

Awareness and utilization of library services among secondary school students in Yenagoa LGA  
of Bayelsa State

## ABSTRACT

*Library services are vital services that form an integral part of the learning and training process of children. Despite its integral role in the education of an individual, there have been reports of poor utilization of library services around the world. This study thus set out to determine the level of awareness of library services, the utilization of library services as well as the factors affecting utilization of these services among secondary school students in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State. The descriptive research design was employed in conducting this study among junior secondary two and senior secondary one and two students of government secondary schools located within the Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. A sample size of 391 was used. The study instrument was a semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire that consisted of four sections. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and relationships between variables were statistically tested using the chi-squared bivariate analytical test. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05. The overall level of awareness regarding library services in this study was found to be low with a grand mean of 2.01 out of 4. The level of use of library services was found to be low (mean: 2.29). Certain factors both affected library services utilization to both high and low extents. The respondents' gender as well as the level of provision of library services was significantly related with the utilization of library services. It was concluded that awareness of library services as well as the utilization of these services by secondary school students was low. It was recommended that the provision of required books, reading materials and lacking resources in these schools be made to foster library usage among students in these schools.*

Keywords: Library services, use, students, benefits library services, awareness

## Introduction

Library services are vital services that form an integral part of the learning and training process of children. Libraries made available in the pre-primary, primary and secondary educational institutions, are usually equipped with materials which would be of optimal interest and developmental advantage of teenagers as well as youths. They are usually provided in these institutions with the primary purpose of making necessary materials available for the students in these institutions and not necessarily for the teachers. This notwithstanding, libraries are regarded as learning laboratories in these schools and they provide the full learning package required by students as well as teachers to optimally achieve learning. Owate & Okpa, (2013) have posited that the school library is a collection of a wide variety of library materials and resources housed in each school, centrally organized by staff, professionally prepared to offer

*services to students and teachers that will enrich and support the educational enterprises.* These services thus provide a fruitful ground that is necessary for complete learning in schools.

Libraries have also been described as storehouses of knowledge which play research, educational, informational, cultural as well as recreational roles in the development process of a child. This affirms that the non-availability or non-utilization of these library services could have the capability of adversely impacting the learning process of an individual in that there will be a dearth in the amount of information and ideas that could have been gathered from books, magazines, audio-visual aids etc; which are made available in libraries. (Akinola et al., 2013; Suleiman, Rajeev & Hassana, 2018). Despite its integral role in the education of an individual, there have been reports of poor utilization of library services around the world. In certain areas where utilization was reported to be good, certain aspects of the libraries were utilized to a large extent and others were unsatisfactorily utilized. This unsatisfactory utilization of library services by students has been associated with a number of factors including inadequacy of necessary resources required for effective delivery of library services including skilled manpower and technical resources. Others included inadequacy of library infrastructure as well as lack of adequate funding required for providing library services effectively. (Joy & Lucky, 2016; Moruf, 2015; Owate & Okpa, 2013).

In schools within the Yenagoa Local Government Area, the inadequate utilization of school library services has been noticed. Considering that this problem is prevalent among secondary school students in Nigeria, it could also be the case among students attending secondary schools in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Having no published data on this research area among secondary schools in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; it became necessary to carry out this study. This study was also necessary for the provision of data regarding library awareness and factors affecting library utilization among the students. These will in-turn be useful in educational planning and development for both the immediate schools' authorities and the Ministry of Education. This study thus determined the level of awareness of library services, the utilization of library services as well as the factors affecting utilization of these services among secondary school students in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State.

