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### Medical Students' Perception of the Information Resources Adequacy in the Medical Library, College of Medicine, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria

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#### Abstract

*The study focuses on the medical students' perception of information resources adequacy in the medical library, College of Medicine, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The aim is to ascertain if the Library's information resources available in the Medical Library is adequate in providing effective information service delivery. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire that was designed in line with the research questions. The population of the study is made up of 50 library users who constituted the respondents for the study. All 50 questionnaires were returned and used for the study. Data were analysed using frequency, mean and standard deviation. Results were presented in tables in line with the research questions. The finding revealed that the information resources in the medical library are up to date, relevant to medical students' study and useful in their clinical practises. The study also showed that the medical students are satisfied with the information resources as regards to its up to date, its relevance to their studies, exams, and quizzes. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended among others, that the college management should ensure regular updating of the medical library resources to promote adequate information service delivery in the medical school and that the library should always promote available information resources to ensure general awareness and inclusion.*

**Keyword:** Libraries, Medical libraries, Medical students, Information resources,

#### 1.1 Introduction

An institution's library is designed to function as the brain and centre point of intellectual activities. It is an essential component of any academic ecosystem, supporting the institution's mission and goals. The purpose of establishing academic libraries is to support academic programmes, foster learning and research, enhance students' success and promote information

literacy, which are fundamental to academia. In other words, to ensure effective and efficient services delivery in an institution, library resources and facilities are expected to meet up with their users' needs and satisfaction. One of the ways to achieve this is carry out periodic evaluation of users' perception which will establish raw facts about how users perceive the library service quality, its resources, thereby giving clear

areas the library need to improve in order to keep patrons satisfied with the library.

Medical libraries, traditionally, is seen as physical repositories for books and journals which serve as dynamic centres that integrate traditional resources with digital platforms. They are designed to provide information resources to the medical practitioners, researchers, medical students and others in allied fields. According to Walzer, Scott and Sutton in Okeke and Enem (2023), some of the purposes of a medical library is to provide current information resources to users in a quick and cost effective manner, satisfying the health information needs of the community, locating and assisting the development of relevant information materials among others. This shows that information resources and services' utilization in medical libraries is very important, because, medical students need information that is timely, genuine and up-to-date in order to provide quality medicare (Okeke, Eze and Ani, 2019).

The Medical science is an advancing discipline, meaning that, the use of the medical library by students is a very important means for updating their knowledge and competence (Rathnakara, Rajeshwari, Unnikrishnan, Ananth, Sudhakar, Shiva Prakash, Ashok, and Udupa, 2011). The medical library belongs to the group of special libraries which is the group that deals with special subjects. This means that, as a special library, it is established to serve the medical practitioners, medical students and other people who wish to carry out a research in the field of medicine (Okeke, Eze and Ani, 2019). Same authors further stated that good healthcare depends upon the existence of good communication and information network, hence the establishment of medical libraries. In other words, Medical libraries as centre of information sources play important role to develop lifelong learning skills among the medical students (Graves and Seliq, in Sahak and Masrek, 2014).

Enugu State University College of

Medicine (ESUCOM) Medical library is a college library established to service the community of college of medicine, Enugu state university of science and technology. Just as the name implies, ESUCOM medical library serves as an essential resource hub for students, faculty and researchers within the medical community. It provides a wide range of information resources tailored to meet the rigorous demands of medical education and research. By combining traditional collections and digital resources, the ESUCOM medical library supports students' academic needs and enhances their learning experiences through access to textbooks, medical journals, specialized databases and multimedia resources.

