

# Use of Academic Library: A Case Study of Covenant University, Nigeria

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***Abstract:** This study examines the extent of use of library resources in Covenant University, Nigeria. Two separate questionnaires were used to gather data. 400 registered library users were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The findings revealed that 88% of the students sampled visited the library to read for examination while most faculties visited the library to read journals, electronic or print. Also, students used OPAC more than faculty. It is recommended that faculty give reading assignments that will require students to consult journals and other resources in the library, not just for examination purposes. And the library should organize a “library week” each semester to showcase the various resources available in the library.*

## I. Introduction

The academic library is the nerve centre or the hub around which scholarship revolves. It is an indispensable instrument for intellectual development. A well stocked academic library is a storehouse of information, or a record of human experience to which users may turn to for data or information.

Jubb and Green (2007) observe that academic libraries have for centuries played critically important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host universities or colleges. Opara (2001) posits that the library stands in the same relationship to the society as the memory of an individual by making available and accessible to its users information required for teaching and independent study. The main purpose of an academic library as stated by Aina

(2004) is to support the objectives of an academic environment in the areas of learning, teaching, research, and service.

Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) assert that in academic communities, libraries are indispensable. Guskin (1996) notes that the use of university libraries promotes active learning, thus contributing to students' ability to think critically and work well independently or in group. An academic environment without a library is tantamount to a person without a brain.

It would be pertinent to discover whether academic libraries are indeed living up to their objectives. The effectiveness and efficiency of services provided in academic libraries are mainly determined by library users. Behling and Cudd (1967) assert that the library user is regarded as the most logical source to determine whether the library is playing its role satisfactorily or not. Perera (2005) submits that satisfying user needs is essential to the management of libraries. The management staff of a library should be aware of the current needs of their users, which may vary from one library to another as well as from time to time. Therefore, carrying out regular surveys on user needs at regular intervals on various aspects of library usage will be an invaluable guide in determining the future directions of library developments.

Popoola (2001) observes that information availability does not mean accessibility and use and that academic libraries should stimulate primary demand for their products and services. This view is upheld by Mason (2010), who opines that librarians must be sympathetic and helpful to all students on the one hand and that on the other hand, students must be aware that librarians and faculty members are there to instruct and encourage their intellectual odyssey and should be seen as facilitators.

Several authors have written on the use of academic library. Amkpa (2000) in his study of the use of the University of Maiduguri Library discovered that a majority of students did not use the library effectively because they did not use the library catalogues.

In a study on students and faculty use of academic libraries in Nigeria, with particular reference to Delta State University, Okiy (2000) found that respondents used books more than other materials and that they browsed the shelves to locate these materials. Williams (1992) and Julien

(2000), on the other hand, observed that regular library users are active learners who participate more in class, and read, write and study more.

In a similar study on the use of Olabisi Onabanjo University Libraries, Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) discovered that male students used the library more frequently than their female counterparts.

Ugah (2001) found out that textbooks account for most library visits. Don (2006) discovered that library computer access is utilized by students far more than faculty, while interlibrary loan services are used more by faculty members. He also noted that both undergraduates and faculty members appeared to be confident about finding needed print materials and accessing electronic resources at their institutions' libraries.

It is evident that quite a few studies have been carried out on the use of academic libraries. This paper aims to reveal how the Covenant University Library has been used by its faculty and students.

## **II. Profile of Covenant University and Its Library**

Covenant University is located in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. It was established in October, 2002. Presently, it has two colleges: College of Development Studies and College of Science and Technology. In addition to the traditional mission of Universities of teaching, research, and community service, Covenant University is also saddled with the mandate of raising new generation of leaders.

The Covenant University Library is popularly known as Centre for Learning Resources. It is fully automated and uses Alice for Windows library software. The library has a collection of over 70, 000 volumes of books, 350 journal titles, and over 9 online databases which contain thousands of electronic journals and textbooks. It has a seating capacity of over 3,500.

## **III. Objectives of the Study**

This study was carried out to determine the extent of use of library resources in Covenant University by faculty and students. Specifically, the study was to:

1. Discover reasons for the use of the library by faculty and students
2. Examine sources of information most consulted
3. Find out how faculty and students locate needed materials
4. Determine frequency of use of the library by faculty and students
5. Measure the level of user satisfaction of library services and facilities available

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

The survey method was adopted for the study. Students in 300-500 levels who visited the library within the space of one month while this research was being conducted were randomly selected. Also, faculty members who have been in the employment of the university for six or seven years were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Two separate close-ended questionnaires were used to gather data from faculty and students respectively.

In all, 400 copies of questionnaires were distributed, 300 to students and 100 to faculty. 210 (70%) out of the 300 distributed to students were completed and returned. So were 90 (90%) of those distributed to faculty. Data was analyzed using simple frequency counts and percentages.

#### **V. Findings and Analysis**

Table 1A shows that the female respondents constitute a larger part of the survey population, 180 (60%) as against 120 (40%) of their male counterparts. Table 1B shows that a total of 210 (70%) respondents are students while 90 (30%) of them are faculty members. This is expected as students constitute the majority in a university population.

Table 1A: Demographic background of respondents “Gender”

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	120	40
<b>Female</b>	180	60
<b>Total</b>	300	100

Table 1B: Demographic background of respondents “Status”

Status	Freq.	%
Student	210	70
Faculty	90	30
Total	300	100

Table 2 shows that 75 (35.7%) student respondents use the library daily. 112 (53.3%) of student respondents visit the library 2-3 times a week. 8 (3.9%) student respondents visit the library 2-3 times a month. In contrast, 28 (31.1%) faculty respondents visit the library 2-3 times a month. This shows that students use the library more than faculty. This is consistent with the findings of Okiy (2000).

