

An Investigation into the Utilization of Information Resources by Inmates of Correctional Centres in Delta State Nigeria

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Abstract

The study probed the utilisation of information resources by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State. The descriptive survey was used, and the multi-sampling techniques were utilised to select the sample size of 341 respondents out of a population of 2,821 respondents. Five correctional centres in Delta State Nigeria were studied namely the correctional centres in Agbor, Kwale, Ogwashi-Uku, Sapele, and Warri. A research-developed instrument was employed for collection of data which was content validated by three experts in the Library and Information Science, and Measurement and Evaluation departments, of Delta State University, Abraka. A test re-test reliability was ascertained with a coefficient of 0.85. Data collected were analysed using mean frequencies and simple percentages. The finding showed that religious books, dictionaries, and inspirational materials were among the resources utilised by inmates, though they were lowly utilised. They were also helpful in building their spiritual lives as they were incarcerated. The study, therefore, recommended that programmes that will help them use the library should be introduced.

Keywords: Availability; Inmates; Correctional Centres; Utilization; Information Resources; Library Science.

Introduction

Libraries are symbols of unity, power and are called homes where information and its resources are gathered, processed, organized, stored, retrieved, disseminated, and utilized by anyone who requires and wants information. In developed societies, there is a strong nexus between libraries and society. A strong society embraces all the inhabitants of the area and among them are prisoners.

Prisoners are citizens who have been confined to a particular place, and they are parts of the society, not minding they are confined. So as citizens, they also need information that can be gotten through information resources. In Nigeria, they (prisoners) are confined to prisons which are called correctional centres. They are also known as detention centres and remand centres. Larson (2017) described these correctional centres as "that place that people are remanded legally for a committed crime". The essence is to put them away from society for a particular period.

But in modern societies, correctional and not punitive measures have been adopted through the provisions of programmes in their confinement like libraries. Thus correctional centre libraries can be described as special libraries because they are reserved exclusively for users operating within the specialized organisations (Obi, 2018). The major users are inmates who are the occupants of the correctional facilities.

Statement of Problem

Modern correctional centres have instituted education among other strategies for installing morality on their inmates. One way they have done this is through the introduction of libraries in their facilities. These libraries are set up to make available adequate information resources to the inmates which will help in rehabilitating them. These resources if utilized will also help in reintegrating them back into the society, and this will help them to become self-reliant, productive, and law-abiding. To achieve these reformation processes, the inmates of these correctional centres need better provisions of information, which can help them make choices and take better decisions for their personal development. This study is therefore set to investigate the utilization of information resources by inmates, in correctional centres in Delta State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study is set to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify the information resources available for inmates at correctional centres in Delta State, Nigeria;
- Ascertain how frequent the inmates of the correctional centres in Delta State Nigeria utilize the available information resources.
- Investigate the reasons for the utilisation of information resources by inmates of correctional centre in Delta State, Nigeria;
- Highlight the relationship between the availability and the utilisation of information resources by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

These research questions helped to guide the study:

- What are the information resources available for inmates at correctional centres in Delta State Nigeria?
- How frequently do the inmates of correctional centres in Delta State Nigeria utilize the available information resources?
- What are the reasons for the utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between availability and utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

The conceptual framework for this research was structured in line with the theory of human attitude, developed by Allport and Osgood (1936) and it posits that predispositions are a function of one's attitude for attitude makes people act or react in particular ways in the face of particular situations because behaviours are products of attitudes. This theory is therefore adequate for this research because the utilisation of libraries by the inmates of correctional centres is largely affected by their perception of them.

Generally, libraries are charged with information provisions. However, in correctional institutions, attention is focused on inmates. Popoola and Haliso (2009) described information resources as materials bearing information like textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers, magazines, while the electronic format is compact disc read-only memory CD ROM, databases, internet. Obaro (2017) sees them as materials carrying information in diverse forms. She goes on to opine that they are either in print or electronic formats. These views are also supported by Popoola and Haliso (2009) and Pesehens (2011) in their studies. They went ahead to outline illustrated books, comics, dictionaries, encyclopedias, serials, fiction, and non-fiction as information materials found in correctional institutions.

