A TREND TOWARDS THE USE OF LIBRARY: A CASE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, ILARO

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Abstract

Information is an important aspect of human life, required to improve the literacy skills of any individual. The right information helps to create, recreate and shape the minds of people especially the younger ones. This information can be accessed in the library which is the store house and also an essential part of any academic institution. This paper presents a comprehensive case study focused on analyzing the number of students making use of library at The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. The study aims to provide insights into the trends of library utilization,. Data was collected through library records. The analysis reveals the preferred period which the students normally access the library. The findings suggest more awareness should be carried out.

Keywords: Information, Library, Students, Trend

Introduction

The school library is an essential part of any educational system and serves as a reservoir of knowledge, and a research hub, providing invaluable resources for students in their academic pursuits for intellectual growth. The school library can be define as an integral part of the school which houses a collection of a wide range of learning and teaching materials which are centrally arranged and indexed by a librarian to serve the readers(Benard &Dulle, 2014) The library is also the backbone that keeps academic institutions together as the success or stability of any academic institution is dependent on the library (Nwanekezie & Igbokwe, 2022) because it is the first port of call during any accreditation process. The library offer many resources which may be digital or physical. These resources includes ; books ,pamphlets, journals, magazines, newspapers, CD ROMs, maps, video and audio tapes, as well as photographs and paintings (Nwanekezie & Igbokwe, 2022) to supplement classroom learning.

Libraries nowadays are not just store houses of documents but a place where information can also be disseminated. The frequent output of scientific literature in various forms has created the need for readers to retrieve information from the vast complex of materials for their research (Bansal,2014). The library is linked to education, and education impacts social, political, economic, scientific, and technical changes as a result of being a social change agent (Daluba& Maxwell, 2013). The pivot on which the intellectual pursuits of tertiary institutions rest are academic libraries. Without academic libraries filled with pertinent information sources and staffed by qualified personnel, tertiary education will be lacking and mostly incomplete. Academic libraries are a powerful educational force that support each undergraduate student in meeting their obligations and pursuing personal growth (Dibua, 2000).

According to Pandey (as cited in Chaudhari,2018) the academic library provides the following aims and objectives:

• Supporting a high-quality academic setting for both teaching and research.

• Improve faculty research production by providing them with helpful information resources.

• Increasing the standard of education at all levels.

• Giving students the right direction and instruction to get them ready for further education.

• Providing resources for advanced research and study.

• Working together with other institutions to share information resources.

Most students cannot afford to buy the books needed in their various course of studies and to excel in their academic pursuit the library then becomes the only solution. The library serves as an intermediary between information seekers and the information sought by placing itself at the disposal of users to take advantage of its resources and services like lending in order to achieve their dreams. Thus, the library should become the rallying point for scholars and other categories of users for their information needs. For students and the academic community, the library thus becomes a dependable and reliable source of help and knowledge. (Odu, 2017).

The library is also valuable to teaching staff because it provide an enabling research environment and is therefore considered as the "heart" of an academic institution. However, it has been observed that most institutions library facilities is underutilize which is counterproductive to the goals and objectives of the library with regard to enhancing information access(Alokluk, 2020). Libraries are in a continuous state of change, shifting from their traditional roles of having library resources in analogue format to digital format in order to meet to the changing needs of users (Delaney & Bates, 2015) due to technological advancement.

Despite the modernization of library services, which include the development of vast online databases with a wealth of information to aid learning and research, recent trends shows that library services are under- utilized in most institutions of higher learning, thereby limiting the benefits that accrue from the use of the library(Alokluk, 2020) and it is also observed that students makes use of the library mostly during examination periods(Nkamnebe et al., 2014), Oyesiku and Oduwole as (cited in Nike Onifade et al., 2013). This kind of attitude can have a detrimental effects on their academic performance and overall learning experience.

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent of utilization of library resources and services by students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro library The specific objectives To assess the trend in library use pattern from 2020 to 2022 as an indicator of library patronage by the students.

