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QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURE IN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES OF TERTIARY DISTANCE EDUCATION ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on Quality Assurance Measure in Student Support Services of Tertiary Distance Education Enugu State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 4822 comprising 309 facilitators and 4513 learners. 482 respondents were selected as the sample for the study using simple random sampling technique. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was face and content validated, and trial tested. Overall reliability coefficient of 0.83 was generated using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Tool. Data collected were analysed using Mean and Standard deviation to analyse research questions one to four. T-test was also used to test hypothesis one to four. Finding from the study revealed that the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education was high. Also, the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education was high. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made, among which is that the administrators of tertiary distance education should continue to provide regular training and professional development opportunities for library personnel. This can include staying updated on the latest technological advancements, online research techniques, and instructional methodologies to further enhance the quality of services. Also, the chief librarians should maintain a high quality of library collections and access to materials while also considering continuous expansion. Regularly assess the relevance and currency of the materials available to ensure they meet the evolving needs of distance education students.

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Keywords: Quality Assurance Measure, Student Support Services, Tertiary Distance Education

Introduction

Student support services cover a broad spectrum of help offered to students to ease their academic path, deal with difficulties, and foster involvement. Due to the physical distance between students and their schools, these services are essential in distance education. To guarantee that distance learners have a comprehensive and enriching educational experience, services including academic counseling, tutoring, technical support, counseling, and access to learning resources are crucial (Moore, & Kearsley, 2011). Student support services according to Paulsen (2010) is defined as academic advising, counseling, tutoring, career guidance, health services, financial aid, and other forms of assistance that aim to empower students to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and achieve their educational goals.

The success of student support services in tertiary distance education is achieved through the joint effort of both human and non-human resources established for the purpose of assisting students. These include: academic counsellors or advisors, time management and study skills, accessibility services, feedback and assessment and career services. Academic counsellors and advisors play a crucial role in guiding students through their course selections, academic

planning, and degree progress. They provide personalized advice to help learners make informed decisions and stay on track towards their educational goals (Steele, 2017). Again, offering access to online tutoring services and digital learning resources can aid students in improving their understanding of course materials and enhancing their academic skills (Fernández-Pascual et al., 2019). Offering resources and workshops on time management, study skills, and online learning strategies can empower students to manage their workload effectively (Gottschalk & McEachern, 2018). Ensuring that educational materials are accessible to students with disabilities through accommodations and assistive technologies promotes inclusivity in distance education (Johnson et al., 2020). Timely and constructive feedback on assignments and assessments is crucial for students' progress and improvement (Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). Also, providing career counseling, job placement support, and networking opportunities helps students transition from education to employment (Laden et al., 2019). A wide variety of human and non-human resources are used for student support services, including access to library resources, leadership from community members, financial planning for students, teacher mentoring, administrative support, and use of various media and software tools. All of these resources help to enhance the educational experience of the learners. However, the focus of this paper is on library support services.

In tertiary distance education, the library is a crucial support service. According to the American Library Association (2009), a library is a collection of books and other reading material that is kept up and organized for use by a public entity, an institution, or a private person. Libraries act as centers for the exchange of knowledge and encourage lifelong learning by providing a range of services, such as the ability to check out and check back in materials, get help with a reference, get research support, and participate in educational events. Libraries have developed over time to meet the needs of distance learners through a variety of online resources, databases, and services, adjusting to the digital age. Library support service performs a lot of functions in tertiary distance education including creating access to digital resources and databases, virtual reference and assistance, information literacy and research skills, interlibrary loan and document delivery, and building a learning community. Modern libraries in tertiary distance education institutions offer a plethora of digital resources and databases that transcend geographical barriers. Access to e-books, academic journals, research databases, and multimedia materials empowers distance learners to explore and engage with a vast array of academic content. Such access not only supplements course materials but also fosters independent and comprehensive learning (Smith & Kim, 2019). Libraries extend their reach through virtual reference services, enabling students to seek assistance remotely. Online chat, email, and video conferencing with librarians provide timely help with research queries, information literacy skills, and navigating the library's digital resources. These interactions contribute significantly to enhancing students' information-seeking abilities and academic success (Crawford & Irving, 2019). Effective library support is instrumental in fostering information literacy and research skills among distance learners.