## **Materials and methods**

The descriptive study design was utilized in carrying out this study. The population of this study was junior secondary two and senior secondary one and two students of 39 government secondary schools located within the Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State with a total student population of about 16,000 students (Bayelsa State Ministry of Education records, 2019). Using the Taro Yamane's formula:  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(d)^2}$  minimum sample size was calculated to be 391. A purposive sampling was conducted to select secondary schools in Yenagoa LGA that had libraries. Next was the selection of the students in the schools to fill up the sample size. Instrument used for the collection of data was a semi-structured, closed-ended, self-administered questionnaire which was validated and had an internal consistency coefficient of 0.837 which is

regarded as an instrument that was reliable since it was  $> 0.5$ . After permission was granted by school authorities to conduct this study, the questionnaires was administered to consenting students by the help of a research assistant to be completed during their break period. The completed questionnaires were then retrieved immediately from the students after completion. Data was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 for the carrying out of data analysis. As regards their level of awareness of library services, ten questions ascertaining their awareness of library services were asked using a 4-point likert response scale. A similar scale was used eliciting data for the utilization of the services among the students as well as the factors affecting utilization. Using a median mark of 2.5, scoring between 1.00 and 1.75 was regarded as being very low awareness/utilization/ very low extent factors, scoring between 1.76 and 2.50 was regarded as being low awareness/ utilization/ low extent factors, scoring between 2.51 and 3.25 was regarded as being high awareness/ utilization/ high extent factors and scoring between 3.26 and 4.00 was regarded as being very high awareness/ utilization/ very high extent factors.

Relationship between the utilization of library services and factors widely known to affect the utilization of these services including availability of books, encouragement to use the library etc.; was statistically tested using the chi-squared bivariate analytical test. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level of significance. Collated and analyzed data was expressed as frequencies and percentages. Data was also presented on tables and charts.