Understanding medical students' perceptions of the resources in the medical library is essential to evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of these resources in supporting their academic and clinical training. Students' expectations and attitudes towards library resource are shaped by their interactions with print materials, digital databases, e-journals and specialized medical information systems. These perceptions influence how they engage with the library and can provide insight into areas for improvement or innovation. Therefore, this study aims to examine medical students' perception of the resources available at the ESUCOM medical library, identifying factors that enhance or limit their use. By focusing on the ESUCOM Medical Library, this research will contribute valuable findings on how library resources align with the academic professional needs of medical students, ultimately aiming to inform the development of library services that effectively support their education in an increasing digital world.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problems

Medical libraries have evolved to incorporate a wide range of digital and traditional information resources to support the

learning and research needs of medical students. However, despite these advancements, there is often a gap in understanding how effectively these resources meet the specific needs and preferences of students. This gap in knowledge tends to put a doubt on whether the library is effectively serving the users or not with its resources. At ESUCOM Medical Library, which offers a blend of print materials, digital databases, e-journals and other specialized resources, the researcher observed that there is limited information on how students perceive these resources in terms of accessibility, currency relevance and usefulness. Without a clear understanding of medical students' perceptions, the library may face challenges in ensuring that its resource aligns with students' educational needs and preferences. Issues such as underutilization of available resources, difficulty in navigating digital platforms, or dissatisfaction with resource variety may hinder students' learning experiences and limit the information they need for academic and clinical success.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring how medical students at ESUCOM perceive the adequacy of information resources available for information service delivery in the medical library. Insight gained from this research could guide in library services, ensuring that the ESUCOM Medical Library better supports the academic, research and clinical needs of its students.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study aims to find out medical students' perception of information resources adequacy in the medical library, College of Medicine, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Find out which of the library's information resources are utilized by the medical students.

2. Explore the perception of the medical students on the relevance of the information resources in the medical library.
3. Find out how satisfied the medical students are with the information resources available in the library.
4. Identify their challenges with the information resources in the medical library.
5. Discover strategies to help improve information resources in the medical library.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Which information resources are used by the medical students?
2. How do medical students perceive the relevance of the information resources in the medical library?
3. How satisfied are the medical students with the information resources available in the library?
4. What are the challenges of the medical students with the information resources in the medical library?
5. What strategies would improve the information resources in the medical library?

### 2.1 Literature Review

A library is a collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community. According to Barfi, Afful-Arthur & Agyapong (2018), the role of the library is to make available, organized materials that will enable an institution or individual to achieve its set objectives. Abdulahi in Omah & Urhiewhu (2016) opined that among many educational reforms, the need to provide adequate educational resources like library resources, has continued to drive major policy decisions that are focused on enhancing the quality of

learning. Hence, there is need for inclusive library resources to facilitate learning, teaching and research activities of the academic community.

Ezenwa in Omah & Urhiewhu (2016) conceptualize library resources as a collection of wide variety of educational media which include books, magazines, newspapers and pamphlets, records and tapes, maps, films, photographs and painting. To Elaturoti in Abdullahi and Abubakar (2015) library resources consist of both print and non-print media, like books, periodicals newspaper, pamphlets, brochure, ephemerals, photographs, slides, audiotapes, filmstrips, motion films, video tapes, computer diskettes and realia which are organized to broaden reading and the learning horizon of students and other library users. The availability and utilization of these resources has proved to be worthwhile in enhancing academic performance.

Medical libraries are established to support medical students evolving needs, combining traditional print resources with digital access to information; yet understanding how students perceive and interact with these resources remains a critical area of research. Studies on students' perception of library resources have consistently shown that accessibility and relevance to curriculum are key factors to favour digital resources over printed materials due to ease of access and the ability

In a study by Okeke and Enem (2023) on effective use of medical library: a qualitative approach to quality medical care, they stated that, in line with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (2018), the medical library unit should be responsible for keeping records of all books, gazettes, journals and magazines; arranging all books, journals, magazines, gazettes and other materials orderly for easy retrieval; receiving and documenting of items ordered/donated on delivery; guiding users on retrieval of

information; and listing and keeping of items in archive. They further stated that Medical library services ensure that health care providers have access to authoritative, accessible, reliable, relevant, accurate and timely published information that enhances the quality of care given to patients.