Furthermore, libraries offer online tutorials, guides, and workshops on critical skills such as evaluating sources, conducting efficient searches, and citing references. These resources empower students to become discerning consumers and creators of knowledge (Hofmann & Lefoe, 2020). Interlibrary loan services allow distance learners to request materials not available in their home institution's library. Through collaborations with other institutions, students can access a broader range of resources, further enriching their learning experience. Document

delivery services ensure that physical materials, such as books or articles, are delivered to the students' location, overcoming the limitations of distance (Bishop & Starkey, 2020). Libraries contribute to the sense of community in distance education by providing virtual spaces for collaboration and engagement. Online discussion forums, study groups, and social media platforms hosted by libraries facilitate knowledge sharing and peer interactions, enhancing students' feelings of connectedness (Peng & Zhu, 2019). Therefore, there is need to ascertain quality assurance of library support services in tertiary distance education in Enugu State.

Quality assurance involves a process of monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing the different parts of an educational system to ensure that they align with the stated standards and objectives. Several studies have highlighted the importance of quality assurance in higher education, emphasizing its role in improving student retention, satisfaction, and learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Smith and Johnson (2018) emphasized that robust quality assurance mechanisms positively influence students' perceptions of the support services offered by distance education institutions. Similarly, Brown et al. (2020) demonstrated that effective quality assurance contributes to the establishment of a strong student-faculty relationship, which is a critical factor in promoting student engagement and success in distance learning environments. Quality assurance in the context of tertiary distance education involves a systematic and continuous process of monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing various aspects of education, including curriculum design, instructional delivery, assessment methods, and, crucially, student support services. Effective quality assurance practices not only help maintain the integrity of the educational programs but also contribute to student satisfaction, retention, and overall success (Altbach, & Reisberg, 2019).

Distance education is an educational arrangement where the learners are separated from the instructors physically, but learning takes place with the aid of media. According to the United States Distance Learning Association, USDLA, (2017) distance education is defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance. This form of education allows for scheduling and location flexibility, making it suitable for people who are unable to engage in traditional classroom settings because of employment, family obligations, or geographic limitations. Furthermore, tertiary distance education has emerged as a critical alternative for individuals seeking higher education, especially in regions with limited access to traditional on-campus learning. The Commonwealth of Learning, COL, (2009) viewed tertiary distance education as a process which encompasses "education at the post-secondary level, specifically at universities and colleges, which is delivered by distance education methods. It involves the use of technologies like online learning platforms, video conferencing, printed materials, and multimedia resources to facilitate learning and interactions between students, instructors, and course content, overcoming geographical constraints and enabling broader access to higher education.

Enugu State has witnessed a surge in demand for distance education due to its flexibility, allowing students to balance their academic pursuits with work and other commitments. However, with this growth comes the imperative to ensure that the quality of education and library support services provided to distance learners is the same as that of the regular students. To determine this fact, the researchers adopted the Association of College and Research Libraries, (ACRL) (2023) standards for distance and online learning library services. these standards include: Personnel; Collections & Access; Research & Instruction; and Assessment.

On Personnel, ACRL (2023) stated that the library should maintain sufficient personnel to support the needs of distance and online learning communities. The library, should hire either a dedicated distance and online learning librarian, or equivalent title, or maintains personnel distributed across many departments or positions; provides adequate service hours and personal assistance; regularly review workloads and capacities to provide and maintain services across departments that provide support, such as: strategic planning and management, collection development, information literacy, research services, resource access, and marketing and outreach, provides adequate and ongoing support for professional development. On Collections and Access, ACRL (2023) pointed out that the library should provide necessary resources and services for distance and online learning communities. The library should ensures the provision of reliable, rapid, and secure access to online resources; develop policies for delivering hard copy and electronic materials; prepare and updates collection development and acquisitions policies to reflect the needs of the community; regularly review library resources and materials to ensure sufficient coverage and appropriateness of format; markets and promotes library collections directly to distance and online learning communities; and supports open access and open educational resources initiatives.

