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AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR IGBO STUDIES IN CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, IGBARIAM CAMPUS

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Abstract

This study examined availability and utilization of information resources for Igbo language studies in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University library (COOU), Igbariam. Four research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Population of the study comprised 55 students of Igbo Language Department in COOU. The size of the population was small and manageable hence, the entire population was studied. The findings revealed that information resources for Igbo studies were not adequate and the students were not satisfied with the resources. Major challenge the students faced was insufficient information resources particularly on Igbo Grammar and Linguistics as well as their inability to locate the information resources in the library. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made. The study recommends that the library should acquire adequate information resources and conduct user education for students. It was also recommended that the library should create a separate section for Igbo language and culture literature.

Keywords: *Academic library, Availability, Utilization, Igbo Studies, Information Resources, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.*

Introduction

Igbo language is one of the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria—a multilingual nation with about 450 languages. Igbo is spoken by the Igbo people of the South-Eastern region (Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states) and some parts of Delta and Rivers states. Igbo is spoken by about 40 million people both in Nigeria and in the diaspora. Igbo is not only a spoken language, it is also a written language with advanced level of description since 1828. Igbo language being a major component of Igbo culture is an instrument of socialization, economic, religious and political activities. The language is not only taught in

primary and secondary schools; it is a course of study in tertiary institutions both in Nigeria and overseas. It is currently a degree course in Harvard University.

In spite of the role Igbo language plays in the lives and culture of the Ibos

there have been a general outcry that Igbo language is neglected, endangered and near extinction due to the invasion of Western culture and attitudes of Ndi Igbo towards the language (Ohiri-Anichie as cited in Nwigwe, 2020). UNESCO (2010) warned that if appropriate measures are not taken, Igbo language will go into

extinction in future. The early infiltration of the western culture in Igbo land through the christian missionaries has eroded some cultural practices of the Ibos. The official language in Nigeria is English. It is also the language of instruction in schools and in the secular world. It is also absurd to say that even the elites among the Ibos teach their children to learn English language as their first language. Expectedly, these children pass through both at primary, secondary and tertiary institution not knowing how to speak their mother tongue.

Igbo language cannot be allowed to die because indigenous languages bear the identity, history, experiences of a people. The United Nations (n.d) upholds the rights of indigenous communities to preserve their languages, culture, traditions, history and names. The UN also declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages. Igbo language must be preserved and saved from possible extinction. UNESCO warning has compelled state governments, civil societies and individuals to adopt measures aimed at revitalizing the language.

Libraries in Igbo land particularly university libraries have a crucial role to play in revitalization of Igbo language. One of the major roles a university library can play is through the provision of adequate information resources which is a strategy that can impact the status of Igbo language positively. The establishment of Igbo studies in institutions of higher learning is one step in the right direction. Academic libraries owe it as a duty of care to acquire and process all required information resources for the study of Igbo studies in their institution. Both the availability and utilization of these information is not only paramount to students but also members of the academia who teach these students. They teach, write and publish materials in Igbo. Thus Okeke and Okeke (2016) posit that universities and other tertiary institutions in the South-East have the capacity to promote Igbo language and forestall the impending disaster by way of publications by lecturers in the form of books, magazines, literature and other educational materials that will bridge the gap of pedagogical tools needed to propagate information on the language.

This paper therefore sought to investigate the availability and utilization of information resources for Igbo studies in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) formally known as Anambra State University of Technology was established on 1st January, 2000 by edict No 13 of Anambra State. The university has two campuses- Uli and Igbariam. The university has libraries both at Igbariam and Uli. The main university library at Igbariam campus is the focus of this study.

Statement of Problem

Igbo language, one of the three main indigenous languages in Nigeria is feared to go into extinction in the near future. Key factors affecting the extinction of this language is the neglect by the language owners (the Igbos) and lack of adequate information resources for Igbo studies. The poor academic achievement of secondary school students in Igbo language in school certificate examination was attributed to inadequate information resources (Eze, Egbe and Ossai, 2020). The situation in tertiary institutions in Igboland particularly in Anambra State may not be different. This study therefore sought to examine the availability and utilization of information resources for Igbo studies in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University library, Igbariam Campus?

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent of availability of information resources for Igbo Language in COOU Library
2. Identify the purposes for which students utilize the information resources in this library.
3. Determine the students' level of satisfaction with the available information resources in COOU library.
4. Identify challenges which students of Igbo studies face in the utilization of the information resources in the library.

