Journal of Library and Information Science
https://doi.org/10.17509/edulib.v16i1.98446

Attitudes of Undergraduate Students Toward the Use of Library Information Resources: A Case of Two Universities in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study addresses the underutilization of library resources driven by negative user perceptions among higher education students. The purpose of this research was to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate students toward the use of library information resources at two universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. Adopting a multi-stage sampling technique, a structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from a sample of 379 undergraduates, yielding 353 usable responses for analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression. The results and discussion revealed that undergraduates generally held negative attitudes toward library resources (mean = 3.38), with physical books being the most frequently used material on a weekly basis. OLS regression indicated a significant positive relationship between positive attitudes and the hours spent utilizing library assets (coefficient = 0.1778), while final-year status and specific academic programs significantly influenced library engagement. In conclusion, fostering positive attitudes is essential to maximizing resource utilization. Stakeholders must upgrade library facilities, update obsolete materials, and implement robust information literacy training to enhance student engagement.

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Article History:
Submitted/Received 30 Mar 2026
First Revised 07 Mar 2026
Accepted 04 Apr 2026
First Available Online 28 Apr 2026
Publication Date 1 May 2026

Keywords:
Attitudes, library information resources, Nigeria, undergraduate students, universities

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INTRODUCTION

University libraries play an essential role in supporting teaching, learning, and research by providing access to information resources that meet students' academic needs. Library information resources (LIRs) encompass materials collected, organized, preserved, and disseminated to facilitate information access and knowledge development. These resources generally comprise print and non-print materials, including books, journals, reference materials, and electronic information resources. However, the availability of library resources does not necessarily ensure their effective utilization.

Students must recognize the relevance of available resources and demonstrate a willingness to use them for academic purposes. Evidence from Nigerian universities suggests that library resource utilization is associated with undergraduate academic performance, highlighting the importance of promoting meaningful access and use

(Adeagbo & Mabawonku, 2020).The utilization of LIRs refers to the extent to which students access and employ available information materials to accomplish learning and research objectives. In the broader context of information technology, utilization involves adopting and applying information and communication technologies to support academic activities. Similarly, resource utilization encompasses the purposeful use of available materials for educational and research purposes.

An important dimension of utilization is frequency of use, which reflects how regularly students access library resources over specific periods, including daily, weekly, or monthly intervals (Bankole et al., 2024; Idubor, 2015). Regular library use has been associated with opportunities for expanding knowledge and supporting academic development (Ishola & Obadare, 2014). Nevertheless, frequency alone may not fully capture the educational value of library use, as patterns of engagement may differ according to students' learning needs and academic circumstances. Recent research has similarly emphasized the importance of examining students' reasons for library use and their perceptions of its contribution to learning (Scoulas & De Groote, 2022).

Beyond resource availability and accessibility, students' attitudes constitute an important factor in understanding LIR utilization. Attitudes reflect individuals' beliefs, perceptions, and evaluative responses toward particular resources or activities, potentially influencing their willingness to engage with library services (Ukachi et al., 2014). They may encompass positive or negative evaluations, emotional responses, and behavioral dispositions toward using information resources. Consequently, students who perceive library resources as relevant, accessible, and beneficial may demonstrate greater willingness to use them, whereas unfavorable perceptions may discourage engagement. However, the relationship between attitudes and actual utilization should be examined empirically rather than assumed to be uniform across individuals and institutional settings.

Previous studies have documented the importance of favorable attitudes toward library resources. Research involving students at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, indicated that perceived benefits were associated with positive attitudes toward electronic information resources and their utilization (Sivathaasan et al., 2014). Studies conducted in Nigerian universities similarly reported favorable undergraduate attitudes toward library resources, while other investigations identified positive student perceptions of library resource utilization (Alokluk, 2020). More recent evidence further suggests that attitudes are relevant to the use of electronic information resources among university students. Research on electronic textbook adoption also demonstrates the importance of students' expectations, perceived usefulness, and preferences in shaping their responses to digital academic materials (Su, 2022). These findings indicate that attitudes toward library resources may reflect both individual perceptions and the characteristics of available information services.

Nevertheless, favorable attitudes are not consistently observed across institutional contexts. Negative perceptions of library resources have been reported among students in Nigerian educational institutions (Okeke, 2017), while research involving Chinese university students demonstrated differences in how electronic books were used, including their use for leisure activities (Wang & Bai, 2016). Other studies suggest that unfavorable attitudes may contribute to limited engagement with electronic information resources among undergraduates. These findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between students' access to resources, their perceptions of those resources, and their actual usage

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behavior. Research on continued use of online library resources in Indonesia further indicates that satisfaction and perceived enjoyment are associated with students' intentions to continue using digital library services (Ramadhan et al., 2022).

