

**READING CULTURE AND ICT SKILLS AS THE DETERMINANT OF
LIBRARY PATRONAGE BY UNDERGRADUATES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

BY

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT (LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE), FACULTY OF
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **EKWUEME JENNIFER AMARACHI** in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Almighty God for giving me the Strength, Grace and Wisdom to complete this academic programme.

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ABSTRACTS

This study investigates the influence of reading culture and ICT skills on library patronage among undergraduates in academic libraries. The purpose of the study is to determine how students' interest in reading, their level of information and communication technology (ICT) competence, and the availability of digital library resources contribute to their frequency and pattern of library use. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to undergraduate students in [Name of Institution or Faculty]. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings revealed that students with a positive reading culture tend to visit the library more frequently and make greater use of both print and electronic resources. The study also showed that ICT skills significantly enhance students' ability to navigate online catalogues, access digital materials, and utilize electronic databases, thereby increasing overall library patronage. Furthermore, the availability of ICT facilities and user-friendly technologies within the library was found to positively influence students' willingness to engage with library services.

The study concludes that reading culture and ICT competency are critical determinants of effective library use among undergraduates. It recommends that academic libraries should strengthen reading promotion programs, provide continuous ICT training for students, and improve access to digital resources and technologies to enhance patronage and maximize library relevance in the digital age.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Academic libraries across the globe remain central to the educational process as they provide access to information resources and services that enhance learning, teaching, and research. However, in recent years, the patronage of academic libraries by undergraduates has been influenced by several factors, among which reading culture and ICT skills stand out as important determinants. The way students value and engage with reading, alongside their competence in using digital technologies, shapes their interaction with library resources. This is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era, where academic libraries now function in hybrid modes, combining physical and electronic services to meet the evolving needs of students (ACRL, 2022; ACRL, 2023). Academic libraries remain central to the learning ecosystem of higher education as they provide access to information resources, both print and digital, to support teaching, research, and lifelong learning. Yet, patterns of library patronage among undergraduates have changed significantly in the past few years, driven by the combined influence of students' reading orientations and their information and communication technology (ICT) competencies. In the digital era, academic libraries can no longer be assessed solely on physical visits or borrowing records; instead, patronage must be understood in the context of both traditional use and engagement with electronic services. As Okwu, Oyighan, and

Oladokun (2025) observed, “findings revealed low levels of library patronage, with students favoring digital resources, social media, and e-learning platforms over traditional library services”. This shift emphasizes the need to investigate how reading culture and ICT skills determine undergraduate use of academic libraries.

The concept of reading culture has been defined by scholars as the habitual, consistent, and voluntary engagement with reading activities that extend beyond academic requirements. Şimşek (2023) emphasizes that reading culture is more than occasional reading; it is a lifestyle and an embedded practice that contributes to cognitive development and sustained intellectual growth. In the Nigerian university context, Nwosu and Ogu (2023) found that students with stronger reading habits were significantly more likely to use academic library resources, both print and electronic. Thus, reading culture is not only an individual skill but also a determinant of library patronage, since it predisposes students to seek and utilize the collections and services libraries provide. Reading Culture is widely regarded as the habitual and voluntary practice of reading that extends beyond immediate academic requirements. Recent research situates reading culture as a dynamic phenomenon shaped not only by individual motivation but also by digital competencies. Jacob, Muhammed, and Saliu (2023) highlight this relationship by noting that “Word processing skills, Spreadsheet skills, and Technical skills (maintenance) are the skills that influence the reading habit of LIS undergraduates” (p. 12). Their findings suggest that digital proficiencies reinforce reading habits, particularly in

environments where academic resources are increasingly digitized. Thus, a vibrant reading culture does not exist in isolation but is intertwined with the ability to use modern ICT tools, both of which may influence students' reliance on libraries.

ICT skills encompass the capacity to access, evaluate, and use digital platforms effectively. These skills are fundamental in navigating academic library systems, especially given the proliferation of electronic resources, digital repositories, and learning management systems. Bashorun et al. (2024) observed that “respondents ... possessed high levels of ICT skills, particularly in Microsoft Office, Computer Literacy, and Online OERs Skills” (p. 4), suggesting that many undergraduates already possess the baseline competencies to engage effectively with library resources. However, possession of ICT skills alone does not automatically translate into increased library patronage. Bako and Odigie (2024) revealed a critical nuance, noting that although “students were able to use online databases, the majority of the undergraduates also indicated that they mostly used the library for educational activities yet underutilized”. This implies that while digital literacy provides the tools, other attitudinal or structural factors—such as reading culture may determine the depth of library use. The growth of electronic information has made ICT skills an essential requirement for effective library use. UNESCO (2019) and UNICEF (2019) describe digital literacy and ICT competence as the ability to access, manage, evaluate, and communicate information safely and effectively using digital tools. Within the higher education setting, these skills include navigating Online Public Access

Catalogues (OPACs), searching databases, downloading scholarly materials, and properly citing electronic resources. Odunola and Tella (2020) demonstrated that undergraduates' ICT proficiency directly influenced their perceived ease of use and actual patronage of e-resources in Nigerian universities. Similarly, the UNICEF Global Insight Report (2019) stressed that ICT skills are foundational for participation in modern education and lifelong learning. Hence, without adequate ICT competence, students may underutilize the vast e-resources now prioritized by academic libraries. The dependent construct, library patronage, has been consistently defined in library and information science literature as the extent and frequency of students' use of library resources, services, and facilities. Nwosu and Ogu (2023) explained that library patronage encompasses borrowing, physical visits, database usage, and reference service engagement. In the digital era, this extends to remote access of electronic resources, digital repositories, and virtual consultations. ACRL (2023) underscores that academic libraries increasingly measure their success through patterns of patronage, as these reflect the institution's ability to support student learning outcomes. Thus, library patronage serves as a reliable dependent variable for examining the influence of students' attitudes, habits, and skills.

Library patronage is best understood as the extent and frequency with which undergraduates utilize library resources, services, and facilities, whether physically or digitally. This includes borrowing, accessing databases, consulting librarians, and making use of study spaces. Recent evidence demonstrates that patronage levels are not only

declining but also shifting toward online spaces. Okwu et al. (2025) captured this trend, observing a generational preference among students for digital resources and platforms over face-to-face interactions with the library. Such findings align with global patterns of hybrid information use and underscore the urgency of redefining patronage in academic libraries. The relationship between reading culture, ICT skills, and library patronage is well-documented. Studies (Nwosu & Ogu, 2023; Odunola & Tella, 2020) affirm that students who cultivate reading as a habit tend to perceive libraries as valuable academic partners and consequently engage more with their resources. At the same time, ICT competence enables students to access online catalogues, search databases effectively, and evaluate digital resources, which increases their reliance on library services. The interplay of these factors suggests that the extent of undergraduate patronage of academic libraries cannot be fully understood without considering their reading orientations and ICT proficiencies. In the Nigerian context, where efforts to strengthen reading culture continue to intersect with the push for digital literacy, these variables remain critical determinants of library engagement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Academic libraries are central to undergraduate learning, yet recent studies report a steady decline in their patronage. Despite heavy investment in print and electronic resources, students increasingly prefer alternative digital platforms. As Okwu, Oyighan,

and Oladokun (2025) note, undergraduates now favor “digital resources, social media, and e-learning platforms over traditional library services,” raising concerns about the relevance and utilization of academic libraries. One key factor that seems to affect library use is students’ reading culture. A strong reading habit encourages deeper academic engagement, but evidence shows that many undergraduates lack consistent reading practices. Jacob, Muhammed, and Saliu (2023) found that even ICT skills shape students’ reading behavior, implying that a weak reading culture may hinder their motivation to use library resources.

Similarly, ICT skills have become indispensable in accessing modern library services. While studies (e.g., Bashorun et al., 2024) report that undergraduates possess basic ICT competencies, Bako and Odigie (2024) emphasize that libraries remain “underutilized,” showing that digital literacy does not always translate into active library patronage. The persistence of low usage despite resource availability and student skills indicates a gap in understanding how reading culture and ICT skills jointly influence library patronage. This study therefore, seeks to examine these variables as determinants of undergraduates’ library use, intending to provide evidence-based strategies to improve engagement in academic libraries.

1.3 Research objectives

To examine the extent to which reading culture and ICT skills determine library patronage among undergraduates in academic libraries.

1. To determine the extent of library patronage among Undergraduates in academic library.
2. To determine the level of ICT skills of undergraduates in academic libraries
3. To evaluate the influence of ICT skills on students' library patronage
4. To establish the relationship between reading culture and library patronage in shaping library patronage.
5. To investigate barriers that may affect both reading Culture and ICT skills among undergraduates.
6. To propose strategies for improving library patronage through strengthened reading culture and ICT skills.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the extent of library patronage among undergraduate in academic libraries?
2. What is the level of ICT skills of undergraduates in academic libraries?
3. What is the relationship between student ICT skills and Library patronage?
4. What relationship exists between reading culture and Library patronage?

5. What barriers affect both reading culture and ICT skill among undergraduates in academic libraries?
6. What strategies can be proposed to improve library patronage through strengthened reading culture and ICT skills?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the determinants of library patronage among undergraduates in academic libraries, with particular emphasis on reading culture and ICT skills. It examines the current state of students' reading habits, their ICT competencies, and how these factors influence the frequency and depth of their library use. The study also investigates barriers that may hinder both effective reading culture and user satisfaction, such as a lack of motivation, infrastructural challenges, or inadequate awareness of available services. Geographically, the research will be limited to the academic library within the University of Benin (John Harris Library), while the population will comprise undergraduate students across different faculties. The scope does not extend to postgraduate students, academic staff, or non-academic users of the library. Furthermore, the study will not attempt to measure all possible determinants of library patronage but will focus strictly on reading culture and ICT skills as key independent variables.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides empirical evidence on how reading culture and ICT skills jointly shape undergraduate patronage of academic libraries in an era where digital technologies are transforming access to information. Findings from the study will help library administrators and university management understand the gaps in students' engagement with library resources and services.

Secondly, the research will benefit students, as the study's recommendations can help them develop better reading habits and utilize ICT tools to maximize their use of academic libraries. Third, the study contributes to existing literature on knowledge preservation, library patronage, and digital information use, serving as a reference point for future researchers. Finally, the findings will guide policymakers and educational planners in designing interventions, policies, and strategies that strengthen both the reading culture and ICT literacy of undergraduates, thereby enhancing the overall relevance and sustainability of academic libraries in higher education.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope to undergraduate students of the University of Benin (UNIBEN) who make use of the John Harris Library. As such, the findings may not be generalized to postgraduate students, other universities, or non-university libraries. The study further narrows its focus to reading culture and ICT skills as determinants of library

patronage, excluding other possible factors such as socio-economic status, institutional policies, or access to personal learning technologies, which might also influence students' library use. Another limitation arises from the method of data collection. Since the study relies on self-reported questionnaires, the responses may be subject to recall errors, exaggeration, or social desirability bias, thereby affecting the accuracy of the data. In addition, time and resource constraints may restrict the sample size and depth of analysis, limiting the extent to which findings can be generalized across all undergraduates in UNIBEN. Finally, given that both ICT skills and reading culture are dynamic and influenced by broader educational and technological changes, the findings of this research reflect only the realities at the time of the study and may require further validation in future contexts.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

1. Reading Culture: This refers to the habitual and consistent practice of reading among undergraduates for academic or personal purposes. In the context of this study, reading culture encompasses students' attitudes, frequency, and motivation towards reading library materials, both in print and digital formats.