Also, a study by Khursheed (2016) on usage of library resources by medical students and faculty members of IIMSR, Integral University Lucknow: a case study, where it gathered data from medical students of IIMSR on the various types of information sources they use. The study results that print materials are the major information resource in comparison to other resources (E-resources) used by the medical students, who are daily users in the IIMSR library. Asking help from Teachers and Librarians ranked highest among sources contacted for information. Easy access and availability of information sources in the library were the most aided characteristics when looking for information. Student's objection in getting information resources includes lack of time, location of library and attitude of management. The findings of this study demands increasing of information sources beyond print resources, collaboration between faculties and librarian, periodic updates from the library and guidance in the area of information resources are recommended.

Anyaoku (2015) carried out a study evaluating Undergraduate Students awareness and use of medical library resources at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria. Sampling 295 students from the three faculties of the College of Medicine, results show that many of the students use the library. There is also high awareness of availability of print based information resources. However, about a good number of the respondents are not aware or sure of the existence of electronic information resources in the library. So, the respondents' major activities in the Medical library are reading personal textbooks, newspapers,



sourcing information for research or project work and class assignments. Major barriers reported by the student on the effective use of the medical library are lack of computer/Internet and lack of current materials. The study recommended improved facilities and resources as it may motivate the students to fully exploit the tool that is meant to provide information support for their studies and for practice of evidence based medicine upon graduation.

In order to understand the available information resource and services available for medical library users, Okeke, Eze, Eze and Asogwa (2017) in their study on Status of Medical Library Resources and Services in Teaching Hospitals in Enugu State, Nigeria: implications for quality health care services, major findings showed that even though some of the required resources and services are available and provided for the medical libraries, most of the required resources and services are not adequately provided by these libraries. Similarly, Rathnakara, et al. (2014) studied on the Utilization of Library Services by Students in a Medical College. Using all the students studying for the 5th semester in the Department of Pharmacology, the finding of the study shows that a good number of the students either carried their own books to the library or supplemented the study with their own books. Some of the respondents indicated that they did not always get the current editions of the books, therefore, they suggests that there is a need to increase the availability of the commonly read text books.

Though most of the students in this semester did utilize the library services, most of them seemed to be using the standard text books only, without making use of the other available facilities like medical journals and electronic media databases. There is also a need to improve the stock of commonly read books and to pay some more attention to the conveniences and the comforts in the library. In another study by Sahak and Masrek (2014)

where they aimed to investigate the usage of library resources among first and third year medical students in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FPSK), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) from July 2009 until April 2010. Adopting a survey research methodology involving 205 students, the findings suggest that the three mostly used library resources are the Internet, newspaper and library websites while the three mostly used facilities are computer, reading area and discussion room. In addition, it is also found that there is no significant difference between male and female in most of the resources usage. In contrast, significant difference could be observed between Year1 and Year 3 in most of the resources usage.

Ayia and Tamakloe (2023) examined users' perception towards the resources of the academic library at the University of Education, Winneba. The study was based on a survey where a questionnaire was employed to solicit data from 294 sample size. The findings revealed that, majority of the respondents were not aware of some of the library resources especially the electronic categories. With regards to the available ICT equipment to aid research and academic work, the study found out negative perception especially in connection with adequate computers, stable internet connectivity, easy remote access to the academic databases, etc. These negative perceptions can be attributed to the challenges that the study unravelled as follows; poor user interface designs of some electronic resources, poor signage, poor communication between users and library about any development in the library, experience error whiles using the computers at the library, lack of frequent training for users in new library services. Given this, it was recommended that the library management should redesign the periodic orientation for first year students, continuous awareness creation and training for students, staff and faculty, and the provision of library

infrastructure which should encapsulate both manual and electronic infrastructure.

Ajayi (2017) carried out a study on Library Use and Information-Seeking Behaviour of Medical Students. The results showed that most medical students' frequent use of the library is for studying during their course work and that the library has not been seen as the most useful source of information. The recommendations were that problem-based learning should be introduced into the medical education curricular, that advanced library instruction Programme should be made compulsory for all medical students when they are in their senior class as both will make medical students learn to develop information-seeking behaviour while still in the school and thereafter.

