

**Academic Library Services and its Impact on Research in Faculty of
Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria**

by

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Abstract

This study investigated academic library services and its impact on research in faculty of education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design and was guided by two research objectives. Quantitative research design was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 93 academic staff of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and 71 copies of the questionnaire were returned, representing approximately 58 % used for data analysis. The data was analyzed descriptively using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation with a benchmark of 3.00. The findings revealed that: Library services are readily available for faculty members in Faculty of Education (mean=3.52), research support services are highly utilized by faculty members in Faculty of Education as indicated by mean of 3.56 which was greater than the benchmark of 3.00. Based on the findings it was concluded that faculty members utilize research support services provided by the library to enhance their research activities; however, the level of utilization varies across the different services available. It was therefore recommended that, citation styles, support services, plagiarism and originality check services should be put in place for use. Researchers should improve on the utilization of research clinic, high impact journal publication other than depending on a single library service for research purposes. Also, faculty members should find other library services relevant for their research purposes.

Keywords: Library, Academic library, Library Services, Research

Introduction

Academic libraries play a pivotal role in the intellectual and scholarly advancement of higher education institutions worldwide. As knowledge hubs, they provide essential information resources, research support services, and technological platforms that enable students, lecturers, and researchers to pursue scholarly inquiry and contribute to disciplinary knowledge (Ajiboye *et al.*, 2023). Research activities are inherently dependent on timely access to relevant literature, databases, and bibliographic tools; without these services, academic work may stagnate or become superficial. In the context of Nigerian universities where research output is increasingly becoming a marker of institutional reputation the effectiveness of academic library services is a critical determinant of research quality and productivity.

In Nigeria, academic libraries have undergone significant transformations aimed at supporting the dynamic needs of researchers in the digital age. Libraries now often offer electronic databases, virtual reference services, and internet-enabled workspaces to facilitate seamless access to scholarly materials (Olajide, 2021 as cited in *The Role of Libraries in Supporting Research and Innovation in Nigeria*). These enhancements not only reduce the time and effort required to locate relevant research materials but also broaden the scope of accessible resources beyond physical collections. Such developments are especially meaningful for Faculties of Education, where multidisciplinary research draws on diverse sources ranging from pedagogical theory to empirical educational studies.

Despite these advancements, research conducted within Nigerian academic environments suggests that the utilization and impact of library services on research productivity remain uneven. Studies from federal universities in Southwest Nigeria indicate that library resources and services including books, electronic journals, and reference assistance positively influence postgraduate research activities, but challenges such as inadequate internet access and limited facility expansion persist (Ajiboye *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, evidence from tertiary institutions in Kaduna State shows that even though electronic library platforms are acknowledged for their potential benefits, students sometimes do not perceive a direct link between e-library use and academic performance due to infrastructure and awareness barriers (Ogunwede *et al.*, 2024).

At Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria one of Nigeria's foremost research institutions the academic library complex is expected to be a cornerstone of research support services. Library and information science research at ABU has highlighted the need for academic librarians to access contemporary research reports in order to improve service delivery and support cutting-edge research (Umar, 2023).

such scholarly materials and inadequate technological infrastructure can impede librarians' ability to provide optimal research assistance, underscoring the importance of robust library services for facilitating research excellence in the Faculty of Education and beyond. Given the centrality of libraries in enabling research, this study investigates the impact of academic library services on research activities within the Faculty of Education at Ahmadu Bello University. By examining how library services inform research behavior, support access to scholarly information, and enhance research outputs, this research provides insight into the strengths and challenges of academic library support systems in a major Nigerian university setting. Ultimately, understanding these dynamics will inform policy recommendations aimed at strengthening library-research linkages and enhancing academic productivity in Nigeria's evolving higher education landscape.