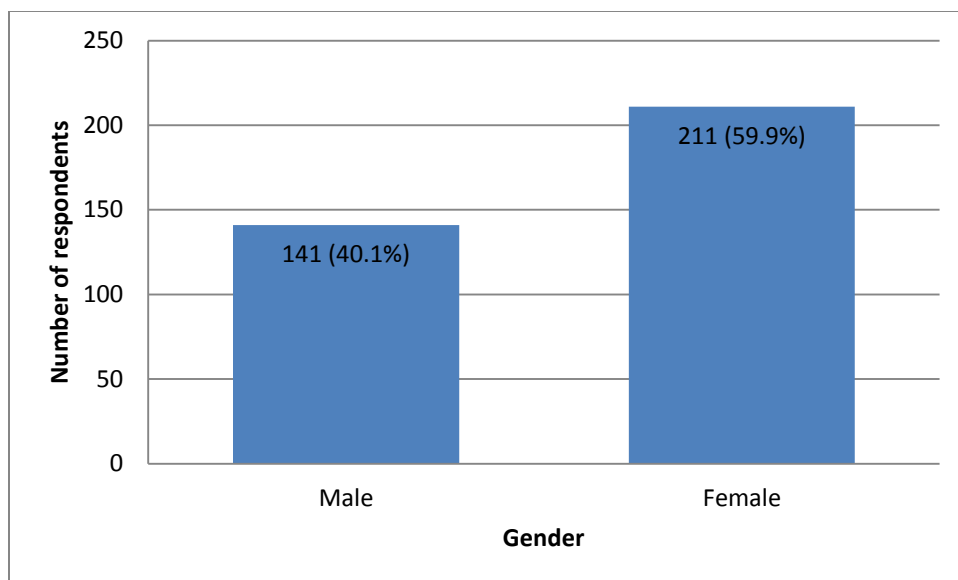
## Results

### Demographics

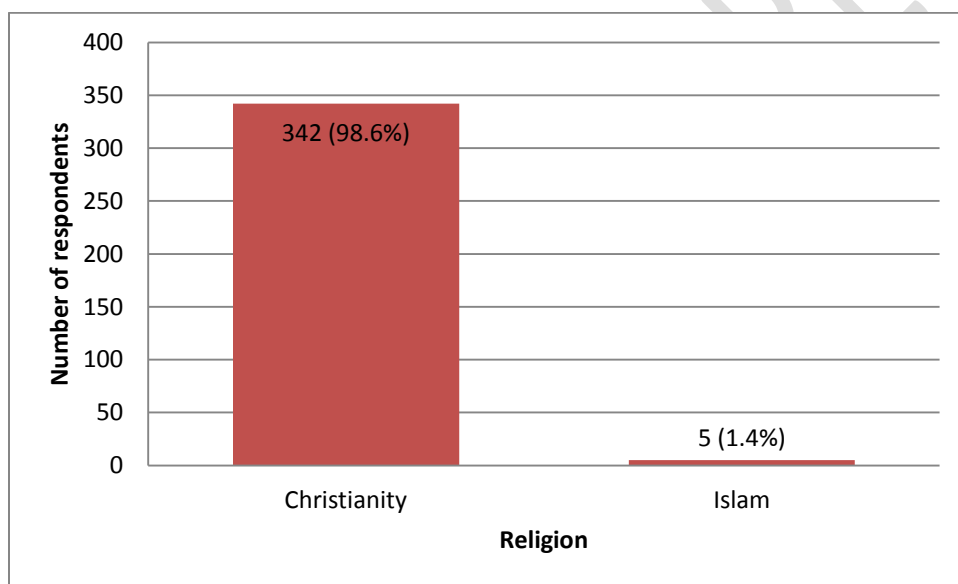
Altogether, 356 properly completed questionnaires were retrieved, collated and analyzed in this study, thus giving a response rate of 91.0%. Among these 356 respondents, majority of them where aged between 13 and 15 years [199 (57.5%)]. The mean age of the students was  $14.59 \pm 1.86$  years. This is shown in Table 1. Regarding the gender and religion of the respondents, majority was female 211 (59.9%) and most of the students were Christians 342 (98.6%). These are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Demographic data of respondents**

| Demographics                     | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age (years) (n=346)              |           |                |
| • 10-12                          | 42        | 12.1           |
| • 13-15                          | 199       | 57.6           |
| • 16-19                          | 100       | 28.9           |
| • 19-21                          | 5         | 1.4            |
| Mean age: $14.59 \pm 1.86$ years |           |                |



**Figure 1: Gender distribution of respondents**



**Figure 2: Religion distribution of respondents**

### **Level of awareness of library services among the respondents**

Concerning the level of awareness of library services among the students in this study, analysis of the likert scale computed responses of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) of the students gave the following result. Students' awareness regarding the provision of reading materials as a library service was found to be very low. However, their awareness regarding library services to include helping in improving reading habits, provision of research materials, improving research abilities, improving study skills, providing relevant educational information, lending books, providing conducive environment for reading, assisting in doing assignments as well as serving as learning laboratories was found to be low. The overall

level of awareness regarding library services in this study was however found to be low with a grand mean of 2.01. This is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Level of awareness of library services**

| Awareness of Library Services               | $\bar{x}$   | $\bar{x}$ %  | Remark     |
|---|-------------|--------------|------------|
| • Provision of reading materials            | 1.72        | 42.96        | Very Low   |
| • Improving reading habits                  | 1.91        | 47.87        | Low        |
| • Provision of research materials           | 2.01        | 50.29        | Low        |
| • Improve research abilities                | 2.01        | 50.29        | Low        |
| • Improve study skills                      | 1.87        | 46.67        | Low        |
| • Provides relevant educational information | 1.95        | 48.75        | Low        |
| • Lends books                               | 2.26        | 56.57        | Low        |
| • Conducive environment for reading         | 2.03        | 50.71        | Low        |
| • Assists in doing assignments              | 2.32        | 57.89        | Low        |
| • Serves as learning laboratories           | 2.06        | 51.45        | Low        |
| <b>Grand mean/mean %</b>                    | <b>2.01</b> | <b>50.29</b> | <b>Low</b> |