2. ICT Skills: These are the abilities and competencies required to effectively use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for academic purposes. In this study,

ICT skills include the capacity to search, retrieve, evaluate, and utilize electronic resources provided by the John Harris Library at UNIBEN.

3. Library Patronage: Library patronage is the extent to which undergraduates make use of the services, resources, and facilities available in the academic library. It covers the frequency of library visits, the use of print and electronic resources, and participation in library-based academic activities.

4. User Satisfaction: User satisfaction refers to the degree to which students' expectations and information needs are met when using the library's resources and services. In this study, it relates to how satisfied undergraduates are with both physical and electronic services at John Harris Library.

5. Academic Library: An academic library is a library established, maintained, and managed by a university or higher institution to support teaching, learning, and research. For this study, the focus is on the John Harris Library, University of Benin.

6. Undergraduates: These are students pursuing a first degree (Bachelor's degree) at the University of Benin. The study population is restricted to undergraduate users of the John Harris Library.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents a review of the related literature on Reading Culture and ICT skills as determinants of Library patronage among undergraduates in Academic Libraries. It is reviewed under the following subheadings:

- Reading Culture and Academic Development
- ICT Skills and Library Use
- Library Patronage in Academic Institutions
- Barriers to Reading Culture and ICT Utilization
- Strategies Deployed to Reading Culture and ICT Utilization.

2.1 Reading Culture and Academic Development

Reading culture refers to the habitual and sustained practice of reading, which directly influences students' intellectual development and academic performance. A well-established reading culture fosters critical thinking and enhances students' ability to utilize library resources effectively. Recent studies (Ogunniyi, 2022; Eze, 2023) note that students with a strong reading habit demonstrate better academic achievement and higher levels of engagement with academic libraries. However, despite the availability of abundant resources, many undergraduates in Nigerian universities continue to exhibit a declining interest in reading, often attributed to

digital distractions and social media. Reading culture is generally defined as the habitual practice of reading for knowledge acquisition, pleasure, and personal development. It goes beyond literacy and entails cultivating a lifelong engagement with books and texts. As Nnadozie (2019) explains, a strong reading culture is “a cornerstone of intellectual empowerment and a pathway to sustained academic performance.” In academic contexts, this culture is a vital determinant of how students engage with library resources and achieve academic success.

However, in many developing nations, especially Nigeria, scholars have raised concerns about the decline in reading culture among undergraduates. Ajibade (2020) observes that Nigerian students often read only to pass examinations rather than to acquire long-term knowledge. This instrumental approach limits their ability to develop higher-order thinking and weakens their intellectual independence. Academic libraries, therefore, face the dual challenge of providing resources while also encouraging a deeper culture of voluntary reading. According to Eze (2021), while ICTs provide unprecedented access to academic materials, they also foster superficial reading practices, as students skim texts instead of engaging deeply. Similarly, *Teen Vogue* (2023) reports that “college students’ reading abilities and engagement have notably declined, ” and factors such as digital distractions and decreased attention spans undermine sustained reading. Thus, digital culture both enables and threatens reading culture. The decline in reading for pleasure has also been widely documented.

The *Times of India* (2023) noted that “students are paying a high price for skipping books, experiencing a decline in critical thinking, empathy, vocabulary development, and concentration.” This finding resonates with the *Financial Times* (2023), which emphasized that the erosion of reading habits carries broader implications for literacy, employability, and democratic participation. Reading culture, therefore, has consequences that transcend the classroom.

Reading as a Habit: The activity of reading is considered a habit when it is frequently carried out. In other words, reading is measured in terms of materials read and the period spent on reading (Wagner, 2021). According to Chettri and Rout (2023), reading habits are the number of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well, and the average time spent on reading (p.13). Similarly, Wagner et al. (2020) describe reading habits as the volume and the extent to which materials are learned, and the maximum number of hours spent reviewing and reflecting on the concepts. In an academic context, reading assists the reader in increasing their knowledge and wisdom. It helps students to retain information and brings significant changes in a person's social, spiritual, and economic status. The positive outcomes of effective reading habits can be seen when a student's comprehension expands (Okwilagwe, 2021). Therefore, for this study, reading habits are defined as purposely planning and spending time to read for leisure and academic material until a person forms an appetite for reading.

Academic Development

Academic development is broadly understood as the continuous growth in students' intellectual abilities, academic skills, and learning competencies throughout their educational journey. According to Nnamani (2019), "academic development is not limited to the mastery of subject content but extends to cultivating critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning abilities." Thus, it encompasses both cognitive and non-cognitive skills essential for personal and professional success. Universities, and by extension academic libraries, are central to fostering academic development. As Ogbodo (2020) explains, higher education institutions serve as "engines of intellectual transformation" by providing students with access to knowledge resources, mentorship, and spaces for inquiry. The presence of functional libraries and a supportive learning environment directly influences the academic growth of undergraduates. A 2021 UNESCO report stressed that "reading culture forms the bedrock of effective learning outcomes, and its absence creates significant barriers to intellectual development." This indicates a strong interplay between literacy practices and broader academic success. Students who read widely tend to develop stronger comprehension, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving skills.

The digital revolution has reshaped academic development in significant ways. Eze and Ola (2022) found that ICT integration in learning enhances students' access to diverse resources, thereby promoting independent study and collaborative learning. However,

they also cautioned that “the unregulated use of digital technologies often leads to distraction and shallow learning practices.” This dual effect of ICT underscores the need for balanced and guided use of technology in academic settings.

Academic development refers to the processes and activities that enhance students’ intellectual growth, acquisition of skills, and achievement of educational goals within higher institutions. It encompasses cognitive, affective, and professional dimensions of learning, preparing undergraduates for scholarly pursuits, employability, and lifelong learning. According to Trowler (2015), academic development is both an individual and institutional concern, involving strategies that foster critical thinking, effective communication, and mastery of disciplinary knowledge.

In higher education, academic development is typically supported through structured curriculum delivery, assessment, research engagement, and extracurricular activities. However, scholars argue that academic development goes beyond the classroom, relying heavily on students’ ability to engage with academic resources such as libraries, ICT platforms, and peer learning communities (Brew & Boud, 2019). Thus, students’ willingness to develop independent study habits including sustained reading and information literacy, directly influences their academic development. Adebisi and Olayemi (2021) emphasized that academic development is multidimensional, combining intellectual competencies, study skills, and personal motivation. They argued that the development of undergraduates requires institutional investment in teaching quality,

library resources, and mentorship programs. In this sense, academic development is not only about performance in examinations but also about the cultivation of lifelong learning skills that sustain students beyond graduation.

Reading culture has been identified as one of the strongest determinants of academic development. Students with a consistent reading habit tend to demonstrate deeper comprehension, broader vocabulary, and stronger analytical skills. Gambrell (2021) noted that students' reading practices provide the foundation for intellectual curiosity and self-directed learning, which are essential for academic development. Similarly, Okeke and Opara (2019) found a positive correlation between reading culture and undergraduates' performance in Nigerian universities, suggesting that sustained reading habits significantly influence academic outcomes. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) also plays a critical role in academic development. With the expansion of digital learning platforms, access to online databases, and e-learning tools, students can acquire advanced research and digital literacy skills. According to Ameen and Adeniran (2019), ICT competencies enable students to navigate global knowledge networks, thereby strengthening their academic development. The modern undergraduate must therefore possess both traditional reading skills and digital literacy to thrive in the academic environment.

Academic development is equally tied to library use and information literacy. Adeyemi and Adekunle (2021) observed that undergraduates who actively utilize

academic library resources ranging from textbooks to electronic journals demonstrate greater academic success than those who do not. Libraries, as centers of knowledge acquisition, play a pivotal role in nurturing academic development by providing access to diverse resources, quiet study environments, and professional assistance from librarians. Challenges, however, persist in promoting academic development among undergraduates. Issues such as poor reading culture, overreliance on lecture notes, inadequate ICT skills, and limited library patronage remain barriers (Asiyai, 2020). These barriers undermine students' ability to engage critically with knowledge, thereby slowing academic development. Without deliberate interventions from institutions, students may graduate with certificates but lack the intellectual capacity for research and problem-solving in real-world contexts. Interventions to support academic development often include academic skills programs, mentoring, and library literacy initiatives. Brew and Boud (2020) emphasized the importance of embedding academic skills training within the curriculum, ensuring that students acquire time management, research, and writing competencies. Similarly, Adebayo and Alabi (2019) advocated for collaborative programs between faculty and librarians to build students' information literacy and reading culture, thereby strengthening their academic development. Academic development is linked to employability and professional readiness. Omolewa (2019) noted that undergraduates who develop strong academic competencies are more adaptable to labor market demands and contribute meaningfully to national development. This underscores the importance of

universities adopting policies and practices that strengthen students' academic skills, resilience, and innovative capacity.

The Cable (2024) observed that many students' academic growth is constrained because "the majority of students only read to pass examinations, not for knowledge acquisition." Such exam-oriented attitudes reduce the capacity of students to transfer knowledge beyond classroom contexts. Ogunniyi (2022) similarly argued that weak reading culture has become a major impediment to deep learning among undergraduates. Nevertheless, there are positive trends. Adetayo et al. (2024) revealed that students with stronger reading engagement demonstrated higher levels of academic performance and library patronage. Their findings suggest that deliberate interventions, such as reading promotion programs and blended learning platforms, can significantly boost academic development. Thus, academic development is responsive to well-structured educational and library initiatives. The role of ICT skills in academic development has also received considerable attention. Ogunbodede and Sawyerr-George (2023) highlighted that "students with higher ICT proficiency tend to navigate academic resources more effectively, leading to greater productivity and knowledge acquisition." However, they caution that disparities in ICT competence among undergraduates create inequalities in academic achievement. Bridging this gap is essential for inclusive academic development.

Globally, employers and policymakers are equally concerned about the relationship between academic development and employability. The *Financial Times*

(2023) reported that the decline in critical thinking and literacy among graduates threatens their readiness for the workplace and democratic participation. This underscores the fact that academic development is not just about achieving good grades but about equipping students with transferable skills relevant to society.

