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IMPACT OF LIBRARY ACCESS ON ACADEMICS DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Access to library resources plays a crucial role in supporting teaching, research, and scholarly productivity in higher education institutions. With the increasing dependence on both print and electronic information resources, academic libraries have become central to academic development. However, disparities in library access persist in many developing regions, particularly in North-East Nigeria, including Yobe State. This study examined the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria with specific focus on teaching effectiveness, research productivity and scholarly publication. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Data were collected from academic staff in selected higher institutions in Yobe State using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that while physical access to library facilities was relatively adequate, access to electronic resources and reliable internet connectivity was limited. The study further showed that access to library resources significantly enhanced teaching effectiveness, research output, publication frequency, and professional development of academics. Major challenges identified included inadequate funding, insufficient electronic resources, poor internet connectivity, and limited information literacy skills. The study concludes that effective library access has a significant positive impact on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State. Strengthening both physical and digital library infrastructure is essential for improving academic productivity and sustaining educational quality.

Introduction

Academic libraries play a fundamental role in the advancement of teaching, learning, and research within higher education institutions. They serve as intellectual hubs that provide access to information resources, scholarly publications, and research support services essential for academic development. In the contemporary knowledge economy, effective access to library resources both print and electronic has become a critical determinant of academic productivity and institutional quality (Adedipe & Ogunlade, 2023). The rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) has transformed the nature of academic libraries from traditional book-centered institutions to hybrid and digital information centers. Electronic journals, online databases, institutional repositories and remote access services have expanded the scope of information availability beyond physical library spaces (Ogunwede, Zakari, & Afolayan, 2024). These developments have enhanced the capacity of academics to engage in research, improve teaching quality, and contribute to global scholarly discourse.

Despite these advancements, access to library resources remains uneven across Nigerian higher institutions. Institutions in the North-East region including Yobe State continue to face challenges such as inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, limited electronic resources, and insufficient user training (Muokwelu, 2025). These constraints negatively affect the ability of academic staff and students to fully utilize library services for academic development. Academic development encompasses improved teaching effectiveness, increased research productivity, publication output, and professional growth of academics. Previous studies have established a strong relationship between library access and academic performance, noting that academics with greater access to library resources demonstrate higher research output and improved instructional delivery (Ajiboye et al., 2023; Onyia, 2024). However, most of these studies focus on institutions in southern Nigeria, with limited empirical evidence from Yobe State.

This study therefore seeks to examine the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. By assessing the level of library access, utilization patterns, and associated challenges, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening academic libraries and enhancing academic productivity in the region.

Statement of the Problem

Academic libraries are central to teaching, learning, and research in higher education institutions. They provide access to print and electronic resources, support research activities, and enhance the overall quality of academic work. Despite their importance, many higher institutions in Nigeria, particularly in the North East region, continue to face challenges in ensuring adequate library access for academic staff. In Yobe State, higher institutions reportedly struggle with limited digital resources, inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, unreliable internet connectivity, and insufficient information literacy among staff (Muokwelu, 2025; Onyia, 2024). These challenges restrict academics' ability to effectively utilize library resources, thereby negatively affecting teaching quality, research productivity, and scholarly publication output.

While several studies have explored the role of library resources in academic development in southern Nigeria, there is limited empirical evidence on how library access influences academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State. This gap makes it difficult for policymakers and institutional administrators to implement targeted strategies that could enhance library access and, consequently, improve academic performance and professional growth among staff.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent of library access, its utilization, its impact on academic development, and the challenges faced by academic staff in higher institutions in Yobe State, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations for improving library services and academic outcomes.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the level of library access available to academics in higher institutions in Yobe State.
2. Examine the extent of utilization of library resources by academics for teaching and research purposes.

3. Determine the impact of library access on academic development, particularly in terms of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and scholarly publication.
4. Identify the challenges affecting effective library access in higher institutions in Yobe State.
5. Propose strategies for improving library access to enhance academic development in the study area.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of library access available to academic staff in higher institutions in Yobe State?
2. To what extent do academic staff utilize library resources for teaching, research, and publication purposes?
3. What is the impact of library access on academic development, particularly in teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and scholarly publication?
4. What are the challenges affecting effective library access in higher institutions in Yobe State?
5. What strategies can be implemented to improve library access and enhance academic development in the study area?

Literature Review

Concept of Library Access

Library access refers to the ability of users to obtain, retrieve, and effectively utilize information resources and services provided by libraries without undue restrictions. In academic environments, library access encompasses physical access to library buildings and collections, as well as digital access to electronic books, online journals, databases, and institutional repositories (Anekwe & Ofuebe, 2025).