Objectives of the Study

1. Find out the library services provided in support of research to Faculty of Education
2. Examine the extent of utilization of research support services by Faculty of Education

Literature Review

Types of Academic Library Services Available to Staff and Students

Academic libraries in Nigeria, including those in major universities, play a central role in supporting the teaching, learning, and research activities of both staff and students. These libraries traditionally offer core services such as circulation (borrowing and lending of materials), reference services, cataloguing, information literacy training, and access to both print and electronic collections. Such services help users to locate, retrieve, and use information effectively in academic environments. Studies show that academic libraries are increasingly integrating digital resources and technology-based services to meet evolving user needs in the digital era (Umoh, 2017; Olubiyo & Olubiyo, 2023). At Ahmadu Bello University, the Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) serves as the main academic library complex and one of the largest academic libraries in Africa. It houses over 1.2 million volumes of books, thousands of periodical titles, and extensive information resources, and is open to students, academic and non-academic staff of the institution. The library system also includes multiple satellite libraries spread across faculties and campuses to ensure discipline-specific access to materials and services. These collections and services include reference divisions, ICT sections, customer service units, and research/bibliographic support, which together enhance user engagement with information resources. The types of services available to both staff and students at the Faculty of Education, ABU, Zaria align with those offered in broader Nigerian

academic libraries. These include: Reference and information services, where librarians assist patrons in finding relevant sources and answering research queries. Borrowing and circulation services, allowing users to check out books and other materials. Digital information services, including access to online public access catalogues (OPACs), online databases, and digital repositories. Studies specific to Kashim Ibrahim Library show that OPACs and electronic databases are among the major digital services available, though challenges like networking issues can affect usability. User education and information literacy, to help users navigate library systems and digital platforms.

While a range of library services is available at ABU and similar institutions, the level of utilization varies among staff and students. For example, studies on online information services at Ahmadu Bello University indicate that faculty often uses selective dissemination services and university portals more frequently than the library's online portal, with some key services like virtual library feeds less frequently accessed. A quantitative study by Hussain and Rafiq (2025) investigated the provision of research support services across the research lifecycle in university libraries in Pakistan using responses from 138 university librarians. The study found that more than half of the surveyed university libraries provided research support services throughout the research lifecycle. However, the extent of utilization was considerably higher for traditional services such as literature searching, reference assistance, and information literacy instruction than for advanced services including research data management, bibliometric analysis, and data curation. Private universities recorded higher levels of utilization than public universities because of stronger institutional support and better technological infrastructure. The authors concluded that while research support services are increasingly available, their utilization remains moderate due to limited expertise and inadequate institutional investment.

Despite the array of services, challenges persist in fully meeting user needs in ABU's Faculty of Education and beyond. These include limitations in networking infrastructure, inadequate user orientation to digital platforms, and varying levels of digital literacy among users. Research on academic library service delivery underscores the importance of continuous training for librarians and users, improved ICT infrastructure, and strategic enhancement of service quality to boost access, use, and user satisfaction. Improving awareness of available resources and strengthening support for digital services could further enhance the level of service delivery to both staff and students Yaya, & Adeeko (2024).

Extent of Utilization of Research Support Services

For high-quality research, a well-organized support system must be present in the universities. One of the important components of this support system is the academic library which has the responsibility to provide researchers with scholarly resources and services to support their research. Bryant et al. (2020) considered the library as one of the major stakeholders in research support at the campus. Research support can refer to anything that a library does that supports the activity of scholarship and research at its present institution” (Hoffman, 2016). Lavoie (2019) was also of the view that research support services enhance researcher productivity, facilitate analysis of research activity and make research outputs accessible and visible across the scholarly community and beyond.