Table 2: Frequency of library use

Period	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
Daily	18	20	75	35.7
2-3 times a week	19	21.1	112	53.3
Once a week	25	27.8	15	7.1
2-3 times a month	28	31.1	8	3.9
Total	90	100	210	100

Table 3 represents reasons for using the library. Various reasons were adduced by respondents for using the library. 195 (92.8%) student respondents visited the library to photocopy materials. 185 (88%) student respondents used the library to read for examinations while just 8 (3.9%) of them read journals and 10 (4.7%) used the online resources. In contrast, 69 (76.6%) faculty respondents read electronic journals and 67 (74.4%) read newspapers. Other reasons for using the library by the respondents are presented in Table 3 as well.

Table 3: Reasons for using the library

Reasons	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
<b>To write assignments</b>	0	0.00	112	53.3
<b>To read lecture notes</b>	0	0.00	75	35.7
<b>To consult textbooks</b>	25	27.8	15	7.1
<b>To consult journals (hard copies)</b>	28	31.1	8	3.9
<b>To consult electronic journals (online resources)</b>	69	76.6	10	4.7
<b>To read for examination</b>	0	0.00	185	88.0
<b>To consult reference materials</b>	20	22.2	90	42.8
<b>To photocopy materials</b>	30	33.3	195	92.8
<b>To read newspapers</b>	67	74.4	125	59.5
<b>All of the above</b>	0	0.00	103	49.0

Table 4 shows the materials most consulted by faculty or students. It is clear that faculty members treasure both the electronic and print journals provided by the library. 69 (76.6%) of them use the electronic journals while 67 (74.4%) read the print copy. This is expected as faculty members are engaged in active research to extend the frontiers of knowledge. In contrast, students read newspapers more. 125 (59.5%) indicated newspapers as the most used materials. Just a few of the respondents used textbooks, which is at variance with literature (Ugah, 2007). Other rankings are presented in Table 4 as well.

Table 4: Materials most consulted

Materials most consulted	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
Reference Materials	20	22.2	90	42.8
Textbooks	25	27.8	15	7.1
Journals (Hard copy)	67	74.4	8	3.9
Newspaper	28	31.1	125	59.5
Past Students' Project	0	0.00	60	28.5
Electronic journals	69	76.6	70	33.3

Table 5 clearly highlights the means of locating materials in the library. Browsing through the shelves ranks highest among faculty, 72 (80%). 130 (61.9%) student respondents used OPAC to locate materials. This may be a result of compulsory orientation programmes organized for first-year students by the library. Seeking assistance from colleagues ranks lowest. Very few faculty or students seek the assistance from library assistants.

Table 5: Means of locating materials

Means of locating materials	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
Browsing through the shelves	72	80.0	43	20.4
Using OPAC	09	10.0	130	61.9
Seeking assistance from library staff	09	10.0	25	12.0
Seeking assistance from colleagues	0	0.00	12	5.7
<b>Total</b>	90	100	210	100

Table 6, shows that 108 (51.4%) student respondents agreed that materials they need to consult are always available. This is expected as most of them use OPAC to locate materials as shown in Table 5. On the other hand, 56 (62.3%) faculty respondents sometimes find materials needed.

This may be a result of their poor use of OPAC. A small number of the respondents (faculty, 4.4%, students, 3.3%) claimed that they do not usually find reading materials while none indicated that they have never found reading materials to consult.

Table 6: Availability of reading materials

Availability of material	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Always</b>	30	33.3	108	51.4
<b>Sometimes</b>	56	62.3	95	45.3
<b>I don't usually find them</b>	04	4.4	07	3.3
<b>Never</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	90	100	210	100

Table 7 shows the level of satisfaction with services and resources available in the library from the respondents. 70 (77.7%) faculty respondents and 167 (79.5%) student respondents indicated that they were very satisfied respectively. None showed dissatisfaction. This shows that the library is living up to the expectations of faculty and students and well-equipped to cater for their information needs.

Table 7: Level of satisfaction with library services and resources

Level of Satisfaction	Faculty		Students	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Very satisfied</b>	70	77.7	167	79.5
<b>Satisfied</b>	15	16.6	33	15.7
<b>Not very satisfied</b>	05	5.7	10	4.8
<b>Never satisfied</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	90	100	210	100





## VI. Conclusion

Reading for examination and photocopying materials accounted for most students' visit to the library, 88% and 92.8% respectively. Students are more conversant with the use of OPAC than faculty. To be more specific, 10% of faculty members as against 61.9% of students use OPAC to locate materials on the shelves. Faculty read more journals, both online and print while students read newspapers more. Students tend to visit the library more than faculty. 112 (53.3%) of students sampled visited the library 2-3 times a week as against 19%-21.2% by faculty. Most of the reading materials needed by both faculty and students are usually available. In general, both faculty and students are satisfied with the library services rendered and the resources available.

The findings of this study suggest that library professionals should stress the importance of using OPAC as a retrieving tool, especially to faculty. Users should be dissuaded from merely browsing the shelves. They should be encouraged to use OPAC before going to the shelves. Faculty members should be encouraged to give reading assignments that will require students to consult journals and other resources in the library, not just for examination purposes. The library should organize a "library week" each semester to showcase the various resources available in the library and their importance. The library should also organize a quarterly training for both faculty and students on the use of library materials and services.

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