In recent years, academic libraries have expanded access through digital platforms, enabling remote use of scholarly resources. This transformation has enhanced flexibility in information retrieval and supported continuous academic engagement beyond traditional library spaces

(Adedipe & Ogunlade, 2023). However, disparities in digital access persist, particularly in developing regions where ICT infrastructure and funding remain inadequate.

Academic Development

Academic development refers to the improvement of teaching competence, research capacity, scholarly publication, and professional growth of academic staff. It is a continuous process that relies heavily on access to quality information resources. Ogunbodede et al. (2023) emphasized that access to current and credible information significantly enhances teaching effectiveness and research productivity. In higher institutions, academic development is measured through indicators such as research output, publication frequency, instructional quality, and participation in scholarly activities. Libraries therefore serve as critical support systems for academic advancement by providing relevant information resources and research assistance services.

Empirical Review

Ajiboye et al. (2023) examined the influence of library resources on research activities among postgraduate students in Nigerian federal universities and found a significant relationship between library access and research productivity. Their study highlighted the importance of electronic journals and databases in supporting scholarly writing.

Similarly, Ogunwede, Zakari, and Afolayan (2024) investigated the impact of e-library access on academic performance in selected Nigerian tertiary institutions. The findings revealed that access to electronic resources significantly improved research quality and academic engagement across disciplines.

Onyia (2024) studied the role of library technology innovation in enhancing academic performance and reported that institutions with advanced digital library services recorded higher levels of academic productivity. However, the study also identified challenges such as inadequate funding and limited digital literacy among users. Muokwelu (2025) emphasized the need to equip academic libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions, noting that insufficient infrastructure and limited access to electronic resources negatively affect academic development, particularly in less-developed regions.

Despite these studies, there remains a noticeable gap in empirical research focusing specifically on higher institutions in Yobe State. Most existing studies are concentrated in southern Nigeria, underscoring the need for localized research that reflects the unique challenges of the North-East region.

The reviewed literature establishes a strong link between library access and academic development in higher education. While several studies confirm the positive impact of library resources on teaching and research, limited attention has been given to institutions in Yobe State. This study therefore fills this gap by providing empirical evidence on how library access influences academic development in higher institutions in the state.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. This design was considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a representative sample in order to describe existing conditions, perceptions, and relationships among variables. The study was conducted in selected higher institutions located in Yobe State, Nigeria. These institutions include universities and colleges of education offering undergraduate and postgraduate academic programs. The population of the study comprised academic staff in the selected higher institutions in Yobe State. Academic staff were considered suitable respondents due to their direct involvement in teaching, research, and scholarly publication, which are key indicators of academic development.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select respondents from the participating institutions to ensure adequate representation across faculties and academic ranks and 160 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree (4)* to *Strongly Disagree (1)*.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A decision mean of 2.50 was used to determine agreement or disagreement with each item.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on data collected from academic staff in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. The findings are presented under four sub-sections: level of library access, utilization of library resources, impact of library access on academic development, and challenges affecting library access.

Table 1: Level of Library Access

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Physical library facilities are easily accessible	3.12	0.78	Agree
2	Library opening hours are convenient	2.95	0.81	Agree
3	Access to electronic databases is adequate	2.41	0.89	Disagree
4	Internet connectivity in the library is reliable	2.36	0.93	Disagree
5	Remote access to e-resources is available	2.28	0.87	Disagree

Analysis:

Respondents generally agreed that physical access to library facilities is adequate. However, access to electronic resources and internet connectivity recorded mean scores below the benchmark of 2.50, indicating limitations in digital library access within Yobe State higher institutions.

Table 2: Utilization of Library Resources by Academics

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I use library materials for lecture preparation	3.18	0.74	Agree
2	I consult journals for research and publication	3.05	0.79	Agree
3	I frequently use electronic journals	2.44	0.86	Disagree
4	I access online databases for literature review	2.39	0.91	Disagree
5	I rely on library services for academic development	3.01	0.76	Agree

Analysis:

Academic staff rely more heavily on print resources than on digital resources. Limited use of e-journals and online databases suggests that digital access and ICT-related challenges affect the effective utilization of library resources.