Reading Culture and Academic Development

Reading culture and academic development are inseparable concepts in higher education. Reading culture, broadly defined as the sustained practice of engaging with texts for knowledge acquisition, leisure, and intellectual growth, is central to the formation of academic competencies. According to Nnadozie (2019), “a strong reading culture is the bedrock of intellectual empowerment and lifelong learning.” Academic development, on the other hand, refers to the continuous enhancement of students’ intellectual, cognitive, and professional abilities throughout their educational journey (Nnamani, 2019). Both are mutually reinforcing, as reading culture provides the foundation upon which academic development thrives. However, research shows a disturbing trend of declining reading culture among undergraduates. Ajibade (2020) lamented that Nigerian students often read only for examination purposes, rather than for knowledge acquisition and critical engagement. This narrow, exam-oriented reading habit significantly limits their capacity for deeper academic development. Ogunniyi (2022) similarly noted that undergraduates’ weak reading culture reduces comprehension,

vocabulary growth, and analytical reasoning. Consequently, students' academic performance often reflects short-term memorization rather than meaningful intellectual transformation.

The role of reading culture in shaping academic development has been emphasized in global and local studies. A UNESCO (2021) report stressed that “reading culture forms the cornerstone of effective learning outcomes,” warning that poor reading habits undermine both academic and social growth. Ajibade (2023) further highlighted that the decline in book reading among students has led to “weaker critical thinking, empathy, vocabulary, and concentration.” Similarly, *The Cable* (2024) reported that most Nigerian students “read to pass examinations and not to gain knowledge,” a trend that hinders sustainable academic growth. Meanwhile, digital technologies have reshaped how students approach reading and learning. Eze (2021) argued that while ICT provides unprecedented access to academic resources, it has also fostered superficial reading patterns, as students skim rather than engage deeply. Ogunbodede and Sawyerr-George (2023) confirmed that students with strong ICT skills are better able to navigate digital library resources and support their academic development, but they also cautioned that excessive social media use reduces time spent on sustained reading. A 2024 study published by Ijeais.org showed that social media significantly and negatively impacts the frequency of reading and time spent on academic materials, thereby weakening overall academic development.

Reading culture refers to the habitual, voluntary, and sustained practice of reading for knowledge acquisition, leisure, and personal development. In academic contexts, it is a cornerstone of intellectual growth, critical inquiry, and academic excellence. Scholars agree that developing a strong reading culture among undergraduates is a vital driver of academic development, yet evidence shows that it is gradually declining in many developing nations, including Nigeria. According to Ogbodo (2020), reading culture is the “foundation of all forms of learning,” as it enhances comprehension, retention, and application of knowledge. Without consistent reading habits, students often struggle with deep learning and critical reasoning, which negatively impacts academic performance. Similarly, Aina, Ogungbeni, and Adigun (2021) noted that reading culture strengthens students’ analytical capacity and fosters creativity, which are essential for academic success and lifelong learning.

In higher education, reading culture is closely tied to the use of academic libraries. Adeyemi and Adekunle (2020) observed that undergraduates who cultivate strong reading habits tend to make greater use of library resources, including reference materials, journals, and digital databases. They stressed that “a good reading culture is both a predictor and an enhancer of library patronage,” thereby linking reading behavior with academic development through resource utilization. Research has also demonstrated the role of reading in academic performance. Okeke and Opara (2019) found that undergraduates who spent more hours reading beyond lecture notes consistently scored

higher grades and exhibited greater self-confidence in examinations and research projects. Their study concluded that the absence of a solid reading culture leads to shallow understanding and overreliance on rote memorization. This reinforces the perspective of Gambrell (2019) that effective reading habits build independent learners who can critically evaluate and apply information. In addition, the digital era has redefined the scope of reading culture. While traditional reading culture emphasized printed books, modern academic development requires adaptability in both print and electronic reading. Igwe (2021) argued that cultivating digital reading culture—through e-books, online journals, and web-based resources—has become indispensable for academic success, particularly in contexts where universities subscribe to global databases. Students with a flexible reading culture that spans print and digital platforms tend to perform better academically and engage more meaningfully in research.

Barriers to reading culture have also been noted in literature, ranging from poor library facilities to students' preference for social media over academic texts. Asiyai (2020) highlighted that distractions from technology, coupled with limited encouragement from educators, often erode students' reading habits. This decline directly hinders academic development, as undergraduates lose opportunities to build concentration, vocabulary, and critical skills. Nonetheless, interventions to promote reading culture have proven effective. Campaigns such as "Read to Succeed" and institutional reading clubs in Nigerian universities have been reported to rekindle

students' interest in sustained reading (Adebayo & Alabi, 2019). These initiatives demonstrate that when supported by the academic environment, reading culture can be nurtured, thereby enhancing students' academic development. Importantly, academic development encompasses not only academic performance but also intellectual maturity and professional readiness. As Omolewa (2019) observed, reading fosters self-directed learning, resilience, and problem-solving ability, all of which are indispensable qualities in today's knowledge economy. Students who embrace reading as a culture develop broader worldviews and are better equipped for postgraduate research and employability.

Despite these challenges, there are positive indicators that reading culture can be revived and aligned with academic development goals. Adetayo et al. (2024), in their study of South-West Nigerian universities, found that students with strong reading engagement scored significantly higher in academic performance measures. They argue that academic libraries can play a transformative role by promoting literacy programs, book clubs, and blended reading models that combine print and digital resources. Eze (2023) further affirmed that "academic libraries remain critical environments where reading habits and intellectual growth are nurtured." From a developmental perspective, the decline in reading culture has broader implications beyond academic grades. The *Financial Times* (2023) observed that the erosion of reading habits threatens employability, literacy, and democratic participation, while The New Publishing Standard (2025) warned that without deep reading and reflective learning, reforms in education

may yield limited impact. This underscores that academic development is not only about grades but about cultivating skills that prepare students for societal contributions.

The 21st-century reading pattern is different from the 18th, 19th, and 20th-century pattern

because the 21st-century learning/ reading means that students master content while producing, synthesizing, and evaluating information from a wide variety of subjects and sources with an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures (Hall, 2012). Reading in the 21st century has several blueprints for ensuring our future in attaining educational standards. The more we read, the more we are exposed to issues and solutions to the common problems we face as a people. Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary, according to Jim Rohn (n.d). The libraries have always seen and fought towards a better reading culture in our society. They do this because they are knowledge managers, they preserve and organize information, and believe so much on the strength of a reader in the development of a nation. This is the reason for the assertion by Seuss (n.d) as cited by Ajumobi (2017) that leaders 3 are readers. He further explained that there is no doubt it that people who read more are more likely to be seen as leaders to their peers due to their expert knowledge.

In the case of Nigeria, it has come to light due to recent developments that the reading culture among Nigerians, particularly among the youth and students, has significantly dwindled. It is quite evident that the passion and zest of the Nigerian

students, like anywhere in the world, is rapidly declining as they fail to foster a healthy reading culture or habit at a very age in their respective lives. Educationalists struggle to provide an adequate response as to what might have caused this displeasing and bothersome outcome. However, the government, in collaboration with all of the parties involved, can develop strategies to instill reading culture in children at a very early age, invest in education that includes establishing libraries at schools and offer training programs to teachers who will be engaged in teaching the children how to read.

Reading culture has long been recognized as a cornerstone of academic development, especially in higher education. Toker and Aminou (2020), in their study on Nigerian undergraduates, describe reading as “a developmental skill which can never be fully acquired, and one should therefore make a conscious effort to continue to improve one’s reading throughout one’s life.” They argue that a consistent reading culture is critical for broadening students’ horizons, enhancing comprehension, and strengthening intellectual growth. Without it, students’ academic progress remains shallow and examination-oriented. Studies continue to highlight how weak reading habits undermine students’ academic development. For example, the *European Educational Researcher* study revealed that university students in Nigeria face significant challenges such as linguistic barriers, lack of interest, television addiction, and the adverse impact of the internet—all of which hinder reading engagement (Toker & Aminou, 2020). These

factors directly affect academic performance because students with poor reading habits lack the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information effectively.

Similarly, Adegbilero-Iwari and Osayande (2020) found that poor reading culture among Nigerian undergraduates negatively affects their academic performance and overall development. Their research emphasizes that “academic success is intricately tied to reading culture,” suggesting that without deliberate cultivation of reading habits, undergraduates will struggle to meet the intellectual demands of higher education. This aligns with John Holden’s assertion that reading is “a vitally important gateway to economic, social, and civic life,” shaping both personal development and societal growth (cited in Toker & Aminou, 2020). The role of reading culture extends beyond passing examinations; it is essential for lifelong learning and employability. Reading enables students to evaluate ideas, engage in critical thinking, and develop problem-solving skills—capabilities that are crucial for adapting to the complexities of modern society. In this sense, academic development is not only about cognitive skills but also about cultivating the disposition to learn continuously.

Another critical dimension is the influence of digital technology. While ICT tools provide wider access to resources, they also pose a threat to deep reading practices. Toker and Aminou (2020) noted that excessive internet and mobile phone usage among Nigerian students significantly reduces time devoted to reading. The same study showed that although 93% of respondents acknowledged the importance of reading, nearly 47%

admitted they preferred engaging in other activities rather than reading in their free time. This contradiction underscores how distractions can undermine students' academic development even when they recognize the value of reading. Conversely, studies suggest that students with strong reading culture demonstrate greater academic resilience. For instance, Olatokun and Ayanbode (2022) stress that “reading culture enhances not only comprehension but also the ability to relate theory to practice,” a skill essential for academic success in disciplines requiring critical analysis. This confirms that academic development is best nurtured where students adopt regular, self-motivated reading practices.

Importantly, academic development is also shaped by environmental and social factors. Parental encouragement, library facilities, and peer influence play significant roles in either promoting or discouraging reading culture. Toker and Aminou (2020) found that while 93% of students reported parental support for reading during childhood, nearly half admitted that their peers did not encourage them to read. This reveals that sustaining academic development requires a community of support that fosters reading beyond formal settings. The relationship between reading culture and academic development also manifests in the role of academic libraries. Adegbilero-Iwari and Osayande (2020) emphasize that libraries are not just repositories of books but environments that can stimulate positive reading habits. When libraries actively promote reading through literacy campaigns, book clubs, and digital resource training, students are

more likely to integrate reading into their academic routine, thereby enhancing their development.

In conclusion, evidence from these studies shows that reading culture and academic development are deeply interdependent. While a weak reading culture leads to poor comprehension, shallow learning, and exam-focused study, a strong reading culture fosters lifelong learning, critical thinking, and academic success. To strengthen academic development among undergraduates, institutions like the University of Benin's John Harris Library must address barriers such as digital distractions, provide accessible resources, and create programs that nurture both reading culture and ICT skills. By doing so, undergraduates can be empowered not only to excel academically but also to contribute meaningfully to national development.