Furthermore, on research and instruction, ACRL (2023) stated that the library should provide reference, research support, consultation, and instruction to distance and online learning communities. The library should ensure instruction methods are supported by the ACRL framework for information literacy for higher education; Creates appropriate learning outcomes specific to the institution; Encourages library instructors to work collaboratively with teaching faculty to include information literacy instruction into distance and online courses and programs; Collaborates with faculty and/or learning management system administrator to embed library tools and instructional materials into the online classroom; Provides point-of-need or virtual assistance which may include, but is not limited to, the following: research needs, use of collections and equipment, general library services, and referrals; markets and promotes educational services directly to distance and online learning communities. On assessment ACRL (2023) stated that the library should conduct needs and outcomes assessments at regular intervals to ensure that the needs of distance and online learning communities are being met. These needs include, but are not limited to: resources, collections, personnel, library research and instruction, distance learning facilities, and technology. The library should Identify useful metrics, ideally aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the institution; Utilizes different types of assessment which may include surveys, tests, interviews, student learning, statistics on library use and collections, as well as data on staff and work assignments. Assessment could involve distance and online learning community representatives, including administrators, faculty, and students; compares the library as a provider of distance and online learning library services with its peers.

While the expansion of tertiary distant education in Enugu State is encouraging, a thorough assessment of the quality assurance measure used within library support services is still required. Existing literature has addressed quality assurance in education and library support services notably in traditional settings. Therefore, there is limited studies concentrating explicitly on the current state of library support services in distance education within Enugu State. To fill the gap, this study looks at quality assurance measure in student support services of tertiary distance education Enugu State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

In tertiary distance education, the role of student support services, particularly library support services, is of paramount importance to ensure a comprehensive and effective learning experience for remote learners. However, despite the increasing demand for flexible and accessible education, there is a critical gap in understanding the quality assurance measures that are currently in place within library support services for distance education students. This gap raises significant concerns regarding the, personnel, collections and access; research and instruction; assessment; accessibility, relevance, and effectiveness of library resources and services in facilitating successful learning outcomes for distance education students in the area.

While existing literature has highlighted the importance of student support services and library resources in traditional system of education, limited research has specifically delved into the quality assurance within library support services in tertiary distance education in Enugu State. As a result, critical questions remain unanswered: How are library support services structured and provided to distance education students in South East Nigeria's tertiary institutions? What quality assurance measures are currently implemented to ensure the accessibility, relevance, and adequacy of library resources for distance learners? To what extent do these quality assurance measures address the unique challenges and needs of distance education students, considering factors such as geographic dispersion, technology limitations, and diverse learning styles? What are the perceptions and experiences of distance education students regarding the quality of library support services, and how do these perceptions impact their overall learning journey? Without a comprehensive understanding of the existing quality assurance measures and their impact on library support services for distance education students, institutions may struggle to effectively meet the evolving needs of their learners. Addressing these gaps is crucial for enhancing the overall quality and efficacy of library support services within tertiary distance education in Enugu State.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following research objectives

1. To determine the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.
2. To determine the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.
3. To ascertain the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.
4. To find out the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance were postulated to guide the study:

1. There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

2. There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.
3. There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.
4. There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of the staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population (Nworgu, 2015). The study was carried out in Enugu State. The choice of Enugu was because of the presence of tertiary distance education in the area, and its accessibility to the researcher. The population of the study is 4822 comprising 309 facilitators and 4513 distance leaners in Enugu State. A sample of 482 comprising 34 facilitators and 448 learners was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was the researchers' structured questionnaire titled Quality Assurance Measure in Student support services of Tertiary Distance Education Questionnaire was used to collect data relevant for the study. To determine the validity of the instrument the questionnaire was face and content validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was tested by administering copies of the questionnaire on 20 students of National Open University Nigeria Umuahia study centre who are different from the study area but have the same characteristics and shares the same experience in terms of mode of study. Overall reliability coefficient of 0.83 was generated using Cronbach Alpha Statistical Tool, this shows that the instrument was reliable. The data were collected by the researchers through sharing the questionnaire to the learners during their semester examination. As they assembled to write their examination, the questionnaire was distributed to them, the questionnaire was collected on the spot to ensure high return. The data collected were analysed using SPSS to generate the Mean and Standard deviation