Also, Eze and Dike (2014) in their studies on prison libraries and facilities in Eastern Nigeria established that though there are libraries in the correctional centres, their sources of information were

grossly inadequate considering the number of inmates in prisons being served. These are the same views as Ibikunle (2015) Gbashima, Akpe, and Lorfa (2016).

Utilisation by Hornby (2006) is the ability to use available materials and services at one's disposal. Ibikunle (2015) opined in her study that books, newspapers, and dictionaries were utilized by inmates in the North Central State of Nigeria. Gbashima, Akpe, and Lorfa (2016) in their study on Makurdi prisons Benue State, Nigeria reported that the utilisation of sources of information among inmates is disturbingly low as it had a weighted mean of 1.22 → 2.00.

Similarly, Afolabi and Afolabi (2019) reported in their investigations that the frequently used resources by inmates are newspapers, textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and atlases.

The relevance of information resources utilisation in correctional centres cannot be overemphasized. Both Dike (2002) and Obaro (2017) agree that utilisation of sources of information by inmates has a direct and positive influence on their future behaviours.

The sources of information will open the inmates' minds to diverse opportunities in life, support their educational, recreational, and rehabilitative programmes. It will also help them engage in self-directed pursuits. (Lehmann and Locke 2005, Hopkins and Kendall 2017, Obaro, 2017).

Methodology

The correlational type of quantitative research design was employed in the research work. The population of the study was 2,821 inmates and 14 library assistants (welfare officers) of the five (5) correctional centres in Delta State, Nigerianamely: Correctional Centers Agbor, Kwale, Ogwashi-Uku, Sapele, and Warri. A total sample of 341 respondents were chosen in accordance with the recommendations of Krejice and Morgan (1970) which states that a sample size of 341 can be taken on a population of 3,050. The sample size were all eligible library users because the researcher went through the files of the respondents and found out that they were all literates.

This is illustrated thus:

S/N	Names of correctional Institutional center	Population of inmates	Sample
1.	Correctional center Agbor, Delta	327	40
2	Correctional centre Kwale, Delta State	279	34
3	Correctional centreOgwashi-uku, Delta State	666	80
4	Correctional centre Sapele, Delta State	312	38
5	Correctional centre Warri, Delta State	1,237	149
	Total	2,821	341

The multi-sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Utilisation of Sources of Information by Inmates of Correctional Centres(USIICC).

The instrument (questionnaire) used for this research work was divided into two sections. Section A dealt with the biodata of the respondents, whereas section B dealt with questions related to the study. Section B is further divided into 4 parts. Part one (1) was on the available forms of sources of information structured on 2 point scale available and not available. Part two (2) was structured using a likert-type four-point rating scale ranging from highly frequent (4) frequent (3) Never frequent (2) Highly never frequent (1) The part three (3) had the dichotomous rating scale of agree 2 points and disagree 1 point.

Face validity was done by two professors in the Department of Library and Information science, and one professor from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, all in Delta State University, Abraka.

The reliability was determined by a test-retest method and an index of 0.85, 0.88, and 0.82 were obtained to show its reliability as supported by Strauss, Sherman, and Spreen (2006) who opined that the magnitude of co-efficient to denote reliability of a research instrument should be between 0.70 and 0.90.

The instrument (questionnaire)were administered by the researcher, their research assistants, and the welfare officers of the prison over 5 weeks. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics,Mean, frequencies and simple percentages were used to analyse the data

received for the research questions and Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis

A total copies of 341 questionnaire were distributed. 305 (89%) were returned. This response rate was accepted because the standard and adequate response rate for most studies is 60%.