Institutional conditions may also shape students' attitudes and utilization patterns. The relevance, currency, adequacy, quality, and diversity of library collections are important considerations because students may be reluctant to use resources that fail to address their academic needs. Research involving undergraduate law students in southeastern Nigeria identified outdated materials as a factor associated with unfavorable attitudes toward law library resources (Okeji & Agbanu, 2020). Similarly, inadequate or outdated collections have been linked to dissatisfaction and reduced utilization (Michael & Olayemi, 2023). Consequently, negative attitudes should not necessarily be interpreted solely as individual dispositions; they may also reflect students' experiences with the availability, relevance, and quality of institutional information resources.

Although existing studies provide evidence concerning students' attitudes and library resource utilization, their findings vary across resource types, institutional environments, and student populations. Some investigations report favorable attitudes and perceived academic benefits, whereas others identify negative perceptions, inadequate collections, and limited utilization. Moreover, occasional library use, particularly during examination periods, raises questions about whether students engage consistently with available resources throughout their academic activities. These differences underscore the need for institution-specific evidence examining how students perceive and utilize LIRs. Understanding these relationships is particularly relevant to Nigerian universities, where effective resource provision must be accompanied by sustained and purposeful student engagement.

Accordingly, this study investigates undergraduate students' attitudes toward the use of library information resources at Lead City University and the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. By examining attitudes within these two institutional contexts, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the understanding of undergraduate library resource utilization and provide insights that may inform collection development, resource accessibility, user education, and strategies for encouraging more effective library use.

METHODS

Study Population and Sampling Procedure

The study population comprised 19,430 undergraduate students from the University of Ibadan (15,158) and Lead City University (4,272), both located in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Population data were obtained from the Management Information Systems Unit of the University of Ibadan and the Academic Planning Unit of Lead City University. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. First, three faculties represented in both universities were purposively selected. Second, all departments within these faculties were identified. Third, six departments were randomly selected from each university, yielding 12 departments. Finally, 5% of students within each selected department were randomly sampled, producing an initial sample of 379 students, comprising 337 from the University of Ibadan and 42 from Lead City University. Of these, 353 completed questionnaires were retained for analysis.

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Data Collection and Study Variables

Data were collected through a questionnaire examining undergraduate students' attitudes toward and utilization of library information resources (LIRs). Of the 379 sampled students, 353 provided complete questionnaires and were included in the analysis. The questionnaire covered demographic and academic characteristics, including age, sex, course of study, residency status, study level, and monthly allowance. Information on LIR utilization included the type of resources used, internet usage, previous training in accessing LIRs, and patterns of resource use. Students' attitudes were examined in relation to LIR utilization, including the time spent using library resources during an academic semester.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and LIR utilization patterns. Multivariable regression was used to examine the association between students' attitudes and time spent using LIRs, accounting for selected demographic and academic characteristics. The reported regression results included robust standard errors. Pearson's chi-square tests were used to examine associations between students' attitudes and the location and purpose of LIR utilization. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 353 completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. Table 1 presents respondents' demographic and academic characteristics, including age, sex, course of study, residency status, study level, and monthly allowance. Most respondents were aged 21–24 years (60.05%), with a mean age of 22.29 years (SD = 2.35). Female students accounted for 181 respondents (51.27%), while 172 were male. Chemistry represented the largest course-of-study category (22.95%), followed by sociology (18.98%) and guidance and counseling (16.15%). More than half of the respondents lived off-campus (54.96%), and the largest proportion were second-year students at the 200 level (43.06%). Regarding monthly allowance, 52.41% reported receiving ₦10,000–₦19,000, with a reported mean of ₦15,155.81 (SD = ₦8,116.42).

Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
Below 21	82	23.23
21–24	212	60.05
Above 24	59	16.72
Mean (SD)	22.29 (2.35)	
Sex		
Female	181	51.27
Male	172	48.93
Course of study		
Educational management	52	14.73

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Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Guidance and counseling	57	16.15
Chemistry	81	22.95
Physics	40	11.33
Psychology	56	15.86
Sociology	67	18.98
Residency status		
Off-campus	194	54.96
On-campus	159	45.04
Study level		
200	152	43.06
300	122	34.56
400	79	22.38
Monthly allowance (₦)		
Below 10,000	64	18.13
10,000–19,000	185	52.41
20,000–29,000	73	20.68
Above 29,000	31	8.78
Mean (SD)	15,155.81 (8,116.42)	
Internet-use hours for LIRs		
Below 10	239	67.71
10–19	77	21.81
20–29	25	7.08
Above 29	12	3.40
Mean (SD), as reported	86.879 (92.845)	
Type of library resources		
Print	159	45.04
Non-print	194	54.96
Previous LIR-use training		
No	217	61.47
Yes	136	38.53