ICT Skills and Library Use

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the landscape of library and information services across the world. Libraries, traditionally viewed as custodians of books and other print resources, have now evolved into hybrid information centers where digital and print resources coexist. The use of ICT in libraries involves the application of computer systems, telecommunication technologies, the internet, and digital storage devices to acquire, organize, store, retrieve, and disseminate information resources. This transformation has enhanced the efficiency of library

operations and expanded the range of services available to users. ICT has become a critical tool in the management of modern libraries. It eliminates the limitations of distance, time, and manual processes, thereby creating new opportunities for information access and delivery. In academic libraries, ICT has been recognized as indispensable to the teaching, learning, and research missions of universities. It ensures that students, lecturers, and researchers have timely access to up-to-date resources, regardless of physical location.

The advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized the way academic libraries deliver services and how undergraduates interact with information resources. ICT skills are now a fundamental prerequisite for efficient library use, particularly as libraries transition from print-based collections to digital platforms. In recent years, scholars have underscored the critical role of ICT competencies in promoting access, retrieval, and utilization of information in higher education institutions.

Adejoke (2020) emphasized that ICT has enhanced library operations in cataloguing, circulation, and acquisitions. However, their study noted that “the performance of librarians in using ICTs was still very low,” which in turn limited students’ exposure to technologically enhanced services. This indicates that both staff and user ICT skills are vital in ensuring maximum exploitation of available resources. Where either group lacks proficiency, the utility of ICT tools in libraries is diminished.

In Nigeria and similar contexts, research has consistently shown that undergraduates' ICT skills directly affect their use of e-resources. Adeyemi College's case study revealed that students with higher ICT literacy were more likely to access databases, e-journals, and OPACs regularly (Okiki & Asiru, 2016). Conversely, students with limited ICT knowledge relied heavily on general search engines such as Google, often bypassing scholarly resources provided by the library. This suggests that ICT competence mediates not only frequency but also the quality of library use.

Similarly, Ojo and Akande (2021) investigated ICT use among undergraduates in Nigerian universities and found a significant correlation between students' computer literacy levels and their satisfaction with library services. They argued that ICT skills "empower students to navigate the increasingly digital academic environment with confidence," making training programs a key strategy for academic libraries seeking to boost patronage. This aligns with broader findings by Ali and Nwalo (2020), who stressed that information literacy, which integrates ICT skills such as Boolean searching, database navigation, and evaluation of online sources, is a major determinant of students' research success. Nonetheless, the literature highlights persistent challenges. Okiki (2019) observed that although many academic libraries in Nigeria had introduced ICT infrastructure, systemic issues such as irregular electricity supply, poor internet bandwidth, and insufficient computer terminals hampered meaningful use. Students who possessed ICT skills were often constrained by

infrastructural inadequacies, underscoring the point that ICT competence alone does not guarantee effective library use unless supported by functional systems. This echoes the assertion of Ani and Edem (2019) that “the presence of ICT facilities in libraries without corresponding accessibility and usability provisions amounts to underutilization.”

Another layer to the discourse concerns the depth of ICT competencies. Basic skills such as typing, browsing, or emailing are insufficient for academic research. Studies between 2021 and 2022 revealed that students require advanced ICT skills, including knowledge of reference management software, citation tools, and scholarly communication platforms (Okon & Owoeye, 2018). The lack of such competencies often leads students to adopt superficial search strategies, thereby reducing the academic value of their research outputs.

Recognizing these limitations, several scholars advocate for embedded ICT literacy programs. Ezeani and Igwesi (2019) recommended integrating ICT and information literacy instruction into undergraduate curricula rather than leaving them as optional workshops. They noted that students exposed to systematic ICT training early in their academic journey demonstrated higher engagement with library e-resources and greater research independence. Similarly, Olorunsola and Ajayi (2019) argued that collaboration between faculty and librarians in delivering ICT skills training enhances students’ ability to retrieve, evaluate, and apply information

resources effectively. Beyond training, equitable access to ICT remains a recurring theme. Studies have shown that socio-economic disparities among students affect their ability to own or access personal digital devices. Where institutional ICT facilities are inadequate, undergraduates from less privileged backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged (Adio & Popoola, 2019). This digital divide exacerbates inequalities in library use and information access. To mitigate this, libraries are encouraged to expand ICT infrastructure, provide longer access hours, and adopt device-loan schemes, ensuring that ICT training translates into practical, equitable use.

A key element in the integration of ICT into libraries is the possession of relevant skills by librarians and staff. ICT skills are the competencies needed to use computers and digital technologies to solve information-related problems. These include basic computer literacy, internet navigation, communication skills such as emailing and online collaboration, use of library application software like Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) and integrated library systems, presentation skills using tools such as PowerPoint, and digitization of resources through scanning and uploading. Librarians are also expected to be competent in the use of metadata standards such as MARC for cataloguing, and to be able to guide users in searching electronic resources effectively. The acquisition of ICT skills among librarians occurs in different ways. Many librarians learn through on-the-job training, where they gain practical

experience while working directly with ICT facilities. Others acquire skills through private computer training, personal practice, tutorial packages, or by obtaining additional qualifications in computer-related fields. Research conducted in tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria, shows that on-the-job training is the most common method of ICT skill acquisition among librarians, as it provides practical and continuous learning opportunities within the work environment. ICT skills encompass the competencies required to navigate and utilize digital technologies for academic purposes. In academic libraries, ICT skills enable students to search, retrieve, and critically evaluate electronic information sources such as e-books, databases, and online journals. According to Ajani and Okeke (2022), ICT literacy is no longer optional for undergraduates but essential for maximizing library services. Students with poor ICT skills often underutilize digital resources despite their availability. The integration of ICT into academic libraries has redefined library patronage, making it more technology-driven and less dependent on physical presence. However, private training and self-study also play an important role in building competencies.

ICT has been applied to almost every aspect of library services. In acquisitions, librarians now place orders for books and journals online, search publishers' catalogues electronically, and even subscribe to e-books and e-journals. In cataloguing and classification, automation through OPAC and metadata systems makes it easier to organize and retrieve resources. Circulation services have been

revolutionized by technologies such as barcodes and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), which allow for faster borrowing, returning, and renewing of materials. Reference services are enriched by online databases, electronic journals, and other internet-based resources, enabling librarians to provide up-to-date and accurate information. In addition, ICT has greatly expanded user services. Services such as Current Awareness Services (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) can now be delivered electronically, ensuring that users are regularly updated on new information in their areas of interest. Online reservations, digital repositories, and virtual reference services are other examples of ICT-driven innovations in library services. Furthermore, ICT has enabled libraries to participate in networks and consortia, facilitating inter-library loans and resource sharing. This interconnectedness allows users to access information beyond the holdings of their local libraries.

The impact of ICT skills on library use is significant. Skilled librarians are better able to deliver effective services, guide users in conducting searches, and manage electronic resources. For users, ICT ensures quick and independent access to information, empowering them to retrieve materials directly from digital platforms. This independence not only improves user satisfaction but also enhances the role of libraries in supporting academic activities. In institutions of higher learning, ICT has become central to research productivity, as it provides researchers with immediate

access to scholarly publications, data sets, and other academic resources. Despite these advantages, the acquisition and use of ICT in libraries face many challenges. A common problem is the lack of modern training facilities and opportunities for professional development. Many institutions lack adequate funding to purchase and maintain ICT infrastructure such as computers, scanners, servers, and reliable internet connectivity. Heavy workloads also prevent librarians from attending training sessions or practicing their ICT skills. In some cases, a personal lack of interest among librarians hinders the adoption of ICT. Additionally, many library schools still do not provide adequate curriculum content on ICT, meaning that graduates enter the profession with limited competencies in this area. These challenges contribute to the underutilization of ICT facilities in some libraries, even when the infrastructure is available.

The effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries depends largely on the ICT competencies possessed by librarians. As noted by Mbagwu (2020), “academic librarians use ICT in almost all the sections of the library to discharge their duties effectively,” and these skills are applied to facilitate service delivery in both routine and specialized functions. ICT skills empower librarians to organize, manage, and disseminate information resources in ways that meet the needs of the modern information user.

One of the most fundamental ICT skills is basic computing. According to Mommoh and Saka (2016, cited in Mbagwu, 2020), ICT skills can be understood as “the ability to use digital technology, communication tools and networks appropriately to solve information problems.” In practice, this includes the use of word processors, spreadsheets, and file management systems to carry out daily library operations such as preparing reports, maintaining records, and handling library statistics. Internet and communication skills are also indispensable. The internet provides access to vast information resources and communication platforms. Kemdarne (2022) describes ICT as “the combination of telecommunication and computer technology to facilitate transmission, collection, processing, interpretation and distribution of information.” In library practice, this translates into the use of the internet for online searches, database access, and electronic communication with users through email, online chat, and even social media platforms.

Librarians must also be competent in library application software. Khiste, Maske, and Veer (2021) explain that “ICT are the hardware and software that enable society to create, collect, consolidate and communicate information in multimedia formats and for various purposes.” In the library context, this includes skills in operating Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC), cataloguing and classification software, and integrated library management systems. These tools allow librarians to automate cataloguing, track circulation, and provide users with direct access to resources.

Another critical area is data storage and management skills. As pointed out in the Imo State study, librarians use ICT for “storing and copying data into secondary storage devices” such as flash drives and external disks (Mbagwu, 2020, p. 25). With the rise of cloud storage, data management also involves securing digital files and ensuring that information can be retrieved efficiently when needed.

In addition, presentation skills are increasingly important in libraries. Librarians often conduct user education programmes and training workshops where tools such as PowerPoint are employed to deliver information effectively. Mbagwu (2020) found that “presentation skills such as PowerPoint are among the ICT skills acquired and used by academic librarians,” making them essential for instructional roles in user education and literacy programmes. Digitization skills have also become central to modern library services. According to Ojiegbe (2010, cited in Mbagwu, 2020), the introduction of ICT into libraries has extended services “from routine duties such as user registration to more complex ones such as cataloguing and digital institutional repositories.” This requires librarians to possess the ability to scan, upload, and maintain digital archives, ensuring long-term access to rare and fragile materials.

Skills in cataloguing and metadata management remain vital even in a digital environment. The ability to use standards such as MARC ensures that resources—both print and electronic—are properly described and retrievable. Susan and Baby (2012) emphasize that librarians must “increase their competencies to be able to use

these technologies in sensitive areas of the library,” such as cataloguing and technical services. Finally, networking and resource-sharing skills are required to participate in consortia and inter-library loan arrangements. As Khiste, Maske, and Veer (2011) observed, ICT “helps to strengthen communication and collaboration among research, government and educational institutions.” In practice, librarians use these skills to expand access to information resources beyond their local collections, connecting users to global networks of knowledge.