### Level of utilization of library services

Regarding the utilization of library services among the study respondents in this study, the following were found. The level of use of library services was found to be low, thus implying low utilization of the library services (mean: 2.29). This is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Level of utilization of library services**

| Use of the library | Used very often | Used often | Rarely used | Never used | T   | $\bar{x}$ | $\bar{x}$ % | Remark |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----|-----------|-------------|--------|
|                    | 62              | 66         | 56          | 106        | 290 | 2.29      | 57.24       | Low    |

### Reasons for using the library services

As regards the reasons for the use of the library services among the 184 respondents whom had used the services very often, often or rarely; the following was found. Library use as a place for reading, preparing for examinations and doing assignments was found to be of high extent among the students. This is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Reasons for using the library services**

| Purpose for Utilizing Library | $\bar{x}$ | $\bar{x}$ % | Remark   |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| To do assignments             | 2.87      | 71.70       | High     |
| To prepare for examinations   | 2.97      | 74.18       | High     |
| For reading                   | 3.23      | 80.63       | High     |
| To borrow books               | 2.10      | 52.62       | Low      |
| To meet friends               | 1.70      | 42.60       | Very Low |
| For relaxation                | 1.55      | 38.84       | Very Low |

**Factors affecting the utilization of library services among the respondents**

Regarding the factors affecting the utilization of the school libraries by the students in this study, it was found that non-availability of books, availability of irrelevant or outdated books, refusal to offer book lending services to the students, the location of the libraries, lack of time to use the library, improper / poor guidance from the library attendants, no encouragement from teachers to the children to use the library as well as the presence of stringent/rules and laws guiding library use; to a high extent affected the utilization of library services among the respondents. However, non-availability of chairs and study carrels, poor lightning of the library, poor library ventilation, noise and other distractions within the library, lack of knowledge on how to use the library, poor attitude/personality of the library attendant as well as poor hygienic conditions of the library environment were found to only affect utilization of library services among the respondents to a low extent. This is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Factors affecting the utilization of library services among the respondents**

| Factors affecting utilization                      | $\bar{x}$ | $\bar{x}$ % | Remark |
|--|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Non availability of books                          | 2.55      | 63.88       | High   |
| Non availability of chairs and study carrels       | 2.35      | 58.73       | Low    |
| Availability of irrelevant/outdated books          | 2.57      | 64.26       | High   |
| Poor lightning of the library                      | 2.41      | 60.36       | Low    |
| Poor library ventilation                           | 2.48      | 61.99       | Low    |
| Refusal to lend books to students                  | 2.69      | 67.29       | High   |
| Location of the library                            | 2.61      | 65.35       | High   |
| Noise and other distractions within the library    | 2.24      | 56.03       | Low    |
| Lack of time to use the library                    | 2.52      | 63.09       | High   |
| Lack of knowledge on how to use the library        | 2.33      | 58.21       | Low    |
| Poor attitude/personality of the library attendant | 2.43      | 60.85       | Low    |
| Improper/poor guidance                             | 2.53      | 63.19       | High   |

|   |      |       |      |
|---|------|-------|------|
| from the library attendants                         |      |       |      |
| No encouragement from teachers to use the library   | 2.62 | 65.53 | High |
| Stringent/rules and laws guiding library use        | 2.59 | 64.74 | High |
| Poor hygienic conditions of the library environment | 2.37 | 59.24 | Low  |

### Relationship between utilization of library services and gender of respondents

In this study, the relationship between utilization of library services and the gender of respondents, level of provision of these services and the encouragement from teachers to use the library services was tested. Results showed that the gender of respondents, (p-value: 0.018) and the level of provision of these services (p-value: 0.000) were significantly related with the utilization of the services. However, though not statistically significant, the encouragement from teachers to use the library services (p = 0.057), was also found to be related with the utilization of library services. These are shown on Table6.