Patterns of Library Information Resource Utilization

Regarding library information resource (LIR) utilization, 67.71% of respondents reported spending fewer than 10 hours accessing LIRs through the internet during the reported measurement period. Non-print resources accounted for 54.96% of the reported resource-use categories, compared with 45.04% for print resources. Furthermore, 61.47% of respondents had not received previous training in LIR utilization, whereas 38.53% reported having received such training.These findings indicate differences in reported resource-use categories, internet-access duration, and previous training exposure among the surveyed undergraduates.

Reported Associations Between Students' Attitudes and LIR Utilization

Table 2 presents the regression results examining the relationship between students' attitudes and library information resource (LIR) utilization. Students' attitudes showed a positive coefficient (b = 0.1778, robust SE = 0.0390), as did enrollment at the 400 level compared with the 200 level (b = 0.1414, robust SE = 0.0639). Meanwhile, age, sex, 300-level status, and monthly allowance were not statistically significant at the 5% level.

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Table 2

Reported Regression Estimates for Library Information Resource Utilization

Variable	Coefficient	Robust SE	Reported z	Reported p
Age	0.0092	0.0107	0.85	.394
Sex	−0.0080	0.0392	−0.20	.838
300 level	0.0475	0.0475	1.00	.318
400 level	0.1414	0.0639	2.21	.024
Monthly allowance	0.0027	0.0027	0.55	.584
Attitudes	0.1778	0.0390	4.44	< .001
Constant	33.453	0.2381	14.05	< .001

Relationships Between Students' Attitudes and LIR Utilization Characteristics

The relationship between students' attitudes and library information resource (LIR) utilization was examined using Pearson's chi-square test. As presented in Table 3, statistically significant associations were found between students' attitudes and both the location of LIR use ($\chi^2 = 66.193$, $p = .010$) and the purpose of LIR use ($\chi^2 = 73.805$, $p = .017$). These findings suggest that students' attitudes are associated with where and for what purposes they utilize library resources.

Table 3

Associations Between Students' Attitudes and LIR Utilization Characteristics

Utilization characteristic	Reported Pearson χ^2	Reported p
Location of use	66.193	.010
Purpose of use	73.805	.017

Discussion

Undergraduate Characteristics and Patterns of Library Resource Use

The findings highlight the relevance of demographic and academic characteristics in understanding undergraduate library resource utilization. Differences in institutional representation and gender composition are consistent with previous research involving Nigerian university students. However, these characteristics should be interpreted within the sampling context rather than as evidence of broader demographic patterns. The findings suggest that undergraduate library use should be examined in relation to students' academic circumstances and institutional environments.

Academic level and disciplinary background may further contribute to differences in resource utilization. Previous studies have identified variations in library engagement across undergraduate study levels and academic programs (Bankole et al., 2015; Scoulas & De Groote, 2022; Scoulas et al., 2024). Similarly, information literacy competencies may develop differently throughout undergraduate education, indicating that academic progression does not necessarily correspond to greater information proficiency (LeMire et al., 2024). These considerations underscore the importance of accounting for students' academic characteristics when examining patterns of library engagement.

Resource Preferences, Accessibility, and Digital Engagement

The findings indicate the growing relevance of non-print resources in undergraduate information-seeking activities, consistent with previous studies documenting students' engagement with electronic library materials (Bassey & Odu, 2015; Dukić & Strišković,

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2015). Nevertheless, greater reported use of digital resources should not automatically be interpreted as dissatisfaction with print collections. Resource selection may reflect perceived usefulness, accessibility, and format-related preferences (Nahotko & Deja, 2024; Su, 2022). Moreover, continued engagement with online library services is associated with satisfaction and perceived service benefits, emphasizing the importance of user-centered digital resource provision (Ramadhan et al., 2022).

Accessibility also remains an important consideration, particularly for students residing outside university campuses. Distance from library facilities may constrain resource utilization, while differences in access conditions can shape engagement with physical and digital services (Hayelom, 2014; Scoulas, 2022). Research involving Nigerian university students further emphasizes the relevance of digital accessibility, perceived usefulness, and information-seeking preferences in library engagement (Ajisebutu et al., 2024; Oyighan et al., 2025; Sulaiman et al., 2025). Although these factors provide plausible explanations for variations in resource use, their direct effects were not established in the present study.