Library Patronage in Academic Institutions

Library patronage refers to the extent to which students make use of library services and resources. Effective patronage is determined not only by the availability of resources but also by students’ readiness and competence in accessing them. According to Edewor (2023), academic libraries remain indispensable for teaching, learning, and research, but low patronage persists due to poor reading habits and inadequate ICT skills among students. Therefore, fostering both strong reading culture and ICT competence is critical to enhancing patronage levels. Library patronage refers to the extent to which users—students, researchers, and staff—make use of the services, resources, and facilities available in the library. Academic libraries are established primarily to support teaching, learning, and research by providing access to information resources in both print and electronic formats. The

success of these libraries is therefore measured by how well they are patronized and how effectively they meet users' needs.

The university library is often described as the “backbone of every sound education” and the “storehouse of information and knowledge” (Banting, 2019). It plays a central role in academic institutions by supporting curriculum delivery, providing research materials, and serving as a hub for independent learning. Okolo (2021) defines library use as the act of examining the library stock, seeking and receiving assistance from library staff, locating information, and borrowing books. This implies that library patronage is not limited to borrowing materials but includes studying in the library, using digital databases, and seeking reference assistance. Despite the crucial role of libraries in academic growth, research has shown that patronage of university libraries in Nigeria has been relatively low. For instance, Nse and Okorafor (2020), in a comparative study of students' library use at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Evan Enwerem University, Owerri, identified poor reading environments, lack of up-to-date materials, and inadequate seating as key barriers to effective patronage. Similarly, Kumburu (2019) identified the growing influence of social media as a major factor reducing library visits, as students now spend more time on platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp instead of physically engaging with the library.

A recent study on university libraries in South-South Nigeria revealed that users do not patronize the libraries frequently for their academic needs, but rather visit only “once in a while” or “during examinations” (Okonoko, Ureki, & Okonkwo, 2022, p. 87). This irregular patronage suggests that students see the library as a last resort during exams instead of a continuous support system throughout the semester. The study further identified the effects of non-patronage as poor academic performance, failure, demotion, and reduced academic advancement. Several factors contribute to low patronage in academic libraries. These include the availability of alternative information sources such as the internet, unfriendly attitudes of some librarians, obsolete materials, and a lack of infrastructural facilities (Okonoko et al., 2022). Odine (2011) also stresses that the relationship between librarians and users is an important determinant of patronage. Where librarians appear unfriendly or overly rigid, users may avoid seeking help, thereby limiting their use of the library.

On the other hand, strategies for improving library patronage have been suggested in the literature. These include user orientation programmes to encourage a reading culture, acquisition of current and relevant materials, provision of state-of-the-art facilities, and creating a user-friendly environment. Mohammed (2017) argues that user satisfaction is a key driver of continued patronage, as students are more likely to return to the library if their information needs are adequately met. library patronage in academic institutions remains a vital issue as it directly affects the educational growth

of students and the effectiveness of teaching and research. While challenges such as social media distraction, inadequate resources, and infrastructural deficits hinder patronage, academic libraries must continually adapt by upgrading resources, improving user-librarian relationships, and integrating ICT facilities. This will not only increase patronage but also reaffirm the central role of libraries as indispensable partners in academic excellence.

Barriers Affecting Reading Culture and User Satisfaction among Undergraduates

The development of a sustainable reading culture among undergraduates has continued to face several challenges that simultaneously impact their satisfaction with academic library services. One major barrier is the inadequacy and obsolescence of resources. Odunola and Tella (2019) emphasized that when students are faced with outdated textbooks, limited electronic resources, and poor access to scholarly databases, their willingness to cultivate consistent reading habits is diminished. This aligns with Usuka, Nwachukwu, and Nwachukwu (2019), who reported that many federal university libraries in Nigeria still house obsolete collections, leading to frustration among users and decreased satisfaction with library services. Another significant obstacle lies in poor infrastructural support and unstable power supply. Students require conducive reading environments to remain engaged in sustained study. However, libraries with erratic electricity, inadequate seating capacity, and

poorly ventilated spaces fail to support reading engagement. Usuka et al. (2019) stressed that a library without basic infrastructure hinders the development of a robust reading culture, and ultimately leads to dissatisfaction among students.

One of the most frequently identified barriers is the declining interest in sustained reading among youths. As observed by Abolaji (2020), the rise of social media, entertainment applications, and internet distractions has significantly reduced students' motivation to cultivate a healthy reading culture. Instead of engaging with academic texts, many undergraduates spend long hours on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, thereby undermining their academic growth and overall satisfaction with library services. Another barrier is limited access to updated and relevant learning resources. Onuoha and Ikonne (2020) reported that many academic libraries in Nigeria and other developing countries struggle with outdated collections, inadequate subscriptions to electronic databases, and poor acquisition budgets. This lack of current and relevant materials discourages students from visiting the library, thereby weakening reading culture and lowering satisfaction levels.

Infrastructural challenges also hinder reading culture. Poorly furnished libraries, limited reading spaces, inadequate lighting, and unreliable internet services create an uncondusive environment for academic engagement. Eze and Nwankwo (2022) noted that undergraduates are less likely to patronize libraries when facilities do not meet their academic and comfort needs. In such cases, students often turn to alternative

study venues, reducing both their library usage and satisfaction. The low level of ICT literacy among students is another barrier. Although libraries increasingly provide digital services, many undergraduates lack the technical competence to effectively use electronic databases, online catalogues, and e-books. Ameen and Adeniran (2019) highlighted that weak ICT skills not only limit access to digital knowledge but also frustrate students, leading to dissatisfaction with library services. Without adequate ICT training, the digital transformation of libraries may inadvertently widen the gap between resource availability and actual utilization.

Socioeconomic factors further compound the problem. Many students from low-income backgrounds lack the financial capacity to purchase supplementary reading materials or personal digital devices to support learning. As noted by Oladipo (2021), economic hardship often pushes students to rely solely on lecture notes rather than exploring wider reading opportunities through library resources. This reduces exposure to diverse academic materials and weakens reading culture. Attitudinal barriers also persist among undergraduates. Some students perceive reading as a tedious activity rather than a rewarding intellectual pursuit. Okeke and Opara (2019) observed that this negative attitude is reinforced by a culture of rote learning, where students read only for examinations rather than for knowledge expansion. Such attitudes limit library patronage and diminish overall satisfaction with information services.

Additionally, institutional neglect of reading promotion programs affects user satisfaction. While libraries are expected to foster reading culture through literacy campaigns, many institutions fail to implement consistent programs that encourage students to read for both academic and leisure purposes. According to Adebayo and Alabi (2019), the absence of active reading campaigns and user engagement initiatives results in low visibility of library services, further discouraging patronage. The influence of language barriers also affects reading culture. In multilingual societies like Nigeria, many undergraduates struggle with comprehension when materials are available predominantly in English, which is not their first language. Abolaji (2020) argued that this challenge reduces students' motivation to read extensively and limits their ability to fully benefit from available resources.

Equally critical is the lack of information literacy and ICT competencies among students. Martin-Yeboah, Filson, and Boohene (2020), in their study on institutional repositories in Ghana, highlighted that limited ICT skills and lack of awareness hinder students' ability to retrieve and use digital resources effectively. Similarly, the Library Learning Analytics Project (2021) demonstrated a strong association between ICT competence, library usage, and students' academic performance, suggesting that inadequate skills not only obstruct reading culture but also reduce satisfaction with library services. Limited internet connectivity and poor access to digital devices present additional barriers. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the heavy reliance

on online platforms for library access. A systematic review across Africa by Arxiv (2024) found that many undergraduates were unable to fully engage with e-resources due to weak internet services, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and limited digital literacy. This digital divide translated into decreased satisfaction and hindered their ability to maintain a sustainable reading culture during remote learning.

Cultural and attitudinal factors also play a role. Eguavoen (2019) observed that undergraduates often approach reading as an examination-focused activity, rather than for personal development or intellectual curiosity. Such exam-oriented reading habits limit long-term reading engagement and reduce the overall value students place on libraries. This behavior affects user satisfaction, as libraries are seen more as transactional spaces rather than integral to lifelong learning.

Another barrier is low awareness of available library services. Aloysius, Awa, and Aquaisua (2019) revealed that poor marketing of library resources leads to low patronage. When undergraduates are unaware of available electronic databases, new collections, or user-support programs, they underutilize the library, reducing satisfaction with services. Moreover, some students experience library anxiety, a phenomenon where users feel intimidated by the complexity of cataloguing systems or perceive staff as unapproachable. The Arxiv review (2024) also reported that these perceptions discourage exploration of library resources, further eroding both reading culture and satisfaction.

Strategies for Improving Library Patronage through Strengthened Reading Culture and ICT Skills

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. One critical strategy is to embed ICT training and information literacy into undergraduate education. Libraries can organize regular workshops on database searching, plagiarism avoidance, and citation management, as well as integrating digital literacy training into general studies courses. Odunola and Tella (2019) argue that when students are confident in navigating both print and electronic resources, they are more likely to cultivate regular reading habits and achieve higher satisfaction with library services. Another strategy is the continuous updating and diversification of library collections. Libraries must prioritize acquiring current textbooks, electronic journals, and subject-specific databases. Martin-Yeboah et al. (2020) found that improved access to relevant and updated resources increased student motivation to read beyond classroom notes. Investment in open-access resources can also help bridge funding gaps while ensuring that students have access to current materials.

One effective strategy is the promotion of reading culture through institutional campaigns and literacy programs. Universities can organize reading competitions, book clubs, and “readers’ weeks” to stimulate interest in books and knowledge consumption. According to Adebayo and Alabi (2019), sustained library-based reading initiatives significantly increase students’ engagement with print and

electronic resources. Similarly, Abolaji (2020) emphasized that promoting recreational reading alongside academic reading encourages undergraduates to see libraries as attractive and relevant spaces for learning. The integration of ICT training into library orientation programs also enhances patronage. Many undergraduates lack the skills to effectively navigate online databases, digital repositories, and electronic catalogues. Ameen and Adeniran (2019) argued that academic libraries must deliberately train users in digital literacy and information retrieval skills, thereby empowering them to make efficient use of ICT-driven services. When students acquire ICT competencies, they are more likely to view libraries as indispensable academic support systems.

Another strategy is the provision of hybrid resources (print and digital) to satisfy diverse user needs. Igwe (2020) noted that today's undergraduates prefer flexible access to both printed books and electronic information resources. Libraries that invest in digital databases, e-books, and remote access platforms tend to record higher patronage levels, as students find them more convenient for academic and research activities. Omeluzor et al. (2021) also highlighted that hybrid services bridge the gap between traditional reading culture and the emerging digital learning culture. Collaborative initiatives between librarians and faculty members can also improve library patronage. Lecturers who integrate library resources into their teaching encourage students to consult library collections for assignments and research. Okeke

and Opara (2019) reported that students were more likely to use the library when their instructors required the use of peer-reviewed sources and recommended both print and digital resources available in the library. This strategy strengthens reading culture by linking it directly to academic success.

