
ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Effect of Users Perception of Library Resources on Library Use: A Case Study of Faculty Libraries in the University of Ibadan

Mary Sunday Enidiok¹ | Akpan Ben Bassey² | Asiat Adunola Babatunde

¹Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science,
University of Calabar, Nigeria.

²Department of Library Archive and Information Science,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to determine the effect of users' perception of library resources on library use; using University of Ibadan faculty library as a case study. The overall purpose of the study was to determine the effects of users' perception of library resources on library use and to investigate the role of library resources in meeting the information needs of the users. A simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 200 registered faculty library users as respondents for the study. A questionnaire instrument was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze each of the variables on the questionnaire and results were presented in frequency tables and percentages to show occurrences and events of each variable. Findings indicate that students in the University of Ibadan have a negative perception of the library resources because faculty libraries do not possess abundant resources for students use, couple with the poor accessibility of the resources to the students. The study recommends that the University authority should through the acquisition librarian, acquire specific library resources needed by the students and faculty members, in all formats.

Keywords: Users perception, library resources, and library use.

INTRODUCTION

Library resources are the stock in trade of librarians. These are the materials in the library which the users come to consult, read or borrow, and they play significant roles in education and also meeting the information needs of the library users. The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of library services and the provision of relevant resources for users. To this end, Librarians continue to strive to collect, store, organize and disseminate all forms of recorded knowledge to satisfy both present and future information needs of the user. Library resources are many and varied, but they can be divided into two broad categories namely printed and non-printed materials. The printed materials are books, pamphlets periodicals, newspapers and reference resources. Non-printed materials are, however, often referred to as audio-visual resources, as they can be grouped into three (i.e. Audio, visual and audio-visual).

They are the product of advanced technology, some of which require special equipment to operate.

Some information resources also come in the electronic format, and are usually stored on a server accessible through the internet or local server; examples include e-books, ejournals, e-magazine, web sites, and databases. Popoola and Haliso (2009) defined library information resources as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic format such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet/e-mail, videotapes/cassettes, diskettes magnetic disk, computers, microforms, etc. These informational materials are the raw materials that libraries acquire, catalog, stock, and make available to their patrons, as well as use to provide various other services.

Library users need various kinds of information for teaching, research, imparting knowledge and self-development. To achieve this, the right information must be made available for the right person at the right time, and in its appropriate format; all of which are the core responsibilities of the library. This is essential especially in academic libraries where the information need of users may be to get access to the relevant information materials to do an assignment, prepare for their examinations, and carry out a research work or for leisure. This imperatively makes the accessibility, availability, and timeliness of information retrieval play a major role in encouraging the effective use of these academic libraries. It is worthy to note at this point that the perception of the users on the library resources also has an impressive effect on the level of utilization of such resources. The faculty libraries of the University of Ibadan play a major role in ensuring that the information needs of the library users are met. These libraries are academic libraries located within the various faculties aimed at supporting the study activities of the students by helping them to meet their varying information needs. The purpose of these faculty libraries differ in varying degree, from one faculty to the other and they complement each other, in that they all adhere extensively and they lay particular emphasis to research projects apart from the curricular needs of the institution. Besides aiding in the studies of undergraduates and assisting the teachers in their teaching and periodic research, these faculty libraries are primarily concerned to pro-create an urge for reading habit amongst the undergraduates who are expected to get a firsthand knowledge to use the library resources most effectively in their future career.

To best serve the needs of faculty, university librarians need to understand the opinions and perception of their users to identify their information needs and how to serve them better. Faculty members are expected to cooperate with the university librarians in different ways, such as helping in the selection of relevant information sources and formulating a viable collection development policy.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Academic libraries are expected to be the location to which researchers within the tertiary academic environment will go to access various format of information resources to meet their information needs; as one of the objectives of establishing a university is to promote scholarship, research, and learning in the various fields of learning. The basis for the effective utilization of the services and resources made available by academic libraries through the different faculty libraries most often anchor on the users' abilities and their perception of such

library's competence to meet their information needs. Users perception of a library's services and resources can either be positive or negative, which in the most case may be dependent on user education and the marketing strategies of the library.