Information Literacy Training and Institutional Support

The findings identify limited exposure to library information resource (LIR) training as an important consideration for institutional support. Although previous training participation does not necessarily indicate students' actual information literacy competencies, opportunities for structured instruction may strengthen resource discovery and effective information use. Research suggests that library instruction can improve students' confidence, awareness, and information-seeking competencies (Miller et al., 2023). Similarly, online tutorials and curriculum-integrated approaches offer opportunities to provide accessible and context-sensitive information literacy support (Bernard, 2024; Franklin et al., 2021).

These findings suggest that institutional strategies should extend beyond resource provision to include the development of information literacy competencies. Research emphasizes the importance of assessing students' learning needs, prior knowledge, motivation, and information-processing abilities when designing educational interventions (Bogchelman et al., 2025; Pinto et al., 2024). Integrating information literacy into undergraduate curricula may further support sustained competency development (Howard et al., 2025). In addition, user-oriented digital applications can facilitate access to information resources through improved usability and retrieval functions (Susilana et al., 2022). Accordingly, targeted information literacy training represents a potential institutional response, although its effectiveness in improving LIR utilization requires empirical evaluation.

Students' Attitudes and Library Resource Utilization

The findings suggest a positive association between undergraduate students' attitudes and LIR utilization, indicating that favorable perceptions may accompany greater engagement with available resources. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing the relevance of students' perceptions, information needs, and academic experiences in shaping library use (Adeagbo & Mabawonku, 2020; Scoulas et al., 2024). Differences associated with academic progression may also reflect changing information requirements, particularly as students undertake more advanced coursework and research

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activities (Okwaraji et al., 2015). Nevertheless, these relationships should be interpreted as associations rather than evidence that attitudes directly determine utilization.

Disciplinary differences represent another consideration in understanding undergraduate engagement with library resources. Previous studies have suggested that academic programs and disciplinary requirements may influence information-seeking behavior and library use (Unuabor & Oseghale, 2018; Whitmire, 2001). Variations in research assignments, practical activities, and learning expectations may contribute to different patterns of resource utilization. However, the available evidence does not support definitive conclusions about the relative influence of individual academic disciplines. Overall, the findings reinforce the importance of examining students' attitudes alongside academic and institutional characteristics when investigating LIR utilization.

Attitudes, Utilization Contexts, and Practical Implications

The findings suggest that undergraduate students' attitudes are associated with the location and purpose of LIR utilization. These relationships indicate that attitudes may be relevant to students' decisions concerning where and how library resources are accessed for academic activities. Nevertheless, the observed associations do not establish their direction, strength, or causal mechanisms. Further investigation is therefore necessary to understand how attitudinal characteristics interact with accessibility, academic requirements, and individual information-seeking practices.

From an institutional perspective, the findings highlight the importance of improving resource accessibility, maintaining relevant collections, strengthening digital service usability, and providing targeted information literacy support. Such initiatives should respond to students' needs and be evaluated using complementary behavioral and user-centered indicators. Previous research emphasizes the importance of multidimensional approaches to assessing student engagement while considering institutional differences and responsible data practices (Scoulas et al., 2025). Future research should examine whether improvements in students' attitudes, information competencies, and resource accessibility are associated with sustained LIR utilization across different university environments.

CONCLUSION

This study examined undergraduate students' attitudes toward the utilization of LIRs at the University of Ibadan and Lead City University, Nigeria. The findings suggest a positive association between students' attitudes and LIR utilization, highlighting the relevance of favorable perceptions in understanding students' engagement with library resources. Academic characteristics, particularly study level, were also associated with resource utilization. Furthermore, non-print resources were more frequently reported than print resources, while most respondents had not received previous training in LIR utilization. These findings underscore the importance of considering students' attitudes, academic needs, resource accessibility, and information literacy support when developing university library services.

The study is limited by its focus on two universities, reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, and cross-sectional design, which restrict causal interpretation and broader generalizability. Nevertheless, the findings offer practical insights for improving library resource utilization through updated and accessible collections, user-oriented

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digital services, and targeted information literacy training. University libraries should also consider differences in academic requirements when designing services that support students across disciplines and study levels. Future research should examine these relationships across more diverse institutional contexts and evaluate whether improvements in resource accessibility, user training, and students' perceptions contribute to sustained library engagement.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the University of Ibadan and Lead City University, Oyo State, Nigeria, for facilitating this study. Special appreciation is extended to the participating undergraduate students for their contributions to the data collection process.

Declaration of AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Grammarly for language editing and proofreading. The authors reviewed and verified the content and take full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final version of the manuscript.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Author contributions statement

BDS: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing – original draft. OAJ: Investigation, data curation, validation, writing – review & editing. OOA: Conceptualization, methodology, supervision, writing – review & editing.

Conflict of interest statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

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