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# NCE Students' Perceptions on the Use of Library Course as an Aid to the Use of Library Resources in South-West, Nigeria

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# **NCE Students' Perceptions on the Use of Library Course as an Aid to the Use of Library Resources in South-West, Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study was carried out to survey NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library resources in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was employed and four research questions guided the study. From a population of 60,481 students, a sample of 1,210 was drawn using the proportionate stratified sampling technique. Meanwhile, out of the 1,210 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 1,097 were fully completed (filled out) as retrieved and analyzed. It represents (90.66%) or approximately (91%) response rate and considered adequate because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60%. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection after validation by experts in the field, and pre-tested through Cronbach Alpha method that yielded 0.743 aggregate values. Complete data subsequently gathered from 1,097 copies of the questionnaire retrieved were analyzed by employing the statistical mean to answer the research questions and criterion mean placed at 2.50. Among the major findings of the study were: Students perceived use of library course as an aid to their use of all library resource categories examined in the study (that is, reference, reserve, circulation and serials resources). The study therefore recommends that students should be given increased opportunity to access "use of library course programme" as a veritable tool of enhancing their capacity for adequate use of reference resources among others in colleges of education in the region to ensure their effective integration into our 21<sup>st</sup> century society even after college life.

**Keywords:** Use of library course, Library resources, NCE Students, Nigeria

## **INTRODUCTION**

Societal development and advancement are the end-products of quality education. Hence, education has been described as the bed rock of every society and the tool for nation building. Education, in its broad sense, embraces all those experiences of the individual through which knowledge is acquired, the intellect nurtured or the will strengthened through learning (Okendu, 2012). Education is not only an instrument of social change but viewed or perceived as an investment in nation building. Generally, education is important for learning basic life skills, as well as learning advanced skills that can make a person or student more attractive in the job market after graduation (Osarome, 2011). Precisely, and according to Osarome, "education", in its strict sense, has been employed to designate consciously planned and systematically applied formal education or training, carried on through the various social agencies of education, especially the tertiary institutions such as colleges of education in which the National Certificate of Education (NCE) student is a prominent factor. Thus, education is not only an instrument of social change but viewed as

an investment in national development through organized and efficient information resources usage.

Interestingly, one of the objectives of National Policy on Education (NPE) is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in, and contribute to the development of his society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). Lifelong education is the basis for the nation's education policy. To implement the policy accordingly, the Government directed that educational activities will be centered on the learner for the maximum self-development and that the educational system will be structured to develop the practices of self-learning; and acknowledged that the library is an important and indispensable instrument designated to play a pivot role towards achieving educational objectives.

The Library is the storehouse of organized knowledge (embedded in information resources) and expected to play a significant role in teaching, learning, and research processes directed towards national development. In this direction, the primary objective of the library is to adequately provide necessary information resources and services in its various operations or sectional services to ensure proper utilization and satisfaction of the information needs of teachers and students (Kumar & Phil, 2009). Pointing to the indispensability of library, it is worthy to note that among the requirements for the take-off of any higher institution of learning, the institution's library must be put in place. The institution's library is to provide adequate information resources and services to support teaching, learning and research activities of students.

Consequently, Okendu (2012) revealed that for relevant information resources in a library to be used effectively, students must be taught the skills of using these resources and where to look for information on particular topics to facilitate self-learning; noting that: it is not enough to acquire relevant information resources but they must be used effectively by the students. Unarguably, a library could be well stocked with the best books and their educational gadgets and yet remains useless if the students do not know how to access and utilize them. In this circumstance, many libraries over the years have supported educational efforts by providing teaching of "use of library course", "user instruction programme" or "information literacy" (as interchangeably used in this study) and should be effectively taught by Librarians (Nithyanandam, Kanniyappan, Dhanakar & Rajasekar, 2006).

Following this development, a more active approach has been taken by libraries offering educational courses on "one-to-one tutoring" programmes. In this light, and at the Nigerian Universities for instance, there is a provision for the teaching of "Use of Library" as a unit conjunction with "Use of English" course under either GST 101, GNS 101, GSE II2 or as the case may be. In most cases however, English Language lecturers hijack the course (Osarome, 2011) and even teach the "Use of Library" aspect together. This ugly scenario is also observable in many other tertiary institutions in Nigeria including polytechnics and colleges of education. This form of behaviour could have been occasioned following the poor/negative attitude of most academic staff and students' perceptions on the use of library course in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