Faculty libraries are set up to encourage users' utilization of library information resources at the departmental and faculty levels. Most users still do not make use of these libraries, while some take full advantage of it. However, availability and accessibility of the information materials, as well as the timeliness of the information retrieval, play a major role in affecting the perceptions of the library users and this also plays a major role in-library use. It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted to determine the effects of users' perception of library resources on library use.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was conceived with a view to:

1. Determine the effects of users' perception of library resources on library use.
2. Investigate the role of library resources in meeting the information needs of the users.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the effects of users' perception of library resources on library use?
2. What are the roles of library resources in meeting the information needs of the users?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Behind the mission and vision of university education is the university library, which is the academic library serving the university community. Academic libraries are libraries established along with academic institutions like universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. They provide professional and academic services to satisfy the entire college or university students and faculty alike.

Over the past decade, most libraries in Nigeria have been experiencing many difficulties providing materials to the users on account of the alarming rate of inflation of the prices of books and journals as well as depreciation value of the Nigerian economy (Ehikhamenor, 1993). Osundina (1974) who studied the relationship between accessibility and library use by undergraduates in Nigeria noted that the problem of Nigerian students is not the question of wanting to use the college library, but whether or not the university library can provide for their needs, and whether there is access to what is provided. This assertion was agreed to in later studies by Iyoro (2004) and Popoola (2008).

Many university libraries in Nigeria have not been able to acquire collections comprehensive enough to meet the needs of their users due to inadequate funding of the universities. The 10% of allocations meant for the library as stipulated by the National University Commission (NUC) has not been adhered to in many Nigerian universities. Okiy (2005) notes that of all the different types of libraries in Nigeria, only university libraries have a clearly defined policy of funding because they are allocated 10% of the recurrent annual budget of their parent institutions. However, it is regrettable that such monies are not forthcoming as most university administrators tend to flout that decision. Ifijeh (2011) citing

Mordi (2008) indicated that between 2000 and 2008, the Nigerian Federal Government allocated an average of only 9% of its budget to education. From this meager budget, the libraries are funded; and with such low funding, universities are not able to operate libraries with first-class services. As a result, facilities and information resources are inadequate, and students use the libraries mainly for study space.

According to Nwokocha (1998), Highlights of the effects of poor library funding include low users' patronage, inadequate up-to-date materials, and inadequately trained personnel. The suggestions for improvement includes the involvement of multinational organizations in funding.

Service perception is the users' judgment and evaluation of a service performance received and how it compares to their need. Since University libraries are an integral part of the education system, how they are perceived determines their smooth existence and value to the users. Lack of knowledge among library users of the services their university libraries provide is a growing concern in academic librarianship. This has been caused by poor communication and inadequate interaction between users and the library, coupled with the library's failure to apply marketing strategies to promote its services (Oyedemi, 1980).

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used for the study. The study was carried out in the University of Ibadan faculty libraries. The population of the study was 10,012 registered faculty library users. A simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 20% of the population which resulted in 200 registered users as respondents for the study. A questionnaire instrument was used for data collection, and a descriptive statistic was used to analyze each of the variables on the questionnaire, and results presented in frequency tables and percentages to show occurrences and events of each variable.

RESULT

Research Question 1: What are the effects of users' perception of library resources on library use?

Table 1: Users perception of library resources

S/N	Library resources	SA	A	D	SD		
1	I perceive my faculty library to possess abundant resources for student use	18(9.0%)	25(12.5%)	65(32.5%)	92(46.0%)		
2.	I perceive library resources to be accessible to student	18 (9.0%)	60 (30.0%)	55 (27.5%)	67 (33.5%)		very
3.	I have the belief that all that is required for my academic excellence can be found in my faculty library	21(10.5%)	39 (19.5%)	54 (27.0%)	86 (43.0%)		
4.	The automation of my faculty library		10(5.0%)	34(17.0%)	68(34.0%)		
	88(44.0%)						
							13

makes it easy to locate any material that

I need

5 I have access to online information 10(5.0%) 10(5.0%) 62(31.0%) 118(59.0%)

in my faculty library that I cannot subscribe to,

on my own

Table 1 revealed that 43(21.5%) of the respondents agreed that faculty libraries possess abundant resources for student use, while a larger percentage of about 157(78.5%) of the respondents disagreed with this claim. Also, only 78(39.0%) respondents perceived that the library resources were very accessible to the student, while a total of 122(58.0%) are of the perception that library resources are not very accessible to students. 60(30.0%) of the total respondents strongly believe that all that is required for students' academic excellence can be found in the faculty library, while the remaining 140(70.0%) disagreed with this fact.