Results

Table 1: Extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education

S/N	Indicate the extent to which your institution library perform the following functions	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Hires either a dedicated distance and online learning librarian, or equivalent title, or maintains personnel distributed across many departments or positions.	2.95	.66	HE
2	Provides adequate service hours and personal assistance.	3.00	.66	HE
3	Regularly reviews workloads and capacities to provide and maintain services across departments that provide support, such as: i. strategic planning and management	3.57	.62	HE
ii.	collection development	3.71	.53	HE
iii.	Information literacy	3.46	.68	HE
iv.	Research services	3.33	.71	HE
v.	Resource access	3.21	.56	HE
vi.	Marketing and outreach	3.54	.53	HE
	Overall mean	**3.34**	**0.61**	**HE**

Data presented in table 1 revealed the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education. Hires either a dedicated distance and online learning librarian, or equivalent title, or maintains personnel distributed across many departments or positions with a mean score of high extent (*M*=2.95), Provides adequate service hours and personal assistance with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.00), Regularly reviews workloads and capacities to provide and maintain services across departments that provide support, such as: i. strategic planning and management with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.57), collection development with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.71), Information literacy with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.46), Research services with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.33), Resource access with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.21), Marketing and outreach with a mean score of high extent (*M*=3.54). therefore, the grand mean score of (*M* = 3.34) revealed that the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education was high.

HO_1: There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Table 2: Summary of t-test on the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Staff	34	3.56	0.51	480	3.38	0.33
Learners	448	3.02	0.63			

The analysis shows that there was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education. t (480) = 3.38, p = .33. Since the probability value of 0.33 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3: Extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education.

S/N	Indicate the extent to which your institution library perform the following functions	Mean	SD	Decision
4	Ensures the provision of reliable, rapid, and secure access to online resources.	3.17	.56	HE
5	Develops policies for delivering hard copy and electronic materials.	3.37	.79	HE
6	Prepares and updates collection development and acquisitions policies to reflect the needs of the community.	3.16	.54	HE
7	Regularly reviews library resources and materials to ensure sufficient coverage and appropriateness of format.	3.52	.60	HE
8	Markets and promotes library collections directly to distance and online learning communities.	3.35	.58	HE
9	Supports open access and open educational resources initiatives.	3.39	.66	HE
	Overall mean	**3.32**	**0.62**	**HE**

Data presented in table 3 showed the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education. Ensures the provision of reliable, rapid, and secure access to online resources with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.17), Develops policies for delivering hard copy and electronic materials with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.37), Prepares and updates collection development and acquisitions policies to reflect the needs of the community with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.16), Regularly reviews library resources and materials to ensure sufficient coverage and appropriateness of format with a mean score of high

extent (M = 3.52), Markets and promotes library collections directly to distance and online learning communities with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.35), Supports open access and open educational resources initiatives with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.39). Therefore, the grand mean score of (M = 3.32) revealed that the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education was high.