Questionnaire Response Rate

Number of Questionnaire administered	Number of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
341	305	92%

Sex of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Males	258	84.6
Females	47	15.4
Total	305	100.00

Highest Educational Qualification of the Respondents

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
a.	First school leaving certificate	120	39.34
b.	West African School Certificate General Certificate of Education WASC/GCE	98	32.13
c.	Ordinary national Diploma/ Nigeria Certificate in Education, OND/NCE	40	13.11
d.	Higher National Diploma/Bachelors degree	37	12.13
e.	Masters and Ph.D. degrees	10	3.29

From the data collected it is evident the males respondents were more compared to their female counterparts in correctional institutions. Also, holders of First School Leaving Certificate, West African School Certificates and the G.C.CO'level were more dominant in the correctional centres compared to those with other qualifications.

Testing of the Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant relationship between the availability and utilization of information resources by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State, Nigeria.

Relationship Between Availability and Utilization of Information Resources by Inmates of Correctional Centres

			Availability of Information Resources	Utilization of Information Resources
Availability of Information Resources	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.132
	N		305	305
Utilization of Information Resources	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	.132	1
	N		305	305

From the table, the Pearson correlation coefficient is $r(0312)$. The significant value (sig. 2 tailed) is 0.021 which is greater than 0.05. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the availability of information resources and their utilization by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected implying that an increase/decrease in the availability of information resources will lead to a corresponding increase/decrease in the utilization of information resources by correctional centres inmates.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the different types of information resources available in correctional centres in Delta State?

Types of information resources available in correctional centres

Types of Information Resources	Available		Not available		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Dictionary	276	90.5	29	9.5	305	100%
Encyclopedia	64	21.0	241	79.0	305	100%
Bibliography	82	26.9	223	73.1	305	100%
Handbook/manual	267	87.5	38	12.5	305	100%
Novel	270	88.5	35	11.5	305	100%
Newspaper	290	95.1	15	4.9	305	100%
Newsletter	246	80.7	59	19.3	305	100%
Journal	234	76.7	71	23.3	305	100%
Bulletin	256	83.9	49	16.1	305	100%
Maps &atlass	256	83.9	49	16.1	305	100%
Textbooks	286	93.8	19	6.2	305	100%
Magazines	296	97.0	9	3.0	305	100%
Religious books	300	98.4	5	1.6	305	100%
Inspirational books	284	93.1	21	6.9	305	100%
Directory	83	27.2	222	72.8	305	100%
Gazetteer	73	23.9	232	76.1	305	100%
Globe	162	53.1	143	46.9	305	100%
Biography	204	66.9	101	33.1	305	100%
Audio cassette	34	11.1	271	88.9	305	100%
Video cassette	22	7.2	283	92.8	305	100%
Poster	191	62.6	114	37.4	305	100%
Charts	196	64.3	109	35.7	305	100%
CD Rom	11	3.6	294	96.4	305	100%
OPAC	4	1.3	301	98.7%	305	100%

Source: Field survey 2021

The collected data showed religious books, magazines, inspirational books, newspapers, dictionaries, novels as the most available information resources in a correctional institution in Delta State.

Research Question 2

How frequently do inmates of these correctional centres utilize the available information resources?

Inmates use of sources of information in correctional centres N= 305

Types of information resources	Highly frequent	Frequent	Never frequent	Highly never frequent	Mean
Dictionary	70	84	113	38	2.61
Encyclopedia	20	39	177	69	2.03
Bibliography	22	58	170	55	2.15
Handbook and manual	36	89	137	43	2.39
Novel	50	102	121	31	2.57

Newspaper	65	99	111	29	2.67
Newsletter	33	87	148	37	2.38
Journal	17	76	163	49	2.20
Bulletin	30	77	150	48	2.29
Maps &Atlas	21	62	176	46	2.19
Textbooks	75	93	108	29	2.70
Magazines	90	111	78	26	2.87
Religious books	104	93	80	28	2.90
Inspirational books	85	105	86	29	2.81
Directory	15	45	186	59	2.05
Gazetteer	2	35	209	59	1.93
Globe	9	36	191	69	1.95
Biography	14	41	169	81	1.96
Audio cassette	10	5	192	98	1.76
Video cassette	2	9	186	108	1.69
Film and slides	1	11	175	118	1.66
Poster	20	47	168	70	2.06
Charts	16	47	174	68	2.04
CD Rom	1	4	181	119	1.63
Aggregate			Mean		2.19
Criterion Mean					2.50

The research work revealed the religious books magazines, inspirational books, textbooks, newspapers, and novels as the most frequently used information resources.