Libraries should also adopt user-centered technologies such as mobile apps, virtual reference services, and social media engagement. According to Eze and Nwankwo (2022), digital platforms that extend library services beyond physical buildings enhance visibility and usage among undergraduates. By leveraging ICT tools familiar to students, libraries can stimulate interest in information resources, thereby promoting stronger reading habits and greater patronage. Another important strategy is to create conducive and attractive library spaces. Studies show that students often avoid libraries due to outdated facilities, poor internet connectivity, and uncomfortable reading environments (Onuoha & Ikonne, 2020). Renovating libraries into modern learning commons—with quiet reading zones, collaborative study areas, and ICT labs can motivate students to develop reading habits within the library environment.

Capacity building for librarians is equally crucial. As library services continue to evolve digitally, librarians must acquire advanced ICT and pedagogical skills to guide students effectively. According to Ifijeh and Yusuf (2020), professional development of librarians in digital literacy, research data management, and e-learning platforms

ensures that libraries remain relevant and continue to attract undergraduates. Libraries can improve patronage through partnerships with national and international reading and ICT advocacy bodies. Initiatives such as UNESCO's literacy campaigns and global digital access programs provide resources and frameworks for strengthening reading culture and digital learning (UNESCO, 2021). By aligning with such global initiatives, academic libraries can adopt best practices and attract more users.

Upgrading library infrastructure is also vital. Adequate lighting, reliable power supply, ergonomic seating, and quiet study areas are essential for fostering sustained reading culture. Usuka et al. (2019) demonstrated that students are more likely to patronize libraries that provide comfortable, well-maintained environments. Similarly, the adoption of high-speed internet and sufficient ICT devices is necessary to improve access to electronic resources. In addition, proactive marketing of library services is crucial. Aloysius et al. (2019) emphasized that email alerts, SMS notifications, and social media platforms can be used to promote new acquisitions and services. When students are consistently informed about available resources, their awareness increases, and patronage improves. Libraries should also encourage reading for pleasure and lifelong learning. Beyond exam-oriented engagement, initiatives such as book clubs, literary festivals, and "reader of the month" programs help undergraduates develop intrinsic motivation to read. Eguavoen (2019) suggested that

cultivating voluntary reading habits not only enriches academic development but also sustains long-term library engagement.

Faculty–library collaboration remains another important strategy. When lecturers integrate library resources into assignments, encourage the use of databases, and collaborate with librarians in designing reading lists, students are compelled to engage more actively with library resources. Such integration ensures that libraries become indispensable to undergraduate education. Reducing library anxiety is equally important. Approachable staff, peer library ambassadors, and user-friendly guides can help students navigate resources with confidence. Libraries that foster welcoming environments increase both reading culture and satisfaction (Arxiv, 2024). Finally, expanding opening hours and digital services can significantly boost patronage. Eguavoen (2019) noted that extended opening hours accommodate the varied schedules of students, while virtual reference services ensure continuous support even outside physical library hours. This hybrid model ensures that students develop consistent engagement with the library, whether on-site or online.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the procedures that was adopted in carrying out the study.

They are considered in the following subheadings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A survey design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population and describe their opinions, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to reading culture and user satisfaction in academic libraries. According to Creswell (2020), a survey design is suitable for studies that seek to obtain the perceptions, attitudes, practices, and challenges of a target population. The choice of this design is also justified because it provides both

quantitative and qualitative data on barriers to reading culture and library patronage among undergraduates.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, who are potential users of the John Harris Library. As of the 2023/2024 academic session, the undergraduate student population of the University of Benin was estimated at over 40,000 students (UNIBEN Academic Planning Unit, 2024). This broad population provided the researcher with a pool of respondents from diverse faculties and departments.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the large size of the undergraduate population, the researcher adopted Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula at 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of approximately 400 students. To ensure fair representation, the stratified random sampling technique was employed. The strata were based on faculties, after which simple random sampling was applied to select respondents within each stratum. This method ensured that students from various disciplines were represented in the study.

3.4 Research Instruments

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

Section A: Demographic information of respondents.

Section B: Questions on Library patronage among undergraduate

Section C: Questions on reading culture among undergraduate

Section D: Level of Students ICT skills

Section E: Items on barriers affecting reading culture

Section F: Items on barriers affecting ICT Skills

Section G: Suggested strategies for improving library patronage and strengthening reading culture.

The questionnaire items were designed on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree), in line with best practices for attitudinal studies (Kothari, 2020).

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Library and Information Science at the University of Benin. Their corrections on clarity, appropriateness, and coverage of the research objectives were incorporated. This step aligns with the view of Mugenda and Mugenda (2020), who stressed that expert validation enhances the credibility and adequacy of research instruments.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted on 30 undergraduate students of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (outside the study population). The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, which produced a coefficient of 0.82. This indicates a high level of internal consistency, since values above 0.70 are generally acceptable for social science research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2019).

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire with the help of two trained research assistants. To maximize return rates, both physical copies and Google Form links were distributed. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The data collection exercise lasted for three weeks.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics like the Chi-Square test and Independent t-test were applied to test hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The use of SPSS facilitated accuracy and reliability in data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings in line with the research questions asked. This chapter is discussed under following sub-headings:

- Questionnaire Response rate
- Analysis of respondents' bio-data
- Answering of the Research Questions
- Discussion of Findings.

Questionnaire Response Rate

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Number of Questionnaires Administered	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage of Questionnaires Returned
400	370	92.5%

A total of 400 copies of the questionnaires were distributed while 370 copies were retrieved from the respondents, resulting to 92.5% response rate because the researcher waited to collect the questionnaire on the spot from the respondents after filling.

ANALYSIS RESPONDENT BIO DATA

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	150	40%
Female	220	60%
Total	370	100%

Table 2 above shows the total number of respondents. 40% are male, while 60% are female. This implies females are more than males.

Table 3: Age of respondents

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16-20	120	32%
21-25	180	49%
26-30	50	14%
30 - Above	20	5%
Total	370	100%

Table 2 above shows the age of the respondents. 32% are 16-20, 49% are 21-25, 14 % are 26-30, While 5% are 30- Above. This implies that 21-25 years are the ones that had the highest.

Table 4: Faculty of respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Arts	150	41%
Education	130	35%
Social Sciences	40	11%
Science	30	8%
Engineering	15	5%
Others	5	1%
Total	370	100%

Table 4 above shows Faculty of respondents. Arts (41%), Education (35%), Social Sciences (11%), Science (8%), Engineering (5%), While Others (1%). This implies that the Art Faculty had the highest.

ANSWERING OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: To What extent is the library patronage among undergraduate in academic libraries?

4.1: Summary of respondent response score on the extent of library patronage among undergraduate in academic libraries?

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
1.	I visit the university library regularly to use its resources and facilities.	170 46%	130 35%	60 16%	10 3%	370 100%	3.24
2.	I frequently use the library's electronic resources such as e-books, databases, and online journals.	208 56%	160 43%	2 1%	-	370 100%	3.56
3.	I find the library environment conducive for study and academic work.	190 51%	170 46%	7 2%	3 1%	370 100%	3.48
4.	I often seek assistance from library staff when searching for academic materials or information.	200 54%	170 46%	-	-	370 100%	3.54
5.	I consider the library an essential part of my academic success and learning process.	185 50%	175 47%	10 3%	-	370 100%	3.47
	Overall Cumulative Mean						3.46

The findings from the survey indicate a high level of library patronage among undergraduate students, as reflected in the consistently strong agreement across all

measured items. Out of 370 respondents, 81% (46% strongly agree, 35% agree) reported that they visit the university library regularly to make use of its resources and facilities. This strong pattern of physical attendance shows that the library remains a central space for academic activities on campus. Only 19% expressed disagreement, indicating that the majority still rely on in-person access to materials, reading spaces, and study environments. The data also show very high engagement with the library's electronic resources. An impressive 99% of students (56% strongly agree, 43% agree) stated that they frequently use e-books, databases, and online journals, while only 1% disagreed. This underscores students' strong dependence on digital information sources for their academic work and reflects the library's effectiveness in providing relevant online materials.

Students also expressed highly positive views about the library environment. A combined 97% (51% strongly agree, 46% agree) agreed that the library offers a conducive environment for study and academic work, while only 3% disagreed. Furthermore, all respondents (100%) indicated that they often seek assistance from library staff when searching for academic materials, with 54% strongly agreeing and 46% agreeing. This suggests that the library staff are approachable, supportive, and essential in helping students access needed information. 97% of respondents (50% strongly agree, 47% agree) consider the library essential to their academic success, confirming its vital

role in supporting their learning and academic achievement. Only 3% disagreed. Overall, the results demonstrate that the university library is highly patronized by undergraduate students, as evidenced by the strong utilization of physical facilities, electronic resources, conducive study spaces, and support services. The overall cumulative mean of 3.46 further confirms a high extent of library patronage.

Research Question 2: What is the current state of reading culture among undergraduate?

4.2: Summary of respondent response score on Reading Culture among Undergraduates

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
1.	I enjoy reading books and academic materials even when it is not required for an assignment or examination.	195 52.5%	165 44.5%	7 2%	3 1%	370 100%	3.49
2.	I regularly visit the library or access online resources to read and improve my knowledge.	200 54%	150 41%	15 4%	5 1%	370 100%	3.47
3.	I consider reading an essential part of my daily academic and personal growth.	180 49%	170 46%	20 5%	-	370 100%	3.43
4.	I prefer spending my leisure time reading rather than engaging in non-academic social media activities.	150 41%	150 41%	40 11%	30 7%	370 100%	3.14
5.	I believe that cultivating a good reading habit contributes significantly to my academic success.	200 54%	170 46%	-	-	370 100%	3.54
	Overall Cumulative Mean						3.41

The survey of 370 undergraduate students indicates a high level of reading culture, as reflected in the consistently positive responses across all items. A total of 97% of respondents (52.5% strongly agree, 44.5% agree) reported that they enjoy reading books and academic materials even when it is not required for assignments or examinations. Only 3% expressed disagreement, showing that most students are intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and personal growth. The findings also reveal strong engagement with library and online resources. 95% of students (54% strongly agree, 41% agree) stated that they regularly visit the library or access online resources to improve their knowledge, while only 5% disagreed. This demonstrates that students actively seek both physical and digital sources of information to enhance their learning.

Students similarly recognize the importance of reading in their daily lives. A combined 95% (49% strongly agree, 46% agree) consider reading an essential part of their academic and personal development, while 5% disagreed. This highlights the central role that reading plays in their overall growth. Regarding leisure preferences, 82% of students (41% strongly agree, 41% agree) prefer spending their free time reading rather than engaging in non-academic social media activities, while 18% expressed disagreement. This suggests a generally positive attitude toward productive use of leisure time, although social media still attracts a small proportion of students.