Methodology

This study was conducted in the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and a descriptive study design was used for this study. The population of the study consisted of a total number of 142,012 students who registered in the library between the 2020 and 2022.The breakdown shows that 34,806 students were registered in the libary in 2020, 38,700 in 2021 and 68,506 in 2022.This population size consists of all the students from all departments in the federal polytechnic Ilaro. The library usage records were used for data collection and the statistics of users for each months of the year were assessed and analyzed within this period (2020-2022). This was to determine the trend in library use pattern within the same period.

The sample size are the student who used the Library which are 64,628.

Results

The finding on the library use pattern based on analysis of statistics from the library records from 2020 to 2022 is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Statistics of Students using the library from 2020-2022

YEAR			MONTH	NUMBER OF USERS			TOTAL NUMBE
2020	2021	2022	January	258	233	254	745
2020	2021	2022	February	1629	840	1779	428
2020	2021	2022	March	1999	5748	2848	1059
2020	2021	2022	April	N/A	1258	3637	489
2020	2021	2022	May	N/A	1350	2410	376
2020	2021	2022	June	N/A	3307	774	408
2020	2021	2022	July	N/A	3753	192	394
2020	2021	2022	August	N/A	1734	2358	409
2020	2021	2022	September	N/A	855	1388	224
2020	2021	2022	October	830	3783	3784	839
2020	2021	2022	November	1162	3528	3528	821
2020	2021	2022	December	4895	2257	2257	940

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		TOTAL		10773	28646	25209		6462

Source: The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Library
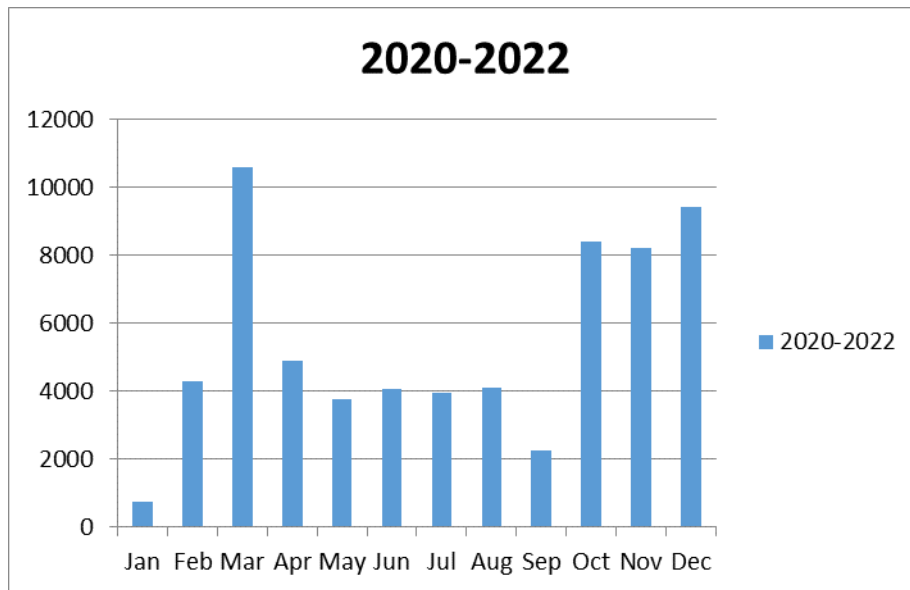*N/A: COVID 19 period

Fig. 1: Number of users at each month from 2020-2022

The result shows the number statistics of users for each month for the period of the study (2020-2022)

Table 2: Statistics of Students using the library Post Covid 2021-2022

YEAR		MONTH	NUMBER OF USERS		TOTAL NUMBER OF USERS
2021	2022	January	233	254	**487**
2021	2022	February	840	1779	**2619**
2021	2022	March	5748	2848	**8596**
2021	2022	April	1258	3637	**4895**
2021	2022	May	1350	2410	**3760**
2021	2022	June	3307	774	**4081**
2021	2022	July	3753	192	**3945**
2021	2022	August	1734	2358	**4092**
2021	2022	September	855	1388	**2243**
2021	2022	October	3783	3784	**7567**
2021	2022	November	3528	3528	**7056**
2021	2022	December	2257	2257	**4514**
TOTAL			**28646**	**25209**	**53855**