### 3.1 Research Method

The study was carried out using a descriptive survey design. It focused on the Medical Library, College of Medicine, Enugu. The population of the study is made up

of 50 library users. All 50 library users constituted the respondents for the study. The instrument that was used to collect the data for the study was a structured questionnaire which was designed in line with the research purposes and questions. All 50 questionnaires were administered, returned and considered useful. The rating scale were: SA- Strongly Agreed; A- Agreed; D- Disagreed; SD- Strongly Disagreed; HS- Highly Satisfied; S- Satisfied; D-Dissatisfied; HD- Highly Dissatisfied. Data were analysed using frequency counts and mean scores and presented in tables in line with the research questions.

### 4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analysed using the SPSS, version 10.0. Findings were presented in tables. The data was expressed by calculating the frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The results of the findings are presented below:

**Table 1: Response on the level of studies**

S/N	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	200 level students	3	6.0
2	300 level students	21	42.0
3	400 level students	15	30.0
4	500 level students	5	10.0
5	600 level students	5	10
	Missing value	1	2.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table 1 above shows the level of studies of the respondents. A good number of the students studied are in their third (42.0%) and forth (30.0%) years of study. This means that

they have good experience with the medical library, therefore, are eligible to provide the needed responses for this study.

**Table 2: Responses on the resources used in the library by students.**

S/N	I use these information resources in the medical library	SA	A	D	SD	Mean score (X)	Stan. Dev.	Decision
1	Textbooks	34 (68.0)	14 (28.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	3.62	.635	Agreed
2	Journals	3 (6.0)	15 (30.0)	19 (38.0)	13 (26.0)	2.16	.889	Disagreed
3	Multimedia tools	5 (10.0)	10 (20.0)	21 (42.0)	14 (28.0)	2.12	.940	Disagreed
4	Online databases	12 (24.0)	8 (16.0)	20 (40.0)	10 (20)	2.44	1.072	Disagreed

Table 3 shows the information resources used by students in the medical library. From the data provided, it shows that the textbooks are the information resources mostly used by the students. This is shown with a mean score of 3.62. Their responses also show that journal, multimedia tools and online databases are rarely used in the medical library. These are shown with mean scores of 2.16, 2.12 and 2.44 respectively.

This is in line with the study of Okeke, Jacinta and Ani (2019) where it was discovered that the users of the libraries make

extreme use of their resources particularly textbooks. However, while Okeke, Jacinta and Ani (2019) noted that their respondents also made use of medical journals and bulletins more, the findings of this study shows that the respondents do not make use of journals, multimedia tools and online database. Also, the study by Khursheed (2016) shows that print materials are the major information resource in comparison to other resources (E-resources) used by the medical students, who are daily users in the IIMSR library.

**Table 3: Responses on the students' perception on the relevance of information resources in the medical library.**

S/N	I think that information resources in the medical library are	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Stand. Dev.	Decision
1	Up to date/current	10 (20.0)	24 (48.0)	11 (22.0)	5 (10.0)	2.78	.887	Agreed
2	Very easy to access	18 (36.0)	30 (60.0)	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	3.32	.551	Agreed
3	Relevant to my area of study	28 (56.0)	19 (38.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (4.0)	3.46	.734	Agreed
4	Aligned with my curriculum of study	23 (46.0)	23 (46.0)	2 (4.0)	2 (4.0)	3.34	.745	Agreed
5	Provides answers to my query	13 (26.0)	29 (58.0)	5 (10.0)	3 (6.0)	3.04	.781	Agreed
6	Specialized information resources	9 (18.0)	22 (44.0)	15 (30.0)	4 (8.0)	2.72	.858	Agreed
7	Very helpful in examination preparation	14 (28.0)	28 (56.0)	5 (10.0)	3 (6.0)	3.06	.793	Agreed
8	Very helpful in clinical practices	9 (18.0)	29 (58.0)	11 (22.0)	1 (2.0)	2.92	.695	Agreed

The table 3 above shows the responses of students on their perception of the relevance of the information resources in the medical library. From the responses provided, it shows that the students agree that the information resources in the medical library are relevant with mean ratings above 2.5. They agree that the information resources are up to date with mean score of 2.78, very easy to access with a mean score of 3.32, relevant to my area of study, with a mean score of 3.46 and aligned with my curriculum of study with a mean score of 3.34. Furthermore, the

resources providing answers to query has 3.04, specialized information resources have 2.72, very helpful in examination preparation has 3.06 and very helpful in clinical practices has 2.29.