Research Questions

These questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are information resources for Igbo studies available in COOU library?
2. What are the purposes for which students utilize the information resources in this library?
3. To what extent are students satisfied with the information resources available for Igbo studies in COOU library?
4. What challenges do students face in the utilization of the information resources available in this library?

Literature Review

Information resources are materials bearing different type of information. It could be in print, audio-visual or electronic format. Print includes textbooks, serials reference source, maps and government publications. Audio-visual include CD-ROM, video tapes and diskettes. Electronic sources include E-book, E-journals, E-magazines, E-newspaper, E-reference sources. The Internet contain large quantity of E-reference resources. Online database such as HINARI, AGORA, JSTOR are also E-resources.

An information resource is said to be available when it is readily obtainable without stress. The availability of information resources means ensuring their presence in the library for immediate use (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002). Information resources may be available in the library; meaning that the library has acquired it. However, it may not be accessible to users either because it was wrongly classified, mis-catalogued, mis-shelved or users lack awareness of its existence. Thus, an information resource may be available yet not accessible to users. The availability and accessibility of information resources enhances utilization. Hornby (2015) defined utilization as the act of making use of something especially for a practical purpose. Academic libraries can promote indigenous languages by ensuring that quality information resources are readily available and accessible to users and that users are also aware of their existence in the library.

Akpe, Ajav and Ngunna (2018) examined the availability and utilization of information resources by students of AkaweTorkula College

of Advanced and Professional Studies. The findings revealed that types of information resources available for students use, was grossly inadequate. The study also showed that the students were not satisfied with the utilization of the information resources in the library. Onye (2016) examined availability and utilization by students of Federal University of Technology, Owerri and the study revealed that textbooks and serials were the primary information resources used by the students. The library had limited information resources and available resources were not maximally positioned for access by the students. The challenges discovered were poor library facilities and lack of current information resources. Mahwasane and Mudzielwana (2016) studied challenges which students faced in accessing information in the library. Results showed that students lack proper knowledge of how to use information retrieval skills; students lack computer knowledge and user education for accessing information in the library

Methods

The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2015) stated that descriptive research design aims at collecting data from a group and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic and features of the facts about a given population. The population consists of 55 students of Department of Linguistics /Igbo Language in COOU which is the total number of students from 1st year to 4th year. The entire population was studied because the number is considered small and manageable. Questionnaire and interview were the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire titled 'Questionnaire on Availability and Utilization of Information Resources for Igbo Language Studies in the Library (QAUIRISL)' It was structured on four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) High Extent (HE), and Moderate Extent (ME) used to check for availability of Information resources while Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to check for items on purpose for which students use the information resources and the challenges they face. Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Moderate Level (ML) and Low Level (LL) was used to check for item on students level of satisfaction with information resources.

The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Library and Information Science Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha formula and the overall index was 0.86. Fifty-two (52) copies of the questionnaire were administered on the students

and 50 were returned showing a return rate of 96%. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean scores. An item a mean rating of 2.5 was taken as positive while an item less than 2.5 was rated as negative.

Results

Result of the analysis was presented in tables below according to the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1. To what extent are information resources for Igbo studies available in COOU library?

Table 1: Mean score of the students on the extent of availability of information resources for Igbo studies in COOU library.

N= 50			
S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
1	Book	2.25	LE
2	Journals	2.30	LE
3	Dictionary	2.18	LE
4	Encyclopedia	2.50	HE
5	Project	3.10	HE
6	Newspaper	2.24	LE
7	Magazine	2.22	LE
8	Biography	2.23	LE
9	Novels	3.20	HE
10	Igbo artefact	2.20	LE
11	E-Resources	2.57	HE
12	CD-ROM	2.50	HE
	Grand Mean	2.45	LE

Key: HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent

Table 1 shows that out of the 12 items in the table, the respondents agreed that 5 items (Project – 3.10), Novels (3.20), E-Resources (2.57) and Encyclopedia (2.50) and CD-ROM (2.50) were available to a high extent. The remaining 7 items were available to a low extent.

Research Question 2: What are the purposes for which the students utilize the information resources?

Table 2: Mean score of the students on the purpose for which they utilize the information resources.

N=50			
S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
1	Updating knowledge	3.10	Agreed
2	Supplement lecture note	3.45	Agreed
3	Research	3.30	Agreed
4	Examination	3.48	Agreed
5	Assignment	3.45	Agreed
6	Entertainment/leisure	2.20	Disagreed

Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that 5 out of 6 items listed in the table were the purposes for which they utilize the information resources. Mean scores for examination (3.48) assignment

(3.45) and supplement lecture note (3.45), Research (3.30) and Updating knowledge (3.10) were high while mean score for Entertainment/leisure (2.20) was low.