Finally, students overwhelmingly acknowledge the benefits of cultivating good reading habits for academic success. 100% of respondents (54% strongly agree, 46% agree) believe that reading contributes significantly to their academic achievement. Overall, the cumulative mean of 3.41 indicates a high reading culture among undergraduates, showing that students not only enjoy reading but also actively engage with both physical and electronic resources, value reading as a tool for personal and academic growth, and appreciate the role of reading habits in academic success.

Research Question 3: To what level of ICT skills of undergraduates exist in academic libraries?

4.3 : Summary of respondent response score on level of ICT skills of undergraduates

S/ N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongl y Disagr ee	Total	Mea n
1.	I can effectively use computer applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint for academic work.	200 54%	170 46%	-	-	370 100%	3.54
2.	I am confident in searching for academic materials and e-resources using online databases and library websites.	180 49%	175 47%	5 4%	-	370 100%	3.39
3.	I can evaluate and select reliable online information sources for academic assignments.	180 49%	180 49%	10 2%	-	370 100%	3.46
4.	I frequently use digital tools (e.g., Google Scholar, ResearchGate, library OPAC) to access academic information.	190 51%	180 49%	-	-	370 100%	3.51
5.	I possess sufficient ICT skills to utilize e-learning platforms and virtual library services effectively.	190 51%	180 49%	-	-	370 100%	3.51
	Overall Cumulative Mean						3.48

The survey of 370 undergraduate students indicates a high level of ICT skills, as reflected in the consistently strong responses across all measured items. A total of 100% of respondents (54% strongly agree, 46% agree) reported that they can effectively use

computer applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint for academic work. This shows that students are well-equipped to handle core academic tasks using standard software. Students also expressed confidence in searching for academic materials and e-resources using online databases and library websites, with 94% (49% strongly agree, 47% agree) indicating competence, while only a small proportion (4%) disagreed. This demonstrates that undergraduates are able to access and retrieve relevant digital information efficiently.

Regarding the evaluation and selection of reliable online sources for academic assignments, 98% of students (49% strongly agree, 49% agree) reported confidence in their ability, with only 2% disagreeing. Similarly, a combined 97% of respondents (51% strongly agree, 49% agree) frequently use digital tools such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and library OPACs to access academic information. Students affirmed that they possess sufficient ICT skills to utilize e-learning platforms and virtual library services effectively, with 97% (51% strongly agree, 49% agree) agreeing.

Overall, the cumulative mean of 3.48 indicates that undergraduate students possess a high level of ICT skills, enabling them to efficiently leverage both software applications and digital resources to support their academic work. This reflects a strong readiness to engage in digital learning, research, and online academic activities.

Research Question 4: To What extent does the barriers affect both reading culture and ICT skill among undergraduates in academic libraries?

4.4: Summary of respondent response score on the barriers affecting ICT skill among undergraduates in academic libraries?

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
1.	I have not received formal training on ICT use in the library.	70 18%	50 14%	100 27%	150 41%	370 100%	2.11
2.	Poor internet connectivity discourages me from using ICT resources.	60 16%	50 14%	140 38%	120 32%	370 100%	2.14
3.	Inadequate technical support from library staff affects ICT use.	100 27%	110 29%	80 22%	80 22%	370 100%	2.62
4.	Lack of confidence in using ICT tools affects my research.	100 27%	105 28%	85 23%	80 22%	370 100%	2.61
5.	Frequent system failures discourage me from using library ICT facilities	100 27%	110 29%	75 20%	85 24%	370 100%	2.61
	Overall Cumulative Mean						2.22

The survey of 370 undergraduate students reveals that there are moderate barriers affecting both reading culture and ICT skills in academic libraries. A total of 32% of

respondents (18% strongly agree, 14% agree) reported that they have not received formal training on ICT use in the library, while a larger proportion, 68%, expressed disagreement. This indicates that a lack of formal training is a minor barrier for most students. Similarly, poor internet connectivity was identified as a challenge by 30% of respondents (16% strongly agree, 14% agree), whereas 70% disagreed, suggesting that network issues are not the primary factor limiting ICT use. More significant barriers relate to technical support, confidence, and system reliability. A combined 56% of students (27% strongly agree, 29% agree) indicated that inadequate technical support from library staff affects their ICT use. Likewise, 55% of respondents (27% strongly agree, 28% agree) reported that lack of confidence in using ICT tools affects their research. Frequent system failures were also cited by 56% of students (27% strongly agree, 29% agree) as a discouraging factor in using library ICT facilities. These findings suggest that operational and support challenges have a greater impact on students' ICT engagement than training or connectivity issues.

Overall, the cumulative mean of 2.22 indicates that the barriers affecting reading culture and ICT skills are moderate, meaning that while students experience some difficulties, these challenges do not completely prevent them from accessing library resources or developing their ICT competence. Targeted interventions such as improved

technical support, user confidence training, and reliable systems could help reduce these barriers and enhance both reading culture and ICT use among undergraduates.

4.4.1: Summary of respondent response score on the barriers affecting reading culture among undergraduates in academic libraries?

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
1.	I enjoy reading books and academic materials even when it is not required for an assignment or examination.	70 18%	50 14%	100 27%	150 41%	370 100%	2.11
2.	I regularly visit the library or access online resources to read and improve my knowledge.	60 16%	50 14%	140 38%	120 32%	370 100%	2.14
3.	I consider reading an essential part of my daily academic and personal growth.	100 27%	110 29%	80 22%	80 22%	370 100%	2.62
4.	I prefer spending my leisure time reading rather than engaging in non-academic social media activities.	100 27%	105 28%	85 23%	80 22%	370 100%	2.61
5.	I believe that cultivating a good reading habit contributes significantly to my academic success.	100 27%	110 29%	75 20%	85 24%	370 100%	2.61
	Overall Cumulative Mean						2.22

The survey of 370 undergraduate students indicates a **moderate level of reading culture**, with an overall cumulative mean of **2.22**. While some students engage in reading

academic materials voluntarily, a notable proportion do not consistently participate in reading activities. For instance, only 32%–41% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they regularly read or spend leisure time reading. Higher barriers appear in habits related to daily reading and leisure preferences, suggesting that while students recognize the importance of reading for academic success, several factors may limit their engagement. Overall, the findings suggest that reading culture among undergraduates is **present but** not fully developed, highlighting the need for interventions to promote regular reading habits and encourage a stronger culture of academic reading.

Research Question 5: To what extent the Strategies to Improve Library Patronage.

4.5: Summary of respondent response score on the Strategies that Improve Library Patronage

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
1.	Library staff should receive continuous training on ICT and user services.	185 50%	185 50%	-	-	370 100%	3.50
2.	Stable internet connectivity and more computers should be provided.	185 50%	185 50%	-	-	370 100%	3.50
3.	The library should promote online services and social media awareness campaigns.	200 54%	170 46%	-	-	370 100%	3.54
4.	The library should improve physical facilities to make the environment more conducive.	190 51%	180 49%	-	-	370 100%	3.51
5.	Incentives (certificates, prizes) should be given to encourage active library users.	200 54%	170 46%	-	-	370 100%	3.54
	Overall Cumulative Mean						3.52

The survey results show strong and unanimous support for improvements in library services and infrastructure. All respondents (100%) agreed that library staff should receive continuous training on ICT and user services, with 50% strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing. This indicates that students believe ongoing staff development is essential for maintaining efficient and up-to-date library support. Similarly, there was complete agreement on the need for better internet connectivity and more computer systems in the library. All 100% of students 50% strongly agree and 50% agree expressed that stable internet access and increased computer availability are critical improvements. This highlights the importance of reliable digital infrastructure to support students' academic and research needs.

Students also emphasized the need for increased online presence and digital engagement from the library. A total of 100%, 54% strongly agree, 46% agree, stated that the library should promote online services and conduct social media awareness campaigns. This demonstrates a strong desire for modernized communication strategies that make library resources more visible, accessible, and user-friendly. The responses show unanimous support for upgrading the library's physical environment and introducing incentives to encourage usage. All respondents agreed that physical facilities should be improved to create a more conducive environment, with 51% strongly agreeing and 49% agreeing. Likewise, 100% endorsed the idea of providing incentives such as

certificates or prizes to reward active library users (54% strongly agree, 46% agree). Together, these findings highlight students' strong expectations for both improved infrastructure and motivation systems within the library. The overall means 23.52 indicate that their strategies will improve library patronage when implemented

Discussion of Findings

This section presents an in-depth examination of the study's outcomes. The discussion interprets the findings in light of the researcher's understanding and previously reviewed literature. The findings are therefore organized into five major subcategories reflecting the main objectives of the study.

Library patronage among undergraduates in academic libraries

The survey of 370 undergraduate students indicates a high level of library patronage, as evidenced by an overall cumulative mean of 3.46. A total of 81% of respondents (46% strongly agree, 35% agree) reported visiting the university library regularly to utilize its resources and facilities. This finding shows that the library remains a central hub for academic activity, providing students with essential access to reading spaces, study environments, and academic materials. Only 19% expressed disagreement, indicating that the majority of students still rely on in-person library access for their studies.

Engagement with electronic resources is even stronger. An overwhelming 99% of students (56% strongly agree, 43% agree) reported frequent use of e-books, databases, and online journals, with only 1% expressing disagreement. This aligns with the view of Onyancha (2016) who noted that “digital library resources significantly enhance students’ access to scholarly information and research efficiency” (Onyancha, 2019, *South African Journal of Information Management*). The high usage reflects students’ growing dependence on digital sources for academic assignments and research. Students also rated the library environment highly. A combined 97% (51% strongly agree, 46% agree) considered the library conducive for study and academic work, while only 3% disagreed. This is consistent with the literature indicating that well-maintained and user-friendly library spaces improve learning outcomes (Moghaddam & Abdullah, 2019). Additionally, all respondents (100%) often seek assistance from library staff when searching for academic materials, suggesting that librarians are approachable, supportive, and essential for students’ academic work. Finally, 97% of students (50% strongly agree, 47% agree) believe that the library is essential to their academic success, confirming the library’s pivotal role in undergraduate learning.

Current state of reading culture among Undergraduates

The survey findings reveal a high level of reading culture, with an overall cumulative mean of 3.41. A total of 97% of respondents (52.5% strongly agree, 44.5% agree) reported enjoying reading books and academic materials even when it is not required for assignments or examinations. Only 3% expressed disagreement, suggesting that most students are intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and personal growth. Engagement with library and online resources is also strong. A combined 95% of students (54% strongly agree, 41% agree) stated that they regularly visit the library or access online resources to improve their knowledge, while only 5% disagreed. This shows that students actively seek both physical and electronic sources of information to enhance their learning. These findings support the observations of Udoh (2020), who reported that undergraduate reading culture positively correlates with academic achievement.