This finding is contrary to the findings of Ayia and Tamakloe (2023) where the findings show that the perception of the respondents were skewed towards negative perception indicating that library collections are not current enough to meet their information needs.

**Table 4: Responses on students' satisfaction with the information resources available in the medical library**

S/N	I am satisfied with the information resources in the library because they are	HS	S	D	HD	Mean (X)	Stand . Dev.	Decision
1	Up to date/current	4 (8.0)	17 (34.0)	20 (40.0)	9 (18.0)	2.68	.868	Agreed
2	Very easy to access	1 (2.0)	5 (10.0)	28 (56.0)	16 (32.0)	3.18	.691	Agreed
3	Relevant to my area of study	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	24 (48.0)	23 (46.0)	3.40	.606	Agreed
4	Aligned with my curriculum of study	1 (2.0)	6 (12.0)	22 (44.0)	21 (42.0)	3.26	.751	Agreed
5	Provides answers to my query	3 (6.0)	7 (14.0)	29 (58.0)	11 (22.0)	2.96	.781	Agreed
6	Very helpful in examination preparation	1 (2.0)	7 (14.0)	27 (54.0)	15 (30.0)	3.12	.718	Agreed
7	Very helpful in clinical practices	3 (6.0)	11 (22.0)	27 (54.0)	9 (18.0)	2.84	.792	Agreed
8	Specialized resources	6 (12.0)	12 (24.0)	20 (40.0)	12 (24.0)	2.76	.960	Agreed

The table four above displays the responses of students on their satisfaction with library resources in the medical library. The responses show that the students are satisfied with the resources in the medical library with mean ratings above 2.5 responses show that they are satisfied with the currency of the information resources with a means score of 2.68, how easily they can access the information resources has 3.18, relevant to the subject area has 3.40, aligned with the curriculum has 3.26, and provide answers to

the query has 2.96. Very helpful in examination preparation, very helpful in clinical practices and specialized resources has 3.12, 2.84 and 2.76 respectively.

The finding confirms the statement in Ayia and Tamakloe (2023) that providing the needed library resources will have users stick to the services of the library. Also, the finding is in line with the study of Ikolo (2015) where it was revealed that most library users are satisfied with the availability of information resources in the library.



**Table 5: Responses on the challenges faced in using the information resources in the medical library.**

S/N	What are your challenges with the information resources in the medical library	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Stand Dev.	Decision
1	Outdated materials		18 (36.0)	25 (50.0)	7 (14.0)	2.78	.679	Agreed
2	Insufficient varieties	2 (4.0)	18 (36.0)	23 (46.0)	7 (14.0)	2.70	.763	Agreed
3	Limited access to digital resources	12 (24.0)		24 (48.0)	14 (28.0)	3.04	.727	Agreed
4	Inadequate information resources	4 (8.0)	20 (40.0)	21 (42.0)	5 (10.0)	2.54	.788	Agreed
5	Limited library support from the library staff	5 (10.0)	34 (68.0)	6 (12.0)	5 (10.0)	2.22	.764	Disagreed
6	Lack of awareness on the available information resources in the library	3 (6.0)	14 (28.0)	23 (46.0)	10 (20.0)	2.80	.833	Agreed
7	Lack of basic research skills	5 (10.0)	19 (38.0)	20 (40.0)	6 (12.0)	2.54	.838	Agreed

The table 5 above shows the challenges of the medical students with the information resources in the medical library. From their responses, it shows that a good number of the medical students agree with the challenges listed with mean ratings above 2.5 except for limited library support from the library staff that was disagreed with a mean rating of 2.22. A breakdown of the responses shows that out-dated information resources have 2.78, insufficient varieties has 2.70, limited access to digital resources has 3.04 while inadequate information resources has 2.54. Also, lack of awareness of the available information resources in the library has 2.80 and Lack of basic research skills has 2.54 mean rating. In addition, respondents

identified difficulty in identifying specific information resources and no internet access as some of their challenges in accessing information resources in the medical library.