**Table 6: Relationship between utilization of library services and other variables**

| Factors                                       | Utilization of library services |                  | df | X <sup>2</sup> (p-value) |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|----|--------------------------|
|   | Utilized (%)                    | Not utilized (%) |    |                          |
| <b>Gender</b>                                 |                                 |                  |    |                          |
| Male  | 60 (54.5)                       | 50 (45.5)        | 1  | 5.560 (0.018)*           |
| Female  | 121 (68.4)                      | 56 (31.6)        |    |                          |
| <b>Level of provision of library services</b> |                                 |                  |    |                          |
| Very High                                     | 54 (80.6)                       | 13 (19.4)        | 3  | 54.159 (0.000)*          |
| High  | 69 (84.1)                       | 13 (15.9)        |    |                          |
| Low   | 35 (54.7)                       | 29 (45.3)        |    |                          |
| Very low                                      | 24 (33.3)                       | 48 (66.7)        |    |                          |
| <b>Encouragement from teachers</b>            |                                 |                  |    |                          |
| Absent  | 113 (67.7)                      | 54 (32.3)        | 1  | 3.626 (0.057)            |
| Present                                       | 68 (56.7)                       | 52 (43.3)        |    |                          |

Decision: \*p-value < 0.05

### Discussion

In order to ensure that library services in schools are effectively utilized by students, it must be ensured that these students for whom these services are provided understand the reasons for the provision of these services. In this study, the level of awareness of the students regarding what library services are about was assessed. The assessment showed that the level of awareness regarding library services in this study was low. This finding is not supported by the findings of a study which reported moderate awareness of public libraries among the respondents. In this

study, as much as 52.9% of the respondents had heard about public libraries (Bamise et al., 2009). It was also not supported by the findings of Olusola, (2011) in selected secondary schools in Ijebu North LGA, which reported that the students were aware of the need for using the school libraries. These disagreements with the present study findings could have been as a result of the South-west geographical location of the studies as a result of the sociology of education experienced in that region. This notwithstanding, the implication of this finding on the awareness of library services is that as a result of the drive to seek empirical knowledge, when students are properly armed with the knowledge of the importance of library services, it makes them better prepared and motivated to explore and use these services. It is thus important to ensure that students are constantly oriented and reminded of the importance of using library services for their various academic inquisitions as a result of the benefits they tend to get from doing so. (Adebayo, 2013; Owate & Okpa, 2013; Usman, 2006).

The utilization of library services is also an important activity to embark on. This is so because actual utilization is what enables the student to locate required library resources that could help meet their educational needs. Assessment of the utilization of the library services in this study showed that the level of use of library services was low. This finding is supported by the findings of Olusola, (2011) in the study on selected secondary schools in Ijebu North LGA in which the researcher determined the use of school library resources in Ogun State secondary schools. It was reported that library resources were being ineffectively utilized by the students of these schools. Also, in another study conducted to determine students' utilization of secondary school libraries, it was reported that the school libraries were not utilized effectively by the students due to a number of reasons. (Moruf, 2015). To further buttress this study finding, another study by Ogbuiyi & Okpe, (2013), evaluated library materials usage and services in private universities in Nigeria and found that the degree of use of the library materials and services was below average. The implication of this finding is the manifest unsatisfactory quest for empirical knowledge by students either as a result of having no reason to use the libraries or as a result of an intentional abstinence from library utilization. It is necessary that teachers provide a stimulating environment for students to seek knowledge outside off what has been taught in the classroom, thus providing a reason for library use.