HO_2: There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test on the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Staff	34	3.12	0.73			
				480	0.43	0.34
Learners	448	3.13	0.67			

The analysis shows that there was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education. t (480) = 0.43, p = .34. Since the probability value of 0.34 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 5: Extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education

S/N	Indicate the extent to which your institution library perform the following functions	Mean	SD	Decision
10	Ensures instruction methods are supported by the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education	3.71	.56	HE
11	Creates appropriate learning outcomes specific to each faculty	2.96	.46	HE
12	Encourages library instructors to work collaboratively with teaching faculty to include information literacy instruction into distance and online courses and programs.	2.88	.49	HE
13	Collaborates with faculty and/or learning management system administrator to embed library tools and instructional materials into the online classroom.	3.00	.50	HE
14	Provides point-of-need or virtual assistance which may include, but is not limited to, the following: i. research needs	2.92	.58	HE

ii.	use of collections and equipment	3.08	.65	HE
iii.	general library services	3.56	.51	HE
iv.	referrals	3.15	.54	HE
15	Markets and promotes educational services directly to distance and online learning communities.	3.21	.86	HE
	Overall mean	**3.16**	**0.54**	**HE**

Data presented in table 5 showed the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education. Ensures instruction methods are supported by the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.71), Creates appropriate learning outcomes specific to each faculty with a mean score of high extent (M = 2.96), Encourages library instructors to work collaboratively with teaching faculty to include information literacy instruction into distance and online courses and programs with a mean score of high extent (M = 2.88), Collaborates with faculty and/or learning management system administrator to embed library tools and instructional materials into the online classroom with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.00), Provides point-of-need or virtual assistance which may include, but is not limited to, the following: i. research needs with a mean score of high extent (M = 2.92), use of collections and equipment with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.08), general library services with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.56), referrals with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.15), Markets and promotes educational services directly to distance and online learning communities with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.21). Therefore, the overall mean score of (M = 3.16) revealed that the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education was high.

HO_3: There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test on the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Staff	34	3.67	0.63			
				480	0.70	0.43
Learners	448	3.71	0.56			

The analysis shows that there was no significance difference between the mean ratings of staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in

tertiary distance education. t (480) = 0.70, p = .43. Since the probability value of 0.43 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 7: Extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education

S/N	Indicate the extent to which your institution library perform the following functions	Mean	SD	Decision
16	Identifies useful metrics, ideally aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the institution.	2.90	.63	HE
17	Utilizes different types of assessment which may include surveys, tests, interviews, student learning, statistics on library use and collections, as well as data on staff and work assignments. Assessment could involve distance and online learning community	3.04	.54	HE
18	Compares the library as a provider of distance and online learning library services with its peers.	2.85	.45	HE
	Overall mean	**2.93**	**0.54**	**HE**

Data presented in table 7 revealed the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education. Identifies useful metrics, ideally aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the institution with a mean score of high extent (M = 2.90), Utilizes different types of assessment which may include surveys, tests, interviews, student learning, statistics on library use and collections, as well as data on staff and work assignments. Assessment could involve distance and online learning community with a mean score of high extent (M = 3.04), Compares the library as a provider of distance and online learning library services with its peers with a mean score of high extent (M = 2.85). Therefore, the grand mean score of (M = 2.93) revealed that the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education was high.

HO_4: There was no significance difference between the mean ratings of the staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Table 8: Summary of t-test on the mean ratings of the staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State.

Group	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Staff	34	3.23	0.60	480	2.21	0.42
Learners	448	2.87	0.62			

The analysis shows that there was no significance difference between the mean ratings of the staff and learners on the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education. t (480) = 2.21, p = .42. Since the probability value of 0.42 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of findings

Finding show that the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education was high. This is because the respondents agreed that their institution libraries hires either a dedicated distance and online learning librarian, or equivalent title, or maintains personnel distributed across many departments or positions; Provides adequate service hours and personal assistance; Regularly reviews workloads and capacities to provide and maintain services across departments that provide support, such as: Strategic planning and management, Collection development, Information literacy, Research services, Resource access, Marketing and outreach. This is in agreement with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2023) Standards for Distance and Online Learning Library Services. Library personnel play a crucial role in ensuring the quality of services provided to students in tertiary distance education. High-quality library personnel in distance education are often the result of comprehensive training programs that focus on online research methodologies, digital resource management, and effective communication in virtual environments (Smith, 2018). The high quality of library personnel may also stem from their ability to provide personalized support to distance education students. Librarians with specialized knowledge in various disciplines can offer tailored guidance to students pursuing diverse academic paths (Johnson, 2019).