Source: The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Library

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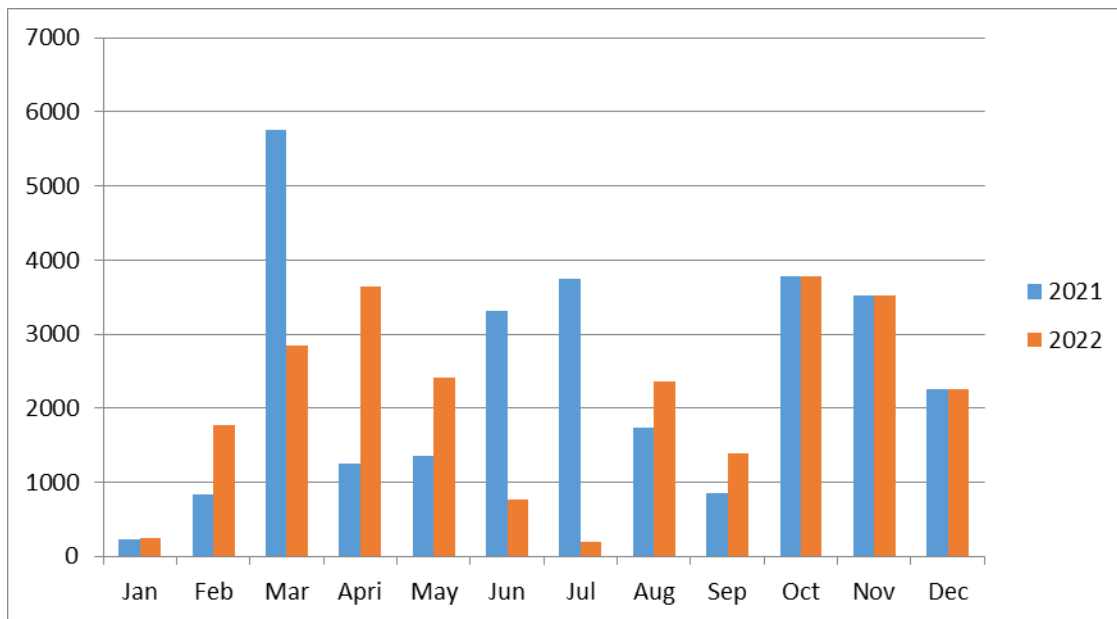
Fig. 2: Number of users for 2021& 2022

Table 3: The analysis of the statistics of registered users and users from 2020 to 2022

S/N	YEAR	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
1	Registered Users	34806	38700	68506	**142,012**
2	Number of Users	10773	28646	25209	**64628**
3	Percentage of Users	30.95	74.02	36.79	**45.51**

4. DISCUSSION

The finding investigates the status of registered library users and the frequency of their use of library. The research indicates that the number of registered users that uses the library is low within the period covered (45.51%).This result support that of Abdulgani et al., (2016)), whose findings shows that 93% of third year students studies in the library during exam days while 85.7% studies in the library during non- exam days while the figures for first year were 67% for exam days and 63.3% for non- exam days. For the second year students it was 58% during exam days and 56.% for non- exam days. The level of usage of library dropped drastically during the months of September and most especially January and rising between the months of March, October, November and December as seen in Fig.1 and 2. The above analysis clearly shows that the students mostly access the library prior to their examination period (first and second semester) or during the examination period, with a relative decline afterward.From personal interaction,it was discovered that most of the students from the East campus end of the Institution found it hard to

come to the Library due to the distance. From the results when comparing the post COVID period i.e 2021 and 2022 it shows a decline of 3437 users in 2022. The increase in the number of students may not be unconnected with the fact to catch up with lost time due to the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted almost every activity around the world.

Conclusion

This study found out that students mostly access the library prior and during the examination period showing some kind of apathy towards the use of the library facilities. They were satisfied with the quality of some resources, particularly books available to them but the distance between the East campus and the West campus where the library is located is far for them. However, information literacy programmes should be conducted from time to time to remind students about the essence of using the library and they should also be encouraged to put their suggestions regarding what could be done to improve library services in the suggestion box in the library. The internet connection should be improved to ensure that student have good access to digital information.

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