Furthermore, about 44(22.0%) of the respondents positively perceived that library automation in faculty libraries makes it easy to locate needed materials, while 156(78.0%) have a negative perception of this fact. Also, 20(10.0%) of the respondents agreed to have access to online information in the faculty libraries which they cannot subscribe to by themselves, while 180(90.0%) disagreed to this claim. It is seen from the result above that users' perception of library resources in the faculty libraries is negative.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of libraries in meeting the information needs of the users?

Table 2: Role of libraries in meeting the information needs of the user

S/ N	Library services	SA	A	D	\$		
1	Provision of up to date information to users	104(52.0%)	12(6.0%)	39(19.5%)	45(22.5%)		
2	Promoting research work among students and lecturers		75(37.5%)		81(40.5%)	29(14.5%)	15(7.5%)
3	Answering of users queries	89(44.5%)	47(23.5%)	43(21.5%)	21(10.5%)		
4	Selective dissemination of information	31(15.5%)	97(48.5%)	30(15.0%)	42(21.0%)		
5	Sensitization of the people on what is going on around them	57(28.5%)	79(39.5%)	43(21.5%)	21(10.5%)		
6	Supporting the academic curriculum of the students	57(28.5%)	74(37.0%)	34(17.0%)	35(17.5%)		
7	Promoting academic excellence of student			72(36.0%)	103(51.5%)	19(9.5%)	
8	Help in promoting government policies			101(50.5%)	59(29.5%)	25(12.5%)	

Table 2 shows the role that libraries, especially the faculty libraries play in meeting users' information needs. The table reveals that 116(58.0%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that

the library provides up to date information to users, while about 84(42.0%) disagreed to this claim. Also, a total of 156(78.0%) agreed that the library promotes research work among students while the remaining 44(22.0%) disagreed with this fact. Furthermore, about 136(68.0%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that the basic service of a library is to answer users' queries, while just about 64(32.0%) disagreed with this. Also, 128(64.0%) respondents agreed that libraries provide selective dissemination of information. While 72(36.0%) disagreed with this claim. 136(68.0%) of the studied sample agreed that the role of libraries include the sensitization of users on what is going on around them, while 64(32.0%) disagreed to this claim. Similarly, 131(65.5%) of the respondents agreed that the library plays a role in supporting the academic curriculum of the students, while 69(34.5%) disagreed. A greater number of the respondents 175(87.5%) agreed that the library promotes academic excellence of students, while the remaining 25(12.5%) disagreed to this claim. Similarly, about 160(80.0%) noted that the library plays a good role in helping to promote government policies, while the remaining 40(20.0%) indicated that it was not so.

The above result shows that the library users have a good understanding of the basic roles that faculty libraries are expected to play in bringing about the gratification of their information needs.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that students at the University of Ibadan have a good understanding of why libraries are being set up in tertiary institutions. However, despite the expected vibrant provision of library resources and services, the students have a negative perception of the library resources made available in the faculty libraries. This perception arises from the fact that faculty libraries do not possess abundant resources for students use, couple with the poor accessibility of the resources to the students. The students also registered their displeasure on the inability of the faculty library to provide up to date information resources to them, as they could not easily lay their hands' on current materials whenever they were researching a topic of interest.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study indicate that despite the faculty libraries expected roles in providing basic reference services, most undergraduate students still perceive that the library resources are outdated and of poor relevance, thereby limiting their use of the library. Also, the level of availability of library resources to undergraduates in the University of Ibadan is very poor considering students' information needs.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend that the University authority should through the acquisition librarian, acquire specific library resources needed by the students and faculty members, in all formats. Also, the government and the private sectors should collaborate and make funds increasingly available to the University faculty libraries.

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