Ternenge (2019) investigated effective utilization of information resources for research in nursing by student nurses in Benue State School of Nursing and Midwifery, Makurdi. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 376 student nurses/midwives and a sample of 194 student nurses was gotten using Taro Yamene’s formula for sample size and were sampled using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire which was validated by 3 experts. Data was collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean scores to answer the research question. Finding of the study revealed that, textbooks, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedia, projects, directories, newspapers/magazines, government documents, handbooks, almanacs, yearbooks as well as gazettes are the types of information resources mostly utilize by student nurses for research in nursing in Benue State Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Makurdi. Findings also revealed that, student nurses utilize information services for nursing research to a great extent and students nurses are satisfied with the information resources utilize for research in nursing. Findings further revealed that, lack of time to use the information resources in the library, lack of awareness on existence of specific information resources, lack of current nursing textbooks and journals, difficulty in finding relevant information resources, lack of internet access, not allowed to borrow books in the library, the environment is not conducive for learning and research, lack of computers as well as lack of adequate skills on how to use the library are factors militating against effective utilization of information resources by student nurses for research in nursing in Benue State School of Nursing and Midwifery, Makurdi.

Jibrin et al (2024) investigated the availability and use of digital information resources and services for access and use by postgraduate students in university libraries in Kaduna State, Nigeria. In order to achieve this, two research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated and tested to guide the study. These include:

the types of digital information resources and services available for access and use by postgraduate students in the university libraries in Kaduna State, Nigeria and the extent with which Postgraduate Students use digital information resources and services available in the University Libraries studied. Survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 18,130 postgraduate students from the 3 universities namely; Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL) of Ahmadu University, Zaria, Kaduna State University (KASU) Library and Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) Library and 377 of them were drawn as the sample size of the study. It was discovered that CD Rom, e-Journals, Search Engines, Online database, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), Online References, Online Journals, e-Bulletin, Audio and Video Communication, Electronic Table of Contents, Electronic Document, and Blog among others were the commonest type of digital information resources available for Postgraduate Students use and access in the Universities Libraries in Kaduna State. It was found a high level of utilization of electronic journals, online databases, institutional repositories, and virtual reference services for research activities, particularly for thesis writing, literature reviews, and academic publishing. It was recommended that library management should introduce more plans and measures that will enlighten and expose postgraduate students to the availability of digital information resources and services in their respective libraries.

Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for the study. This study adopted survey research in order to determine the academic Library Services and its Impact on Research in faculty of education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria. This is in line with what Bryman, (2016) stated that survey design survey can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, policies, or interventions by comparing pre- and post-survey results or by comparing different groups within the study.

The study comprised 194 academic staff in Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with a sample size of 93 Academic staff. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1973) table of sample determination that for a population of 194, a sample size of 93 is appropriate. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data with a benchmark mean of 3.00 and above for positive response while mean values less than 3.00 were taken as negative response.

Results and Discussion

Library services provided in support of research in Faculty of Education is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Library Services Provided in Support of Research to Faculty Members in Faculty of Education

S/ N	Library Services	Response					Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
		VR A	R A	NR A	N A	U D			
1	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	16	32	13	8	2	3.73	1.03	RA
2	Database and digital resources services	14	41	7	7	2	3.82	0.96	RA
3	Citation styles support services	11	29	20	8	3	3.53	1.03	RA
4	Plagiarism and originality check services	12	29	13	11	6	3.42	1.19	RA
5	Education i.e. teaching users how best to exploit library resources	22	18	17	8	6	3.59	1.27	RA
6	Thesis and dissertation support services	12	29	20	9	1	3.59	0.97	RA
7	Research commons	22	22	12	11	4	3.66	1.23	RA
8	High impact journal	13	29	17	10	2	3.58	1.04	RA

9	publication Institutional repository services	12	21	20	14	4	3.32	1.1 4	RA
10	Research clinic Cumulative	5	20	19	21	6	2.96 3.52	1.1 0 1.1 0	NA

Key : VRA Very Readily Available, RA Readily Available, NRA Not Readily Available, NA Not Available, UD Undecided

Library services provided in support of research in Table 1 revealed aggregate mean response scores ranging from 2.96 to 3.82 were obtained for the individual items. All items had mean scores greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00 except for item 10 (research clinic) which is less than the benchmark mean of 3.00. This implies that a number of library services are provided in support of research to Faculty members in Faculty of education. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that database and digital resources services were the major library services provided in support of research to faculty members as this item attracted the highest mean response score of 3.82. This might not be unconnected with the fact that the institution is up and doing when it comes to provision of library services so as to boost research outcomes. Respondents indicated that research clinic is not available with a mean response of 2.96 which is less than 3.00. From the cumulative mean response of 3.52, it can be concluded that library services are readily available for faculty members of Faculty of Education. Research clinic was also considered as the library support services provided for research in faculty of education.