This finding is contrary with the report of Khursheed (2016), where it is stated that the highest challenge reported by medical students and faculty members of the IIMSR is distance of the Library and location from their hostel and academic block. This also affirms the statement of Ayia and Tamakloe (2023) that to satisfy the ever-changing needs of users of the academic library, it is very paramount that, academic libraries be equipped with the necessary resources in order to meet the needs of its users.

**Table 6: Responses on the strategies to improve the information resources in the medical library**

S/N	Information resources in the medical library can be improved by	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Stand Dev.	Decision
1	Increasing digital access to information resources	35 (70.0)	13 (26.0)	2 (4.0)		3.66	.557	Agreed

2	Updating the information resources in the library regularly	35 (70.0)	14 (28.0)	1 (2.0)		3.68	.513	Agreed
3	Diversifying information resources to include multimedia & online databases	33 (66.0)	15 (30.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	3.60	.639	Agreed
4	Improving library facilities such as internet access,	36 (72.0)	13 (26.0)	1 (2.0)		3.70	.505	Agreed
5	Promoting information resources available in the medical library	37 (74.0)	12 (24.0)	1 (2.0)		3.72	.497	Agreed
6	Promoting awareness on the available information resources in the library	28 (56.0)	21 (42.0)	1 (2.0)		3.54	.542	Agreed
7	Encourage basic research skills	29 (58.0)	20 (40.0)	1 (2.0)		3.56	.541	Agreed

The table 6 shows responses on the recommendations to improve the information resources in the medical library. From the responses, it shows that the medical students agreed with all the recommendations with a mean rating above 2.5. The recommendation to increasing digital access to information resources has a mean rating of 3.66, updating the information resources in the library regularly has 3.68, diversifying information resources to include multimedia and online databases has 3.60, and improving library facilities such as internet access has 3.70. Also, promoting information resources available in the medical library was affirmed with a mean rating of 3.72, promoting awareness on the available information resources in the library has 3.54 and encouraging basic research skills has 3.56. Additional information by the respondent suggested creating awareness on how the information resources in the library can be easily accessed.

This is in line with the study of Okeke, Eze and Ani (2019), where it was recommended that the use of ICT facilities is enabled to enhance the accessibility of

resources. Also, the provision of resources that will be relevant to work by the library, provision of adequate services and up-to-date resources for users was recommended.

## Conclusion

The study was carried out to establish medical students' perception of information resources in providing effective information services in the medical library, College of Medicine, ESUT. From the findings, the study shows that hardcopy textbooks are the information resources mostly used by the diverse groups of medical students in the medical library. Furthermore, the finding revealed that the information resources in the medical library are up to date, relevant to their studies and useful in their clinical practises.

The study also showed that the medical students are satisfied with the information resources as regards to its up to date, its relevance to their studies, exams, queries and how easily they can access the information resources irrespective of their diversity. Nevertheless, the medical students experienced challenges such as: out-dated information resources, insufficient varieties

of resources, limited access to digital resources, lack of awareness of the available information resources and difficulty in identifying specific information resources. The following strategies were therefore, devised to improve the library information resources: increased digital access to information resources, regular updating of the information resources in the library, diversifying information resources to include multimedia and online databases, and promoting information resources available in the medical library.

### Recommendations

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

- That the college management should ensure regular updating of the medical library resources especially the textbooks which has been recorded to be the most widely used by the medical students to promote effective inclusiveness in the medical school.
- To ensure users satisfaction, there is need for diversification in the procurement of information resources for effective inclusion in the medical school.
- That the library should always promote available information resources to ensure general awareness and inclusion
- That the library should provide a functional access point to assist medical students in identifying specific information resources.

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