However, at the Colleges of Education, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) established by Act 3 of January 1989 and amended by Act 12 of 1993 as a completion of tripod of excellence in supervision of higher education in Nigeria, provided Use of library as a separate but compulsory course for the National Certificate of Education (NCE) students. This commission provides accreditation services for Colleges of Education and maintains standards through periodic accreditation visit using the library as one of the

most important criteria. In this regard, Sanusi (2006) observed that the Colleges of Education cannot accomplish their task without the back-up of relevant and functional libraries. Hence, the NCCE mandated all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria to have functional libraries in order to achieve their academic purposes. These Libraries have been charged by NCCE with the objectives of assisting their Colleges (Institutions) by providing learning and research information resources as well as providing various services to students in order to achieve the objectives of producing well molded teachers (higher-level skilled manpower/NCE students) in their chosen disciplines (Onifade & Onifade, 2011). Having use of library as a separate course underlines the importance attached to the teaching of use of library as a compulsory course to all students in the present 85 Colleges of Education in Nigeria made up of 21 Federal, 43 State, 1 Military, 19 Private and 1 National Teacher Institute (NCCE, 2015). Moreover, use of library course is a set of instructions given to users to help them make the best (effective or competent) use of library resources and services in its various sections. It is designed to help in enhancing users' effectiveness in searching, identifying, locating, and selecting library materials for use (Kumar & Phil, 2009). Its content according to the NCE curriculum, embraces instructions on: origin and development of library, organizational structure of library and information materials/resources, library automation/ICT, procedure for library use/catalogue use, collection development, reference sources and services, library records/circulation information among others designed to facilitate effective students' use of all categories of available resources in libraries.

In this circumstance, the skills for effective use of library ought be taught by professional librarians only and learnt by the students and not the indulgence of non-professional librarians and other faculty members as often observed in some tertiary institution including colleges of education. This phenomenon became necessary following what Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), and Chukwuma (2004) observed about information resources use among students. They observed that information resources or sources needed by a student could be considerably available in libraries' open shelves among other information resources that are not relevant to the particular student, and may not be able to lay hands on it due to lack of its access skills. Thus, use of library course becomes inevitable.

According to Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011), library resources are those materials which enable libraries to carry out their functions effectively. They are made up of books and other information bearing media that can be divided into groups according to their functions and format; as often categorized or organized into various units /sections such as the ICT/ e-resources, reference resources, reserve, circulation, serials, catalogue and acquisition sections in library practices all over the world. These are the conventional structure or arrangement of library resources to enhance easy location and use by patrons or students.

Moreover, students vary in their information needs and seeking attitudes. They constitute a part of society who is fortunate to have access at little or no cost to themselves a variety of information resources and services in their institutional libraries. This is made possible because tertiary institutions such as Colleges of Education use considerable proportions of their budget to provide these information resources and services for their students through the functions of its various sections to assist in the teaching, learning and research process (Issa, Tunji, Lanre & Tolu, 2011). Without learning the necessary library use skills, library users will always meet frustrations in information search.

In spite of this their fortunate position (access to information resources and services at little or no cost to themselves), students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, including those in

colleges of education still depend solely on the infamous shallow handouts or lecture notes dictated by lecturers during lectures thereby leaving out the rich content of their library resources even when it is a known fact that lecturers in all academic disciplines rarely teach all that students are expected to know in their course of study (Chukwuma, 2004). This phenomenon has over the years been a source of worry to Librarians and other information practitioners. Consequently, the students, therefore, are not exposed to other academics' (academicians') viewpoints outside that of their lecturers; hence, library resources become indispensable and made known to students via use of library course programme for effective usage. Ideally, they have to be exposed to varied academic experts' (authors') viewpoints and other information resources that abound in the library. This would enable students to supplement their class work with further reading that would lead to their improved academic outcomes and learning as incorporated into user education or use of library course programme by Librarians. The need for use of Library course programme according to Edem, Ani and Ocheibi (2009) is for effective use of the Library resources because of the exponential growth of published materials in various fields of academic studies.

The growth in published materials (particularly in Science and Technology) requires that scattered information in various formats be properly disseminated through effective library use instruction (use of Library course). This is expected to be so, because it constitutes important aspects of librarianship as emphasized by the acclaimed father of librarianship "S.R. Ranganathan" in his book as far back in 1931 (Sen, 2008). In this direction, Edem, et al (2009) noted that it is one of the ways of stimulating the active users, especially tertiary institution students on how to search for, and retrieve materials in library to support their learning and research. According to them, this can take many forms such as; use of Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC), browsing, and assistance from librarian (Library Staff), as well as through effective use of card catalogue, computers, the internet and different search engines. All these forms of search skills could be properly achieved through well-articulated and effective use of library course programme (Edem, et al 2009).

However, Awojobi (2004) reveals that students' lack of knowledge on how to obtain information needed is among the serious problems of academic (tertiary) institutions' libraries in Nigeria. In this regard, Awojobi further observed that students in tertiary institutions lack interest in library use instruction programmes, and thereby influencing their attitude towards library resource use which could be due to the manner or nature in which they perceive library use course. To this end, and at retrospect, it was recapitulated that the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureau (ASLIB) conference of 1926 was the first forum to examine use of library course critically as a conference theme, and that by 1976, an impressive bibliography of 1,800 items on the topic has been published with their resulting recommendations (Kumar & Phil, 2009). In spite of this, most library users such as the tertiary institution students are still unable to make effective and efficient use of available resources in Nigerian higher institutions such as Colleges of Education libraries. They also noted however, that proper and adequate user studies will, to a great extent, produce data for planning effective use of library course experience particularly in locating and utilizing library resources through change of attitude or views upon which this study reflects.

However, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) reveal that academic Librarians seem to be preoccupied with basic library duties like acquisition, processing and preservation without giving proper attention on how to use the library resources by students for their learning/research through the use of library course programme designed unto Colleges of Education (COE) students' curriculum by the NCCE. In this scenario, Kumar and Phil

(2009) postulated aggressive user education (Use of Library course) to enhance students' greater utilization of information resources that are available in libraries.

Although, scholars such as Ray and Day (1998); Ampka (2000); Ifidon (2000); Ugah (2007); Fordjour, Badu and Adjei (2010) and Issa, Tunji, Lanre and Tolu (2011) also explored the problems facing use of library course programmes to include: scarcity of funds, lack of professional librarians in teaching the course, unjustifiable increase in students' population, lack of faculty cooperation, students' inability to understand library resources organization/retrieval, time wastage in trying to retrieve library resources, over emphasis on bibliographic instruction, students' lack of interest on the course, and poor integration of use of library course period; yet, there has been no considerable changes or improvement on students use of library resource in recent time irrespective of their gender, academic level and discipline or institutional types among others. These problems may have sprung out from the way in which the academic community including students perceived or view use of library course programme in tertiary institutions. Hence, this study intends to investigate "NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library resources in South-West, Nigeria".

The main purpose of the study is to find out NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library resources in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives intend to find out:

1. Students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library reference resources.
2. Students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of reserve resources of the library.
3. Students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of circulation resources of library.
4. Students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of serial resources.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library reference resources?
2. How does the teaching of use of library course aid NCE students' use of library reserve resources according to students' perceptions?
3. What are NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library circulation resources?
4. How do NCE students perceive use of library course as an aid to their use of library serials resources?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical framework for the study was based on Ranganathan's five laws of Library Science particularly on the first law which states that "books (documents) are for use"; while the second law states that "Every Reader his Book (Document)"; the third law states that "Every Book its Reader"; while the fourth states that "save the time of the Reader", and the last (fifth law) states that "a library is a growing organism" ((Finks, 1981; Sen, 2008).

Moreover, the first law (upon which this study is principally based), "Books (documents) are for use" and "library use course" are related. Books or library resources would not be

effectively used by students if adequate knowledge of the library and what it stands for (content and operations) are not made clearly known to them. This can only be effectively done through “library use course”. Therefore, the sustenance and effective/efficient use of this course content would provide the much needed or sought after reform for Colleges of Education to launch Nigerian/NCE students into the information superhighway effectively and efficiently.

### **Use of Library Course as an aid in the Utilization of Library Reference Resources**

Reference resources are materials in the reference section, while reference services are rendered by reference librarians in meeting the information need of users in the library (Ogunniyi, Efosa & Sheji, 2013). The reference section is very important in every academic library since the resources and staff (reference librarians) is the image makers of the library through effective use of library course programmes (Nwalo, 2003). Nwalo further stressed that the reference section or department is that area in the library where users get in contact with the library properly; noting that reference librarians are experts in the contents and arrangement of their collections, as well as how available resources are organized in and outside the library, and for library users’ consultations and services.

According to the San Joaquin Delta College (2014), reference resources are made up of both print and electronic materials that include but not limited to: indexes, almanacs, both general and specialized encyclopedias, bibliographies, handbooks, directories, atlases, dictionaries, and statistical resources. In its electronic form description by Ifidon (2000) she expressed that there is hardly any field of human endeavour that has not been touched by the new technology; as it is now the answer to most students and other readers’ services problems. She stressed that in reference information services, many of the quick reference materials are in machine readable form. For example, the British National Bibliography, Ulrich’s International Periodical Directory, New Encyclopedia Britannica, Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature, and a host of other quick reference tools are on CD-ROM discs/online and are now attracting students to the library for their usage. According to her, this is so because, for simple enquires from laymen and students, the reference librarian turns to a general index; for the complex ones, he turns to the subject index (referral services); and has a number of advantages that has increased students patronage of reference resources via awareness efforts of use of library course programme service experiences.