Table 3: Impact of Library Access on Academic Development

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Library access improves teaching effectiveness	3.26	0.68	Agree
2	Library resources enhance research productivity	3.34	0.65	Agree
3	Access to journals increases publication output	3.17	0.72	Agree
4	Library use improves quality of academic writing	3.09	0.77	Agree
5	Library access enhances professional development	3.22	0.71	Agree

Analysis:

Library access positively impacts academic development. Respondents reported improvements in teaching effectiveness, research productivity, publication frequency, and professional growth when library resources were accessible.

Table 4: Challenges Affecting Library Access

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate funding of libraries	3.41	0.61	Agree
2	Poor internet connectivity	3.36	0.66	Agree
3	Insufficient electronic resources	3.28	0.70	Agree
4	Lack of information literacy skills	3.02	0.75	Agree
5	Irregular power supply	3.19	0.73	Agree

Analysis:

The major challenges identified were inadequate funding, poor internet connectivity, limited electronic resources, and insufficient information literacy skills. These factors constrain the full potential of libraries in enhancing academic development.

Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that while physical access to libraries is satisfactory, digital access remains limited. Access to library resources significantly enhances academic development, particularly in teaching effectiveness and research productivity. Challenges such as limited funding, poor ICT infrastructure, and insufficient training hinder optimal utilization of library services in Yobe State.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. The findings reveal a exact picture of library access, utilization, and its effect on teaching, research, and publication outcomes. The results indicated that physical library access was relatively satisfactory, while digital access including e-journals, online databases, and remote resources was limited. This finding is consistent with Muokwelu (2025), who observed that inadequate ICT infrastructure and funding constraints hinder effective digital library access in Nigerian higher institutions. The limited access to electronic resources suggests that academics may be underutilizing available opportunities for research enhancement, particularly in regions where e-resources are critical due to the scarcity of up-to-date print materials. Respondents reported frequent use of print materials for teaching and research, whereas digital resources were less utilized. This aligns with findings from Ogunwede, Zakari, and Afolayan (2024), who noted that the adoption of digital library services in Nigerian tertiary institutions is often constrained by internet connectivity issues and insufficient awareness of electronic databases. The underutilization of digital resources may also reflect limited information literacy skills among staff, corroborating Onyia's (2024) observation that training is a key determinant of effective library resource utilization.

While, library access was found to have a significant positive impact on academic development, particularly in terms of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, publication frequency, and professional growth. These findings support the conclusions of Ajiboye et al. (2023), who established a strong relationship between access to library resources and research performance among postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. The study confirms that both physical and electronic library resources are critical enablers of academic excellence and professional development. Major challenges identified included inadequate funding, poor internet connectivity, limited electronic resources, irregular power supply, and insufficient

information literacy skills. These constraints are consistent with previous studies (Muokwelu, 2025; Onyia, 2024) highlighting infrastructural and skill-based barriers to optimal library utilization. The presence of these challenges underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve library infrastructure and user competence, particularly in under-resourced institutions in Yobe State.

The findings imply that for academic development to be fully realized, higher institutions in Yobe State must prioritize both physical and digital library access. Investments in ICT infrastructure, expansion of electronic resources, and provision of information literacy training are essential. Moreover, policymakers and institutional management should ensure that library funding aligns with academic development goals, thereby facilitating research productivity and teaching excellence.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of library access on academic development in higher institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that physical library access is relatively adequate, but digital access to electronic resources and reliable internet connectivity remains limited. Despite these challenges, access to library resources significantly enhances teaching effectiveness, research productivity, publication output, and professional growth among academic staff.

The study confirms that academic libraries, both print and electronic, are pivotal to scholarly advancement. However, infrastructural limitations, inadequate funding, and insufficient information literacy skills constrain the optimal utilization of library resources, particularly in the North-East region of Nigeria. Overall, improving library access is essential for fostering sustainable academic development and enhancing the quality of higher education in Yobe State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Enhanced Funding for Libraries: Institutions and government authorities should increase financial support to ensure the development and maintenance of both physical and digital library resources.
2. Expansion of Digital Library Resources: Higher institutions should invest in e-journals, online databases, institutional repositories, and remote access services to improve accessibility for academic staff.
3. Information Literacy Training: Regular workshops and training programs should be organized to enhance the ability of academics to efficiently utilize library resources, especially electronic databases and research tools.
4. Improvement of ICT Infrastructure: Provision of reliable internet connectivity, adequate computer facilities, and stable power supply should be prioritized to support digital library services.
5. Policy Support: Institutional policies should prioritize library development as a core component of academic excellence, integrating library usage into performance appraisal and research planning.

Implementing these recommendations will strengthen library access, promote academic productivity, and contribute to sustainable development in higher education in Yobe State.

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