The remaining three information resources which are: Internet, Online databases and E-resources with mean score ranging from 3.63 to 3.72 meet the information needs of NOUN students to a very high extent.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges encountered by NOUN students in using information resources provided by NOUN in southeast Nigeria?

The table below shows the analysis of data from 1794 respondents on the challenges encountered by NOUN students in using the provided information resources by NOUN.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of the Challenges Encountered by NOUN Students in Using Information Resources Provided by NOUN

	N	Mean	Remark
1. There is a standard library with adequate information resources in my study center.	1794	2.42	Disagree
2. NOUN'S virtual libraries are well updated	1794	2.33	Disagree
3. There is constant supply of electricity in my study center	1794	2.33	Disagree
4. There are adequate reference materials in my study center library.	1794	2.39	Disagree
5. Students can make affective use of computers in accessing information in my study center library.	1794	2.41	Disagree
6. Students have library cards and as such, print materials can be easily borrowed in my study center library.	1794	2.48	Disagree
7. There is awareness on provided information resources in my study centre library.	1794	2.24	Disagree
8. Students have knowledge on computer skills	1794	2.21	Disagree

The analysis in table 2 shows that the respondents disagreed with all the eight positive items on challenges encountered by NOUN students in using information resources. This indicates that respondents agree that the challenges encountered by NOUN students are: inadequate electronic resources, inconsistent power supply, information resources in their study center do not meet the needs of the various courses offered, lack of access to information resources and that print materials cannot be easily borrowed by students in their study centers among others.

Research Question 3: What are solutions to the challenges encountered by NOUN students in using information resources provided by NOUN in southeast Nigeria?

The table below shows the analysis of data from 1794 respondents on the solutions to the challenges encountered by NOUN students in using the provided information resources by NOUN.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Solutions to the Challenges Encountered by NOUN Students in Using Information Resources Provided by NOUN

	N	Mean	Remark
Provision of standard library with adequate information resources in my study center.	1794	2.75	Agree
NOUN'S virtual libraries should always be equip with all necessary facilities and be updated as the need arises	1794	2.83	Agree
Adequate provision of power supply of electricity in my study center	1794	2.67	Agree
Acquisition and adequate provision of reference materials in my study center library for the purpose of learning and research.	1794	2.70	Agree
Funds should be available for adequate provision computers and its facilities for students use in accessing information in my study center library.	1794	3.40	Agree
The stakeholders should make library cards available for students of center who would want to borrow print materials can easily do so in my study center library.	1794	2.54	Agree
The stakeholders of such centers should always create awareness on provided information resources in my study center library.	1794	2.64	Agree
Students should engage themselves on ict training to have knowledge on computer skills in other to enhance their competence.	1794	2.65	Agree
Provision of steady internet for easy access to information material whenever it is needed in my center	1794	2.78	Agree
Acquisition and provision of current material that will be beneficial to my course in my study center	1794	3.34	Agree
Constant training on the need to use the available resources in my study center	1794	2.56	Agree
There is need to renew subscription of on e-resources in various database by the stakeholders of the programme in y study center	1794	2.52	Agree

The analysis in table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with all the twelve items (9-20) on solutions to the challenges encountered by NOUN students. The responses indicate that respondents agree that these solutions can address the challenges encountered by NOUN students, some of the solutions include provision of standard library with adequate information resources in the study centers, adequate provision of power supply in the study centers, funds should be made available for adequate provision of computers and its facilities for students use in accessing information in the study center library, the stakeholders should make library cards available for students of the center who would want to borrow print materials in the study center library, students should engage themselves on ICT training enhance their competence while sourcing for information and there is need to renew subscription of on e-resources for various databases by the stakeholders of the programme in your study center.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

Extent the provided information resources meet the information needs of NOUN students

The finding shows that the extent to which these provided resources meet the information needs of NOUN students in Southeast Nigeria is low. This is because the grand mean score value of 2.40 is below 2.50. This result, agrees with Abdulkareem (2014), submission that facilitators and student's perception towards resource allocation were negative and there was no significant difference between facilitators and student's perception of the problems associated with resource allocation. More so, Alijam (2015), observed that the distance learning students were not familiar with the concept of digital library and this played a negative role towards their access of information for research purposes.

Hindrances encountered by NOUN Students in using the information resources provided by NOUN.

The finding indicates lack of standard information resources, inadequate electronic resources, irregular power supply, lack of access to resources, restriction in borrowing print materials and incompetency in the use of computers. It also indicates that the provided information resources do not meet students' information needs. This is in consistent with Okonkwo (2012), who observed that the absence of electricity necessary for Information Communication Technology growth is an impediment to the provision of information resources to distance learners. On the other hand, Oloajo and Akewukere (2004), reported that distance learners are not enticed into developing a good reading habit because, the resources of the libraries are never accessible to them.

Solutions to the Challenges Encountered by NOUN Students in Using Information Resources Provided by NOUN

The finding identifies some of the items that can help to alleviate some challenges being encountered by these students in using information resources provided by NOUN. As one can see almost all items listed responded in affirmation, indicating these solutions listed has the ability to address most of the hinderances. Hence the mean rate for each is over 2.50. Majority are truly in support of provision of standard library with adequate information resources in the study center. Others are as follows adequate provision of power supply in the study center, funds should be made available for adequate provision computers and its facilities for students use in accessing information in the study center libraries. Again the stakeholders of such centers should always create awareness on provided information resources in the study center libraries, students should engage themselves on ICT training to enhance their competence on how to access information electronically. Furtherance to that, there is need to renew subscription of e-resources for various databases by the stakeholders of the programme. More so, acquisition and provision of current material that will be beneficial to students should not be neglected.

This is in agreement with what Uzuegbu and Uzuegbu (2013) observed that, most databases are under subscription and only accessible with surname and password through a host source and a special reference e-libraries are only accessible through subscription. The solution to these hinderances would go a long way to improving academic performance of distance learners and the program if fully in place.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, NOUN students need information resources to help them carry out assignment of their course of study. These information resources are not only provided to low extent but also the provided ones do not meet students information needs because the information resources were not easily accessed by students. This is because poor supply of electricity in studied study center libraries restricts students from accessing information online. To access information from online databases, e-resources, and internet, there should be a steady electricity supply. Students should be encouraged to be competent in the use of computers. This eases accessibility of information. Finally, there is a need to make it compulsory for students to be assigned library cards which will enhance easy burrowing of books.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

The stakeholders of the programme from time to time should conduct pilot studies on the students to find out the extent the available information resource meet up with their academic pursuit, these will go a long way to finding out some areas of need. It might come in form of resource verification or accreditation of the entire programme.

NOUN students should be encouraged to acquire computer literacy skills as most of NOUN academic activities are online. NOUN will achieve this by making the acquisition of computer skill compulsory for all students of the university and adequate reference materials should be provided to enable students retrieve information for assignments.

The government and the stakeholder should always ensure that the policy that established the programme should be adhered to, in order to meet up with all that are required for the smooth and effective running of the programme which will be beneficial to both the lecturers and students of NOUN for eradication of illiteracy in the society.

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