Nonetheless, Ogunniyi, Efosa and Sheji (2013) revealed that most students are not even aware of the various services rendered in the reference section inspite of library use course in their curriculum. This is an indication of weaknesses in the laudable programmes under the general studies of academic institutions that consequently influence their perceptions and use of reference resources and services readily available to them. In this direction, Budd (2009) Asserts that there has been a great drop in students’ use of reference resources in recent times. Similarly, Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) reported that students don’t use some resources like bibliographies, gazettes, manuals, and so on often categorized as reference sources or resources in library practices; hence students perform low in writing of meaningful research. However, Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) observed that there has been a surprising relationship between students’ level of study and increased library reference room (resources) usage during each successive year of their study, particularly when conducting their project research that could have been occasioned by their previous users of library course knowledge. Meanwhile, Ogunniyi, Efosa and Sheji (2013) exposed that college students have good understanding of what reference materials and services entail via use of library course but often have difficulties when searching for materials in the reference section thereby adversely influencing their perception (view) of its resources.

### **Use of Library Course as an aid on Use of Library Reserve Resources**

Within the circulation section of the library, there is the reserve unit (Clarke, 1999). Clarke expressed that in some libraries book or information resources reserve is a section of its own. He stated that information resource or books on reserve do not circulated like other formal information resources; patrons may have to sign before using them in the library which has over the years limited their usage by students in most academic libraries irrespective of use of library course experiences. However, reserve resources or lists of items include books, articles and video recordings that an instructor had placed “on reserve” for their course, and few others made by librarians located on shelves in the reserve reading room (reserve unit or section) usually checked out only for short periods of time (between 2 to 3 hours) so that everyone in the class has a chance to use them (Wellesley College Library, 2014). Books or information resources on reserve for a class circulate only for the stipulated loan period of either “2 hours, 4 hours, 1 day, 3 days, or 7 days” depending on usage pressure (University of Delaware Library, 2013).

Clarke (1999), claimed that books or information resources on high demand with few copies are normally placed on reserve in academic libraries when instruction to that effect is given by the course lecturer to enable all interested students have equal access to it. He noted that librarians may also place on reserve, information resources that are rare or extremely expensive to enable users have equal access to them, and that librarians can use their discretions to loan out books on reserve on a short term of two hours bases, and could be renewed if no other patron requests for them. The returning of a book on loan may be due to expiration of loan period or through recalls, and that books cannot be placed on reserve ad-indefinitum, but for a given period of time (Clarke, 1999). He added that this strict form of control could deter or scare most students from their adequate usage (fair-use) and consequently influence their perception of reserve resources adversely.

Ifidon (2000) in this regard, espoused that the reserve unit is an important section of academic libraries which most students do not know about; particularly the new students except through use of library course programmes that most students shy away from. She added that this attitude of most students towards library use course, greatly deprive them from knowledge of the existence of valuable information resources and services kept and rendered by librarians to users for greater academic outcomes, thereby affecting their perceptions of library services; particularly of those taking place in the reserve unit that is basically on strict access. This form of reserve access operation is to provide a secure location for heavily used, and rare items that faculty may request and place on reserve as course readings which may include:

- Library owned books
- Instructors personal copies of books
- Sample of exams and quizzes (past question papers)
- Homework assignments and solutions
- Lecture notes and course syllabi
- DVD/ CD recordings of lectures among others.

The reserve section resources uniqueness and importance may have prompted the San Joaquin Delta College Library (2013) to describe them as exceptional resources for students use that include such materials as:

- Rare books or manuscripts
- Upper division research materials
- Dissertations/ Thesis
- Sheet music



- Lab manuals, and “fill in the blank” study guides
- Out of print books, and
- Condensed books among others; nothing that reserve collections/ resources once generally made up of gifts from faculty publishers.

To this end, Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) asserted that reservation services provide avenue for students and other users to make use of some (rare) books resources for strict in house use only to guide against their loss. Moreover, as libraries work to enhance their presence on the web, a growing number are investigating the potential of electronic course reserves (Johnson, Trabelsi & Tin, 2004). They however noted that the traditional course reserves desk services of an academic library, with its limited copies, short loan periods, and high late fines, can be a considerable source of frustration for many students that is negatively affecting their perceptions of use of library course as an aid to their use of library reserve resources since the course is also expected to play link roles between students and library services to bring about satisfaction. Hence most libraries are embarking on the electronic reserves model, in which they make available, through the world wide web, items, that faculty have selected and “placed on reserve” for students in a particular course in recent times (Johnson, Trabelsi & Tin, 2004). This new development has become a hot topic in library literature (Wilson, 2002). He added that most e-reserves operate on a password protected model mostly appreciated by students of modern times via use of library course programme; and that one must be affiliated with the institution, or even registered in the course reserve services of the library which also permits full integration with the library’s online catalogue. This phenomenon has in recent time positively affected students’ perception of reserve services in libraries he iterated.

It was reported that students use of library reserve resources increases as they increase in their academic levels and thereby changes their initial negative perception of the library reserve section and services (Agboola, and Bamigboye, 2011). However, students who intend to use very rare reserve resources for selfish and commercial gains but could not do so due to the strict or closely use monitoring policies of the library reserve services, often have negative perceptions of the section (Bentley University Library, 2014). The Institution noted that resources placed on reserve are to be solely used for non-commercial educational purposes and in support of the course(s) for which they are designated, and should not be reproduced for further distributions.