Research Question 3: What is the level of satisfaction the students derived from the use of the information resources?

Table 3: Mean scores of the respondents on level of satisfaction students derived from use of the information resources.

N=50			
S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
1	Books	2.21	LL
2	Journal	2.19	LL
3	Dictionary	2.00	LL
4	Encyclopedia	2.50	HL
5	Project	3.00	HL
6	Newspaper	2.34	LL
7	Magazines	2.29	LL
8	Biography	2.42	LL
9	Novels	2.80	HL
10	Igbo artefact	2.05	LL
11	E-Resources	2.78	HL
12	CD-ROM	2.56	HL
Grand Mean		2.42	LL

Key: HL = High Level, LL = Low Level

Table 3 shows that out of 12 items in the table, 5 received positive rating an indication that the students' level of satisfaction was high, (Project (3.00), Novels (2.80), E-Resources (2.78), CD-

ROM (2.56) and Encyclopedia (2.50). Their satisfaction level was low in the remaining 7 items. With a grand mean of 2.42, the students' level of satisfaction was low.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges which students faced in availability and utilization of the information resources?

Table 4: Mean scores of the students on challenges which students faced.

N=50			
S/N	Item	Mean	Decision
1	Most of the resources I need are not available	2.78	Agreed
2	I find it difficult locating resources in the catalogue	2.67	Agreed
3	I find it difficult locating resources in the library	2.75	Agreed
4	Library staff are not friendly	2.14	Disagreed
5	I find it difficult asking librarians to help me	2.55	Agreed
6	Library environment is noisy	2.10	Disagreed
7	Library is not conducive due to power outage	2.72	Disagreed

Analysis in Table 4 shows that out of 7 items listed, the respondents indicated that 4 items were challenges they face but 3 items (items 4, 6 and 7) were not. The major challenge were most of the

Discussion of Findings

The table 1 result shows that the extent to which information resources were available for Igbo studies was low in COOU library. The resources available were mainly Projects, Novels, E-resources and Encyclopedias. Limited information resources are a common feature in university libraries in Nigeria due to such factors such as inflation and drastic increase in student enrollment. Nwachukwu, Abdusalami and Salami (2014) study also reported limited resources in the library under studied. The findings of this study also shows that the students utilized the resources for examination, assignment, supplement lecture note, research and up-date knowledge while entertainment was the least. This is expected because most students normally use library resources for assignments and examinations, only a few use the resources for leisure. This agrees with Aledeniya and Owokole study who discovered that students of University of Medical Science, Ondo utilized the resources for the same purposes.

This study also showed that students' level of satisfaction with the information resources in the library was low. This is not surprising because a relationship exists between availability of library resources and user satisfaction. This finding agrees with Akpe, Ajav and Ngunna (2018) study in AkaweTorkula College Library which discovered that user satisfaction was low among the students.

This study also revealed that the major challenges which the students faced in use of the resources were unavailability of sufficient resources and difficulty in locating materials in the library. This agrees with the findings of Mahwasane and Mudzielwana (2016) who studied challenges facing students in accessing information in the library and discovered that lack of information retrieval skills and lack of user education hindered students utilization of library information resources.

resources desired by the students were not available (2.78) and that students find it difficult locating materials in the library (2.75).

Implication of the Findings

The result of the study indicated that information resources for Igbo studies were available in COOU library to a low extent and user satisfaction was low among the students. This implies that students' achievement in Igbo studies may be poor and the library cannot play its role in revitalization of Igbo language if adequate measures are not taken to arrest the situation.

Conclusion

The study concludes that information resources available in COOU library Igbariam Campus for Igbo studies were not sufficient for the students of Igbo language. The information resources available in the library were mainly research projects and Igbo novels. The study also discovered that the students utilized the resources mainly for examinations, assignments and supplementing lecture notes. The major challenges which faced the students were unavailability of desired information resources and inability to locate materials in the library. The students' level of satisfaction with the library resources was low.

Recommendations

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

- The library should acquire more current and relevant information resources for Igbo language especially on Igbo Grammar and Linguistics.
- The library should provide user education for the students especially how to locate materials in the library.
- The library should establish Igbo Language Centre in the library.
- The library should organize conferences and seminars for Igbo language.
- The library should establish Igboana section.
- Expert in Igbo language and members of SPILC should organize conferences and seminars on Igbo language.

- The university and other academics should support the library to promote Igbo Language.

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