In various research studies, quite a number of reasons have been identified as factors affecting the students' use of the school libraries. (Clabo, 2002; Moruf, 2015). An assessment of the factors affecting the use of the school library in this study showed that non-availability of books, availability of irrelevant or outdated books, the refusal to offer book lending services to the students, the location of the libraries, lack of time to use the library, improper / poor guidance from the library attendants, no encouragement from teachers to the children to use the library as well as the presence of stringent/rules and laws guiding library use; where factors that affected the utilization of library services among the respondents to a high extent. All other factors assessed in this study only affected library services utilization to a low extent. This finding on factors affecting library services utilization to a high extent is supported by findings of other authors whom reported various factors to affect the utilization of library services. These included



parents and teachers influence on the students, materials inadequacy in the libraries, lack of space as well as the absence of qualified library personnel, limited library space for library users, poor funding and staffing as well as the lack of adequate provision for school library development. (Clabo, 2002; Moruf, 2015; Ogbuiyi & Okpe; Olusola, 2011). The implication of these findings is that for effectiveness of library services to be achievable in public secondary schools which in turn would improve its utilization among public secondary school students, there has to be a conscious effort to foster the required improvements. All stakeholders responsible for ensuring the delivery of quality education to the populace through public secondary schools should be made accountable in this regard. Optimal allocation of funds to the educational sector, appropriation of these funds to ensuring the provision of quality education including the provision of well-equipped school libraries etc, continual improvement of school libraries to meet current trends of information and technology, provision of well-trained and motivated teachers and library attendants are some of the measures that can be put in place to ensure the optimal provision of optimal library services needed in public secondary schools in Nigeria (Moruf, 2015; Ogbuiyi & Okpe; Olusola, 2011).

This study also showed that gender (female gender) of the respondents as well as the level of provision of library services were statistically significant factors related with the utilization of library services ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This implies that female students as well as the provision of adequate library services which can be utilized by students for academic purposes are determinant factors for the utilization of library services by students. The provision of adequate library services as a contributory factor to library services utilization is corroborated by literature which has it that the absence of library infrastructure is among the school factors affecting the utilization of libraries. In the absence of the required library facilities, the required services as well as appropriate reading and study materials needed by secondary school students in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; the motivation to use the library services becomes impaired. Once this occurs, it is capable of adversely affecting teaching and learning among these students (Clabo, 2002; Moruf, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

In this study to determine the level of awareness of library services as well as the utilization of these services, it was found that the overall level of awareness regarding library services in this study was low. The level of utilization of these services by the study respondents was found to be low as well. The non-availability of books, availability of irrelevant or outdated books, refusal to offer book lending services to the students, the location of the libraries, lack of time to use the library, improper / poor guidance from the library attendants, no encouragement from teachers to the children to use the library as well as the presence of stringent/rules and laws guiding library use; to a high extent affected the utilization of library services among the respondents. Gender and the level of provision of library services were statistically significant factors related with the utilization of these services.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

The importance of library services to students receiving secondary school education is of immense value for successful completion of that level of education. The provision of effective library facilities and services in government secondary schools in Yenagoa LGA of Bayelsa State is inadequate as evidenced by findings of this study. In order to ensure equitable distribution of educational opportunities and privileges for the children attending public secondary schools, proper library facilities and services need to be provided.

The encouragement to use these services (when available) by school teachers was also unsatisfactory. As members of the guidance and counselling team in schools, school teachers must be oriented to be actively involved in stimulating the use of library services through giving them assignments among their students.

The non-availability of books, improper / poor guidance from the library attendants at the libraries, no encouragement from teachers to the children to use the library etc; could also be implicated as reasons for the unsatisfactory utilization of library services in this study. This could be the situation in other government secondary schools across Nigeria and calls for urgent action by relevant stakeholders to ensure optimal provision, stocking and utilization of library services in Nigerian schools.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made which would be vital in improving utilization of library services among secondary school students. Viz:

- Provision of trained library attendants to aid effective library user guidance in navigating library services.
- Provision of an effective school library system that encourages the provision of reading materials that could be borrowed by students to use outside the confines of the library.
- Provision of required books and other reading materials in government secondary school libraries in Yenagoa where they are lacking.
- Review of students' daily school time table to accommodate time for library service utilization for the students.
- Ensuring proper orientation of secondary school teachers as relevant guidance and counselling agents whom should be involved in encouraging students to utilize library service opportunities provided for them in school.

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