### **Use of Library Course as an aid on Use of Library Circulation Resources**

The circulation resources or section is one of the units of the readers’ services department of any academic library. It is the major interface between the library and the users/students (Ifidon, 2000). She explained that the inputs of all the other departments of the library such as the acquisition or collection development, processing (cataloguing/ classification), bindery, and even administration provides the raw materials with which the circulation section renders services to users and students alike bearing in mind that institutions of higher learning according to Ahmed (2008), are established primarily to discharge the tripartite functions of teaching, research and community development through a number of responsibilities. One of such important responsibilities according to Ahmed (2008), is the availability and accessibility of carefully selected and organized collection of information resources at the open access or circulation section services via effective use of library course programmes of such institution. He noted that the nature of information resources in circulation services will normally prompt a reaction to its utilization and perception by users including students. To Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), it is impossible for any nation or institution to develop without creative and imaginative access to accumulated information resources; expressing that it may be appropriate to deduce “that the decision making of an

individual to a great extent depends on the degree of information resource access and use” via effective library use course experiences. They also acknowledged that the efforts geared to make a variety of information resources available in a library will be a waste if such resources are not made accessible through circulation services, and effective use of library course programmes that could influence patrons’ perception of the entire relevance of library services and existence in academic institutions. They concluded that the responsibility of the library is to ensure that available resources are used by patrons and students alike through effective circulation and use of library course services to engender favourable perception of its existence on the part of users.

Meanwhile, Rasaki (2008) revealed that there is low level of understanding of the library circulation services that has affected students’ perception of the library due to weaknesses in use of library course programmes. He however, explained that the course content, duration of the programmes, the lack of knowledge concepts and the low use of library resources by students show that the programmes as it is presently pursued in some African countries, is a waste of time. In writing on his experience at South African Universities, Dulle (as cited in Rasaki, 2008) also reveals that most universities in Africa practice mainly use of library course orientation, most of which lack the capacity to produce information users/students who exhibit adequate or efficient use of library knowledge attributes, and has considerably affected students’ perception of library circulation resources in universities. This circumstance or weaknesses according to Chan (2003) is due to the following problems with use of library course programmes:

- The programmes were not accorded any official status and this did not receive the support of students or academic staff;
- Students were not given any hand-on experience, meaning that there was no formal assessment of the effectiveness of the programmes;
- The programmes were too short to be really effective;
- As most students had no or very limited experience with library use and resource-based learning, they did not think it worthwhile to expend time and efforts to learn to use the library.

To this end, it was reported that the weaknesses of use of library course programmes resulting from the above shortcoming has made it difficult for students to have good understanding of library circulation resources and services in such areas as:

- Borrowing of materials or resources (who may borrow library resources?)
- How can one (students get a borrowers card?)
- What material may be borrowed?
- What is the check-out procedure for circulating resources?
- What is the check-out procedure for “in library use” or course reserve materials/resources?
- How long may I keep the materials (resources) I borrowed (ie the length of loan period)?
- Are there any limits on certain types of resources that I can check out (borrow)?
- What is the maximum amount of items I may have checked-out in any given time?
- Renewals for student borrower
- Fines on over-due borrowed resource or lost/damaged materials
- Inter library loan services available to them as students
- Library use guidelines among others (Molstead Library, 2014).

The above claim of the ineffectiveness of academic librarians in teaching use of library course/ programme is true; because it is the responsibility of librarians in academic

institutions to effectively educate students on the use of library resources; and if they (students) fail to effectively access or locate and use academic library resources as presented by Ifidon (2000) above, then they should have been responsible since they (librarians) are the major driving factor in information resources access and usage (Ogunmodede, Adio & Odunola, 2011). In this direction, they explained that information provision, access and lending services are perhaps the most important services provided by a library; noting that staffs (librarians) at the circulation desk are responsible for charging/discharging of textbooks (information resources) to users. In rendering these services however, certain processes must be followed such as the registration of such student or user who is eligible to pick library resources from the open shelves and taken to the circulation desk for proper processing and recording by the staff on duty. In this vein, Johnson, Trabelsi and Tin (2004) stated that traditionally, libraries offer circulation services, interlibrary loans and library use instruction (use of library course) to students and other library users; adding that to service students connected to their institutional library primarily through a computer network, librarians are to providing remote access to, and electronic delivery of library resources and a services to users in support of institutional responsibilities to students. They stressed that electronic library circulation services is a quick facilitator in sharing knowledge and information among library staff (librarians), researchers, faculty and students within and outside the institution and encouraging them to work together, develop their skills, and form strong and trusting relationships. They explained that such library circulation function via use of library course focused on collaboration or trusted relationship among the stakeholders that helps to promote responsive approach to course design and supports teaching and learning objectives, particularly when this relationship/collaboration incorporates students' contributions and feedback via use of library course sections or programmes. They further noted that through this form of library circulation function, it motivates all parties to have a common vision in which each one participates actively by contributing their skills and perspectives to the building of a genuine partnership to boost academic activities in higher institutions of learning. In this direction, Akambi (n.d), concluded in his staff user interaction in university libraries study, that circulation services are very important to academic library users, and thus, there is need to modify circulation arrangements from time to time as well as communicating such arrangements to students via effective use of library course programmes that could engender their positive perception of its services among other users.