Finding further revealed that the extent quality is assured in collection and access of library materials in tertiary distance education was high. This is because the respondents agreed that their institution libraries ensure the provision of reliable, rapid, and secure access to online resources; Develops policies for delivering hard copy and electronic materials; Prepares and updates collection development and acquisitions policies to reflect the needs of the community; Regularly reviews library resources and materials to ensure sufficient coverage and appropriateness of format; Markets and promotes library collections directly to distance and online learning communities; and Supports open access and open educational resources initiatives. These are in line with the ACRL (2023) Standards for Distance and Online Learning Library Services. The accessibility and adequacy of library materials are integral to the success of distance education programs. Quality assurance in this aspect may involve the integration of Open Educational Resources (OERs), which are freely accessible materials that can be used for teaching, learning, and research (Brown, 2021). The adoption of OERs expands the pool of available resources and supports cost-effective education for distance learners.

Finding also showed that the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education was high. This finding is in agreement with ACRL (2023) Standards for Distance and Online Learning Library Services which recommended that libraries established for distance education should ensure that instruction methods are supported by the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education; Creates appropriate learning outcomes specific to each faculty; Encourages library instructors to work collaboratively with teaching faculty to include information literacy instruction into distance and online courses and programs; Collaborates with faculty and/or learning management system administrator to embed library tools and instructional materials into the online classroom; Provides point-of-need or

virtual assistance which may include, but is not limited to, the following: research needs use of collections and equipment; general library services; referrals; and Markets and promotes educational services directly to distance and online learning communities. The high quality of research and instruction often involves collaboration with faculty members. Librarians work with educators to integrate information literacy skills into course curricula, ensuring that students are well-equipped to conduct research and engage with academic resources (Taylor, 2020). Quality assurance in this role also extends to educating students about academic integrity. Librarians play a crucial role in teaching distance learners about proper citation practices and plagiarism avoidance through online workshops and resource guides (Williams, 2019).

Finding show that the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State was high. This finding is in agreement with ACRL (2023) Standards for Distance and Online Learning Library Services which recommended that libraries should identify useful metrics, ideally aligned with the vision and strategic goals of the institution; Utilizes different types of assessment which may include surveys, tests, interviews, student learning, statistics on library use and collections, as well as data on staff and work assignments. Assessment could involve distance and online learning community representatives, including administrators, faculty, and students; and Compares the library as a provider of distance and online learning library services with its peers. Quality assurance in the assessment role includes regular evaluation of library services. Librarians assess the relevance and currency of digital collections, the efficiency of virtual reference interactions, and the accessibility of online resources to identify opportunities for enhancement (Brown, 2022). The high quality of assessment extends to understanding user needs. Librarians use assessment data to identify emerging research trends, academic disciplines with higher demand for resources, and areas where distance learners require additional support (Miller, 2023).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the extent quality is assured in library personnel in tertiary distance education was high, the extent quality is assured in collections and access of library materials in tertiary distance education was high, the extent quality is assured in research and instruction role of library in tertiary distance education was high, and the extent quality is assured in assessment role of library in tertiary distance education, Enugu State was high.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that

1. The administrators of tertiary distance education should continue to provide regular training and professional development opportunities for library personnel. This can include staying updated on the latest technological advancements, online research techniques, and instructional methodologies to further enhance the quality of services.
2. The chief librarians should maintain a high quality of library collections and access to materials while also considering continuous expansion. Regularly assess the relevance and currency of the materials available to ensure they meet the evolving needs of distance education students.
3. The tertiary distance education administrators should encourage library personnel to explore innovative ways to support research endeavors and instructional activities. This

could involve offering webinars, workshops, or online resources that guide students in utilizing library resources effectively.

4. Though the quality assurance in the assessment role of the library is high, the chief librarian should consider adopting advanced assessment strategies. Explore data analytics and usage metrics to gain insights into how students are engaging with library resources and services. This information can help tailor services to better meet student needs.

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