Table 2: Extent of Utilization of the Research Support Services by Faculty Members in Faculty of Education

S/ N	Extent Utilization	of H U	U	R U	N U	U D	Mea n	Std. Dev	Remar k
1	Selective Disseminatio n of Information (SDI)	18	2 6	14	9	4	3.63	1.16	Utilized
2	Database and digital	19	3 1	15	5	1	3.87	0.94	Utilized

	resources								
	services								
3	Citation styles support	9	28	29	4	1	3.56	0.84	Utilized
4	Plagiarism and originality check	16	22	20	11	2	3.55	1.09	Utilized
5	Education i.e. teaching users how best to exploit library resources	19	22	18	9	3	3.63	1.14	Utilized
6	Thesis and dissertation support	13	25	25	6	2	3.58	0.98	Utilized
7	Research commons	14	29	20	6	2	3.66	0.99	Utilized
8	High impact journal publication	15	26	17	10	3	3.56	1.11	Utilized
9	Institutional repository	12	27	16	12	4	3.44	1.13	Utilized
10	Research clinic	12	16	17	17	9	3.09	1.29	Utilized
	Cumulative						3.56	1.07	

Key: HU: Highly Utilized, U: Utilized, RU: Really Utilized, NRU: Not Really Utilized

Findings on the extent of utilization of the research support services by faculty members in Faculty of Education in Table 2 revealed the aggregate mean response scores of 3.09 to 3.87. All items had mean scores greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00 an indication that research support services are utilized by Faculty members in Faculty of education. Particularly, majority of the respondents were of the opinion

that database and digital resources services were the major research support services utilized by faculty members in Faculty of Education as this item attracted the highest mean response score of 3.87. This is because research support services are readily available for use by researchers. From the cumulative mean response of 3.56, it can be concluded that research support services are highly utilized by Faculty of Education.

Discussion

Finding from objective one revealed that library services are readily available for faculty members of Faculty of Education with research clinic being the least considered as the library support services provided for research in faculty of education. This finding supports the observations of Hussain and Rafiq (2025), who noted that while university libraries provide substantial support through information access and reference services, advanced research support services including research data management, bibliometric analysis, research impact assessment, and personalized research consultation remain less developed in many academic libraries, particularly in developing countries. The finding is further supported by Cox et al. (2020), who argued that research support in academic libraries is evolving beyond traditional reference services toward embedded and consultative models that include research clinics, open science support, research data management, and scholarly communication services.

It was also discovered that research support services are highly utilized by Faculty members in Faculty of Education. This finding is in line with that of Ternenge (2019) who revealed that student nurses utilize information resources/services for nursing research to a great extent. Similarly, the finding corroborates the work of Jibrin et al. (2024), who examined postgraduate students' utilization of digital information resources in university libraries in Kaduna State, Nigeria and found a high level of utilization of electronic journals, online databases, institutional repositories, and virtual reference services for research activities, particularly for thesis writing, literature reviews, and academic publishing.

Conclusion

The study concludes that faculty members utilize research support services provided by the library to enhance their research activities; however, the level of utilization varies across the different services available. While some services are widely used, others such as research clinics, citation style assistance, plagiarism and originality checking, and support for publishing in high-impact journals remain underutilized. This suggests that researchers tend to rely on a limited range of library services rather than taking advantage of the comprehensive research support available.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. More libraries services should be put into use for research like; citation styles research clinic, support services, and Plagiarism and originality check services.
2. Researchers should improve on the utilization of research clinic, high impact journal publication other than depending on a single library service for research purposes which will improve research quality, increase scholarly productivity, and strengthen the overall research output of the institution.

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