### **Use of Library Course as an aid on the Use of Library Serials Resources**

Serials constitute an important part of the resources of an academic library, because they provide the latest information on research and current affairs, the knowledge of which ought to be communicated to students through effective use of library course activities of librarians. Okiy (2008) noted that serials collection is made up of both current and back-sets of periodicals for lectures and student to access within the library but cannot be borrowed for home reading. In this tenet therefore, Ogbomo (as cited in Emojorho, 2010) defined serials as “a publication issued in successive parts, usually at regular intervals and as a rule, intended to be continued indefinitely”; and that they include journals, magazines, bulletins and newsletters, proceedings of learned societies and associations among others that may be published daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly and so on.

Modern efforts of tertiary institution libraries on serials management and usage by students are changing dramatically particularly on their perceptions of serials collections and their relevance in their academic activities via use of library course programmes. This form of change or transformation has been noticed by Ogunsola (2004) in his reports on University of Ibadan electronic library serials collections' management and usage by students; and that many other universities in Nigeria are yet to take advantage of this modern change that

could engender positive change in students' perception of their services. In this regard, it was therefore, emphasized that students information search on any subject in an academic library must include the examination of serials publications because they contain current information about new ideas or discoveries and keep researchers or students abreast of growth of knowledge in their areas of investigations (Emojorho, 2011). The communication of its knowledge to students via effective use of library course programme is important in influencing their perceptions on serials publication and usage of its section in academic libraries and that serial librarians should therefore be able to satisfy the students/patrons by selecting and acquiring relevant titles (Broadus, 2001).

The communication of the knowledge of serials resources and their organization therefore, is an essential preliminary to effective exploitation and dissemination of information to students and other academic library patrons via effective use of library course" programmes (Emojorho, 2011). He however lamented that inspite of this important function of academic librarians, it is sad to note that many library patrons including students who are in dare need of these current information resources leave the library serial's section without being able to locate these vital information resources because they have poor or no knowledge of how serials resources are being organized which has adversely affected their perceptions of library existence in academic communities. He further stressed that it is not enough to acquire vital serial information resources, but it is far more important to get the resources to the desk of the users through effective use of library course programmes; and however pointing out that libraries, whose role involve the selection, acquisition, organization, and dissemination as well as user education on information resources are still using the 19<sup>th</sup> century methods.

To this end, the Berkeley City College Library (2014) however reported that librarians' deficiency in serials acquisition, organization and user education (use of library course programme) was due to the ongoing depletion in financial commitment to serials information resources by parent institutions; noting that serials prices have historically increased at a rate that far exceeds standard economic indicators such as the consumer price index. This circumstance (view) was also supported by Botero, Carrico and Tenant (2008) who attributed the increasing cost of serials particularly their electronic accessibility, to the reduction in monographs (library resources) budget that affected libraries information services to users/students as well as their (students) views on library serials' services irrespective of use of library course efforts. Meanwhile, Ifidon (2000) emphasized that students need to be attracted to fiction books and other leisure time reading materials (serials resources) through effective library orientation (use of library course) programmes. She noted that journals and secondary services (use of library course programme) have an important role to play in education and need special care, attention and awareness to use them; nothing that such library activities goes a long way to affect how users/students examine (view) their importance.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out to survey NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library resources in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was employed and four research questions guided the study. From a population of 60,481 students, a sample of 1,210 was drawn using the proportionate stratified sampling technique. Meanwhile, out of the 1,210 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 1,097 were fully completed (filled out) as retrieved and analyzed in this study. It represents (90.66%) or approximately (91%) response rate and considered adequate because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies is 60% (Evans, Peterson

& Demark-Wahnefried, as cited in Dulle, Minish-Majanja & Cloete, 2010). A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection after validation by experts in the field, and pre-tested through Cronbach Alpha method that yielded 0.743 aggregate value. Complete data subsequently gathered from 1,097 copies of the questionnaire retrieved were analyzed by employing the statistical mean to answer the research questions and criterion mean placed at 2.50.