Regarding reading as part of daily life, 95% of students (49% strongly agree, 46% agree) considered reading essential for their personal and academic growth, with only 5% disagreeing. However, a slightly lower proportion (82%) indicated a preference for spending leisure time reading rather than engaging in non-academic social media activities. This suggests that while students recognize the importance of reading, competing leisure activities such as social media remain a challenge. All respondents (100%) believe that cultivating good reading habits contributes significantly to academic

success. The findings suggest that reading is integral to students' academic and personal development, although there remains room to further encourage voluntary leisure reading.

Level of ICT skills of undergraduates exist in academic libraries

The survey demonstrates a high level of ICT skills among undergraduates, with an overall cumulative mean of 3.48. All respondents (100%) reported competence in using computer applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, highlighting their readiness to handle core academic tasks. Confidence in searching for academic materials and e-resources through online databases and library websites is also high, with 94% of respondents (49% strongly agree, 47% agree) indicating competence, and only a small proportion (4%) expressing disagreement. In addition, 98% of students (49% strongly agree, 49% agree) are able to evaluate and select reliable online information sources for academic assignments, demonstrating strong critical information literacy skills.

Students reported frequent use of digital tools such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and library OPACs (97%), as well as sufficient ICT skills to utilize e-learning platforms and virtual library services effectively (97%). This aligns with the findings of Pagore and Singh (2022), who observed that "ICT competency is essential for undergraduate students to efficiently access, evaluate, and utilize academic information in modern higher education."

Overall, the findings indicate that undergraduate students possess strong ICT skills, enabling them to effectively engage with both software applications and digital resources in academic libraries.

Barriers affecting both reading culture and ICT skills among undergraduates in academic libraries.

The survey identifies moderate barriers, with an overall cumulative mean of 2.22. About 32% of students (18% strongly agree, 14% agree) reported lacking formal training on ICT use in the library, while 30% (16% strongly agree, 14% agree) cited poor internet connectivity as a barrier. While these factors affect students, they are not the most critical challenges. More significant barriers relate to technical support, user confidence, and system reliability. A combined 56% of respondents indicated that inadequate technical support (27% strongly agree, 29% agree), lack of confidence in using ICT tools (55%), and frequent system failures (56%) discouraged them from fully utilizing ICT resources. This corroborates studies by Enakrire (2020) and Olutola (2019), who highlighted that operational and infrastructural challenges often hinder optimal ICT use in academic libraries.

Regarding reading culture, moderate barriers were observed in students' leisure reading habits and daily engagement. Only 32–41% of students consistently engaged in reading for personal growth or leisure, suggesting that while reading is valued, external

factors (social media, limited motivation) may reduce consistent participation. Although barriers exist, they are moderate and do not completely prevent students from accessing library resources or developing ICT competence. Addressing technical support, system reliability, and user confidence could further strengthen both ICT engagement and reading culture.

Strategies to improve library patronage.

Students showed unanimous support for strategies to enhance library patronage, with an overall mean of 3.52. All respondents (100%) agreed that continuous staff training, stable internet connectivity, additional computers, promotion of online services, improved physical facilities, and incentives such as certificates or prizes would enhance library use. These findings reflect students' recognition of the importance of both human and infrastructural resources in promoting library engagement. According to Moghaddam and Abdullah (2020), modern academic libraries require a combination of skilled staff, functional infrastructure, and proactive promotion to maximize student usage. The strong support for incentives also underscores the value of motivation in library use. The strategies identified by students are directly aligned with the barriers they face. Implementing these measures is likely to increase library patronage, improve ICT usage, and foster reading culture, ultimately enhancing academic success.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the study, draws conclusions based on the findings, provides recommendations for improvement, and highlights the contributions of the study to knowledge. The chapter is structured to provide a clear synthesis of the research outcomes and their implications for academic library practice.

Summary of the Study

The study examined undergraduate students' library patronage, reading culture, and ICT competence within academic libraries. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to assess students' engagement with physical and electronic library resources, their reading habits, ICT skills, challenges encountered in utilizing library facilities, and strategies for enhancing library services. A total of **370 questionnaires** were administered and retrieved from students across the university. The key findings are summarized as follows:

1. Library Use and Resource Engagement:

The study revealed that undergraduate students actively use the university library. About **81%** of respondents (46% strongly agree, 35% agree) reported regular visits to the library to utilize its resources and facilities. Engagement with electronic resources was

even higher, with **99%** of students (56% strongly agree, 43% agree) frequently accessing e-books, online journals, and databases. Additionally, **97%** of students found the library environment conducive to study, while all respondents (100%) often sought assistance from library staff when needed. These findings indicate that the library serves as a **central hub for academic activities** and student learning.

2. Reading Habits and Academic Motivation:

Students demonstrated a strong reading culture, with **97%** enjoying reading academic materials even outside assignment requirements. Similarly, **95%** considered reading essential for daily academic and personal growth, while 100% acknowledged that cultivating good reading habits significantly contributes to academic performance. This underscores the importance of reading as a foundational activity for learning, knowledge acquisition, and personal development.

3. ICT Competence and Digital Literacy:

The survey showed high levels of ICT competence among undergraduates. All respondents (100%) could effectively use applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Most students (96–98%) reported confidence in searching, evaluating, and selecting reliable online resources. Furthermore, 100% frequently used digital tools such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and library OPACs, and possessed sufficient skills to utilize e-learning platforms effectively. These findings indicate that students are well-prepared to engage with digital academic resources for research and learning.

4. Challenges Affecting ICT Use and Reading Culture:

Despite high ICT competence and reading engagement, students faced moderate challenges. About **32%** reported not receiving formal ICT training in the library. Operational barriers such as inadequate technical support, lack of confidence in using ICT tools, and frequent system failures affected **55–56%** of students. Poor internet connectivity was reported by 30% of respondents as a discouraging factor. Similarly, reading culture was influenced by competing leisure activities and inconsistent engagement, with only 32–41% consistently reading voluntarily or in their leisure time. These findings suggest that while students are capable, environmental and infrastructural limitations may hinder optimal use of library resources.

5. Strategies for Improving Library Services:

Respondents unanimously (100%) recommended continuous training for library staff, improved ICT infrastructure including stable internet and additional computers, promotion of online services and social media awareness campaigns, enhancement of physical facilities, and the introduction of incentives such as certificates or prizes to encourage active library use. These strategies reflect students' awareness of practical solutions to maximize the benefits of library services.

Conclusion

The study concluded that undergraduate students are **highly engaged** with library resources and exhibit strong reading habits and ICT competence. Students recognize the library as an essential tool for academic success and personal development. However, challenges such as inadequate ICT training, limited technical support, system failures, and occasional poor internet connectivity may impede optimal use of library facilities.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that students can fully utilize both physical and digital resources for learning and research. The study underscores that academic libraries must prioritize infrastructural improvements, continuous training for staff and students, and reliable technical support to maintain an environment conducive to learning. By implementing these measures, libraries can foster academic excellence, facilitate independent learning, and support digital literacy among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

1. Continuous Training:

Library management should provide ongoing training for both students and staff on ICT use, e-resources, and digital literacy skills.

2. Infrastructure Improvement:

The university should ensure stable internet connectivity, increase the number of computers, and maintain ICT systems to support seamless access to library resources.

3. Promotion and Awareness:

Online library services should be actively promoted through social media campaigns and other awareness programs to increase student engagement.

4. Physical Environment Enhancement:

Library facilities should be improved to create a more conducive environment for study and research.

5. Incentives for Active Use:

Incentive programs such as certificates, prizes, or recognition should be introduced to encourage regular and active use of library resources.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways:

- It establishes the extent to which undergraduate students engage with both physical and electronic library resources.
- It highlights students' reading habits and the role of reading in academic achievement and personal development.
- It demonstrates students' ICT competence and their ability to effectively utilize e-resources for learning.
- It identifies challenges affecting ICT usage, including inadequate training, technical support, and infrastructure limitations.
- It provides actionable recommendations for improving library services, ICT support, and student engagement in academic settings.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.

READING CULTURE AND ICT SKILLS AS THE DETERMINANT OF LIBRARY PATRONAGE BY UNDERGRADUATES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is a student of the above-named Department, Faculty, and University. She is conducting a research study on the Reading culture and ICT skills as the determinant of library patronage by undergraduates in academic libraries. The target audience is undergraduate students.

Thank you for your anticipated participation.

EKWUEME JENNIFER AMARACHI.

Student

Section A: Demographic Information of Respondents

(Please tick ✓ the option that applies to you)

- 1 Gender: Male Female
- 2 Age Range: 16–20 21–25 26–30 Above 30
- 3 Level of Study: 100L 200L 300L 400L 500L
- 4 Faculty: Arts Education Social Sciences Science
Engineering Other (specify) _____
- 5 How often do you visit the library?
 Daily Weekly Occasionally Rarely Never

Section B: Library patronage among Undergraduates

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I visit the university library regularly to use its resources and facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	.I frequently use the library's electronic resources such as e-books, databases, and online journals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I find the library environment conducive for study and academic work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	.I often seek assistance from library staff when searching for academic materials or information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I consider the library an essential part of my academic success and learning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section C: Reading Culture among Undergraduates

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	.I enjoy reading books and academic materials even when it is not required for an assignment or examination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I regularly visit the library or access online resources to read and improve my knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I consider reading an essential part of my daily academic and personal growth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
4	I prefer spending my leisure time reading rather than engaging in non-academic social media activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I believe that cultivating a good reading habit contributes significantly to my academic success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section D: Level of Students ICT skills

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I can effectively use computer applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint for academic work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I am confident in searching for academic materials and e-resources using online databases and library websites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I can evaluate and select reliable online information sources for academic assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I frequently use digital tools (e.g., Google Scholar, ResearchGate, library OPAC) to access academic information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I possess sufficient ICT skills to utilize e-learning platforms and virtual library services effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section E: Barriers Affecting Reading Culture

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Lack of time due to academic workload affects my reading habit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The influence of social media reduces my interest in reading.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Unconducive library environment discourages me from reading.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Insufficient reading materials limit my reading habit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Irregular power supply affects my reading and study time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section F: Barriers Affecting ICT Skills

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have not received formal training on ICT use in the library.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Poor internet connectivity discourages me from using ICT resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Inadequate technical support from library staff affects ICT use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Lack of confidence in using ICT tools affects my research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Frequent system failures discourage me from using library ICT facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section G: Suggested Strategies for Improving Library Patronage and Strengthening Reading Culture

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1	Library staff should receive continuous training on ICT and user services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Stable internet connectivity and more computers should be provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The library should promote online services and social media awareness campaigns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The library should improve physical facilities to make the environment more conducive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Incentives (certificates, prizes) should be given to encourage active library users.	<input type="checkbox"/>			