Research question 3

What are the reasons for the use of sources of information by inmates in correctional centres?

Reasons for the use of sources of information in correctional centres

Reasons for the use of information resources in correctional centers	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
To learn about the happening outside the correctional centre	179	58.7	126	41.3	305	100.0
To learn about legal aid	107	35.1	198	64.9	305	100.0
To read and acquire useful employable skills	205	67.2	100	32.8	305	100.0
To build my spiritual and moral life	174	57.0	131	43.0	305	100.0
To know more about my rights as a prisoner	120	39.3	185	60.7	305	100.0
To develop my reading skills	159	52.1	146	47.9	305	100.0
To relax	213	69.8	92	30.2	305	100.0
To improve myself to be a better person	212	69.5	93	30.5	305	100.0

The table showed relaxation, improving oneself, reading to acquire useful employable skills, learning about happenings outside the correctional centres, building up their spiritual, moral life, and reading skills as among the reasons why inmates utilise the available sources of information in correctional centres.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed the types of information resources available in correctional centres libraries as religious books, magazines inspirational books, newspapers, dictionaries, novels, and other forms of resources. This finding correlates with Glenor (2012) findings which indicated that correctional centre libraries collections should include dictionaries legal databases, fiction and nonfiction books, newspapers, and magazines. Afolabi and Afolabi (2019) also reaffirmed this claim.

Similarly, the data also showed low utilization of the information materials by inmates as the aggregate mean of 2.19 is lower than the criterion mean of 2.50. Nevertheless, inspirational books,

magazines, textbooks, religious books, newspapers, novels, and dictionaries were shown to be more frequently utilized. These findings correlates with the findings of Ibukunle, (2015) who reported in her study on north-central states of Nigerian prisons that inmates utilized books, newspapers, dictionaries while the other resources were at low utilization, Emasealu (2017) also in his survey concluded that information resources among inmates in Nigeria prison is disturbingly low.

Also from the study, it was found out that relaxation, improving of oneself, reading to acquire useful employable skills learning about happenings outside the correctional centres, building up of spiritual-moral lives and reading skills are some of the reasons for the utilization of the information resources. The views are in support of Obaro (2017) who opined that because inmates of correctional centres are incarcerated, there is the need to keep them busy with light reading materials to avoid boredom. Similarly, Obi (2018) also had the views that the incarceration time for most inmates are times of reflection and so they need materials like religious books and inspirational materials that can help them reflect and think critically so as to be better persons when they are out.

Also, there is a significant relationship between the availability of information resources and their utilization by inmates of correctional centres in Delta State. Obaro(2017) has the views that information resources have to be available before they are utilized. She continued when she wrote that if they are not available then what will the inmates utilize.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that inmates of correctional centres need information resources to improve themselves so that when they come out from their incarcerations, they will be better citizens. The study concludes that the information resources available in correctional centres in Delta State are novels, religious and inspirational books, dictionaries, magazines, newspapers, textbooks. Though they are available their utilization is low.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

- Inmates in Delta correctional centres should be encouraged to use the library.
- They should also be assisted in using the library effectively
- Both the federal government of Nigeria and the staff of correctional centres should introduce programmes that can motivate the inmates to use the library information resources.
- Non-print resources and the digitalization of their libraries should be carried out by the government
- The importance of reading, libraries, and information resources should be inculcated to motivate them to read.

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