## RESULTS

### NCE students' perceptions on the use of library course as an aid in their use of library reference resources

**Table 1:** Students' Mean Ratings of the Use of Library Course as an aid to Their Use of Library Reference Resources

<b>Use of Library Course has helped me to:</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1. Recognize the difference between general and subject encyclopedias	3.33	.69	Agree
2. Use indexes for academic purpose	3.18	.70	Agree
3. Use library abstract resources	3.12	.78	Agree
4. Use bibliographic resources	3.14	.80	Agree
5. Improve my knowledge on the use of directories	3.24	.74	Agree
6. Enhance my use of thesaurus	2.96	.84	Agree
7. Improve my use of encyclopedias	3.21	.77	Agree
8. Use journals/magazines for academic purposes	3.31	.73	Agree
9. Use newspapers for academic purposes	3.25	.75	Agree
10. Consult reference librarians when necessary	3.20	.81	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Rating: Aid to the Use of Library Reference Resources</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The overall mean rating ( $\bar{x}=3.19$ ) displayed in table 1 shows that the students are of the perception or view that the use of library course has been an aid to their use of library reference resources. All the mean ratings for the 10 different aspects of library reference resources ranged from 2.96 to 3.33. This is also an indication that the students agree that the course has aided them all these areas. However, they were on their perceptions regarding the "the use of library course" as an aid to enhancing their use of thesaurus ( $\bar{x} = 2.96$ ,  $SD = .84$ ).

**NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid in the use of library reserve resources.**

**Table 2:** Students' Mean Ratings of the Use of Library Course as an aid to Their Use of Library Reserve Resources

<b>Use of Library Course has helped me to:</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1. Gain knowledge on why and how some resources are reserved	3.36	.65	Agree
2. Know that there is time frame (e.g. 2hrs) on the use of reserve resources	3.05	.75	Agree
3. Understand course lecturers place and course resources (materials) on reserve	3.21	.72	Agree
4. Understand what exactly rare materials (resources) are and use	3.14	.76	Agree
5. Know that there is a policy in place limiting number of pages to be photocopied (especially, projects theses and dissertations)	3.19	.76	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Rating: Aid to the Use of Library Reserve Resources</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 shows that the overall mean rating of students on the use of library course as an aid to their use of library reserve resources was 3.19. This is an indication that the students perceived the course as an aid to their use of library resources. The item by item mean ratings also demonstrates this perception as their mean ratings ranged from 3.05 to 3.36. However, gaining knowledge on why and how some resources are reserved had the highest mean rating ( $\bar{x}=3.36$ ) It also had more unanimity in the respondents' rating ( $SD=.65$ ) compared to the other items.

**NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library circulation section/resources.**

**Table 3:** Students' Mean Ratings of the Use of Library Course as an aid to Their Use of Library Circulation Section/Resources

<b>Use of Library Course has helped me to:</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1. Understand the term charging (loaning out) of library resources	3.29	.71	Agree
2. Understand term discharging (return of loaned materials)	3.25	.73	Agree
3. Know the rules guiding charging and discharging of library circulation resources	3.31	.70	Agree
4. Know the policy guiding book reservation	3.26	.70	Agree
5. Know the policy guiding fines (e.g on overdue & lost books). Payable by defaulters	3.25	.74	Agree
6. Know how "overdue notice" looks like	3.09	.80	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Rating: Aid to the Use of Circulation Resources</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Agree</b>

As shown in table 3, the overall mean rating of the use of library course as an aid to students use of library circulation section/resources was 3.24 while the mean ratings for the

six items ranged from 3.09 to 3.31. These are indications that the students perceive use of library course as an aid to their use of circulation section and circulation resources.

**NCE students' perceptions on use of library course as an aid to their use of library serials resources.**

**Table 4:** Students' Mean Ratings of the Use of Library Course as an aid to Their Use of Library Serials Section/Resources

<b>Use of Library Course has helped me to:</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1. Gain knowledge on serials management	3.27	.70	Agree
2. Enhance my academic knowledge of newspaper(s) usage	3.19	.71	Agree
3. Understand how to locate serial resources through the use of Kardex/ Kalamazoo	3.00	.85	Agree
4. Know the difference between the serials (e.g newspapers, magazines journals)	3.27	.71	Agree
5. Enhance my academic knowledge of journal	3.23	.75	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Rating: Aid to the Use of Serials Resources</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>.74</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data in table 4 shows that overall mean rating by students on the use of library course as an aid to their use of serials section or serials resources was 3.19. This shows that, on the average, the students perceived the course as an aid to the use of serials sections or serials resources. This same perception was seen across all the five items which represented the various aspects of serials section/resources. This is shown by their mean ratings which ranged from 3.00 to 3.27. However, the standard deviation scores show that the respondents appear less cohesive in their ratings of "understanding how to locate serial resources through the use of Kardex/Kalamazoo" (SD = .85) when compared with other aspects of the serials resources (SDs ranged from .70 - .75).

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The data collected indicated that NCE students were equally of the perception that the use of library course was an aid to their use of library reference materials. Scientific evidence exists and there is substantial belief that use of library course can aid students in their use of library reference materials. For example, Mohammadi, Moghaddam and Yeganeh (2008) reported that students' perception of impact (effects) of user education on the use of reference resources at the Islamic Azad University revealed that use of library course programme has significant effect on students' use of reference resources. Unfortunately, researchers have also revealed inconsistency on the positive effects of use of library course on students' use of library reference materials. Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) noted that the effect of use of library course on students at the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho in the use of reference resources and services was very minimal. Thus, they concluded that their result on reference resources use by students negates the usefulness of the library 101 (use of library course programme) as a course of study to students. Some of the selected results of Coleman (2010)'s post-test showed that the differences between the students who had received use of library course programme and those who had not were not large in general. Since usage of reference resources was not statistically significant, he concluded that it is discouraging because it implies that teaching of use of library course programme does not have much effect on students' use of reference resources compared to other library resources usage. Similarly, Budd (2009) showed that there was precipitous drop in reference transactions/resources use by students in recent

years irrespective of user education programme. Aderibigbe and Ajiboye (2013) studied 330 students of seven colleges that run postgraduate programme of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. These students noticed that use of library course programme had consequently not enhanced their use of reference resources electronically, neither had it influenced their positive perception of it on their use of library reference resources among others.

Students' use of library course in this study showed that the use of library course was also perceived by NCE students as aiding their use of library reserve. Studies showed that knowledge gained through use of library course has assisted students in no little measure in their utilization of library reserve services; particularly in placing print materials on reserve (Dickenson, 2006). The study of Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) provided great understanding of students' use of reserve resources after use of library course programme. According to them, students use some resources like books (circulation resources), newspapers (serials), and others, they don't use others such as reserve resources that include gazettes, thesis and dissertations after use of library course programme. The challenge posed by this problem can affect students' effective use of the reserve resources in the library. This implies that use of library course programme has not made its desired significant impact on students' use of library reserve resources which could lead to their poor perception of its positive effect on their use of reserve materials. However, Ogbuyi and Okpe (2013) who examined library material usage and services in four private universities after use of library course programme discovered that students had positive perception of the effect of use of library reserve resources.

Students' in this study noted that the use of library course was helpful in their use of library circulation resources. This finding was corroborated by Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) who found that use of library course services were perceived by students to have positive effect on the use of library circulation resources. Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) reported that students showed positive perception on effects of use of library course programme on their effective use of library circulation resources as well as its impact on their academic outcomes, noting that students were seen to receive instructions on how to find periodicals/serials and almost half of them wished to receive instructions on using electronic (ICT) resources on circulation in libraries. Nagata, Toda and Kytomaki (2009) revealed a positive correlation between library use course, benefits of library use and learning outcomes and that the library use course contribute to this relationship. Their findings disclosed that students generally perception use of library course very important. The use of library is highly beneficial to the students particularly in the use of library circulation resources leading to improved achievement of their educational outcomes. A substantial number of other studies have contributed to this idea, that the use of library course was helpful to students in their use of library circulation resources. For example, Akahimhe (2011) and Ogwu (2010) showed that a substantial proportion of respondents used in their study admitted that the course has influenced students' attitude to library circulation resources usage.

The study showed that the use of library course was perceived by NCE students to be an aid to their use of library/serials section /resources. The study of Thanuskodi (2011) on user awareness and use of online-based journals (serials) among students in Coimbatore found that students learned to use online journals (serials) due to their guidance from library staff via use of library course. Budd (2009) found that change in students' use of serials resources was attributed to user education performance. Tella, Owolabi and Altama (2009) examined students' use of the library. The study revealed that students could effectively use journal issues (serials resources) or the library after use of library course programme. Studies have equally revealed students' poor perception on the effect of use of library



course programme as an aid on students' use of library serials resources. Gunashera (2010) investigated students' usage of an academic library and found that the course has not influenced students in their using of bound (back issues) periodicals or serials.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- The findings of the study revealed that students' perceptions were positive in the use of library course as an aid to their use of library reference materials. However, information in the literature were conflicting as some showed positive effect on the use of library course fostering use of library reference materials while others concluded that use of library course cannot aid students in the use of library reference resources.
- Students used in the study reported that the use of library course can aid them in the use of library reserve. This implies that use of library course programme can make the desired impact on students' use of library reserve resources.
- The use of library course was also perceived or viewed by NCE students as helpful in their use of library circulation resources. Conversely students' perception on inter-library loan was negative as they felt that it will not have positive effect on their use of library circulation resources and services.
- The study showed that the use of library course was perceived by NCE students to be an aid to their use of library serials section/resources. Therefore, students could effectively use serials resources of the library after the use of library course programme.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study have formed the bedrock for the following recommendations:

1. Encouraging increased use of library course as a means of enhancing students' use of library reference resources such as thesaurus.
2. Improve students' knowledge on the use of reserve resources of the library through use of library course.
3. Students should be increasingly exposed to the use of circulation section or resources of the library through use of library course.
4. More emphasis should be laid on the use of Kardex/Kalamazoo to locate serial resources of the library during the use of library course instruction.

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