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Stepping Up The Ladder To Meet User Needs: Innovative Library Services And Practices In A Nigerian University Of Technology.

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Stepping up the ladder to meet user needs: innovative library services and practices in a Nigerian university of technology.

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Abstract

Innovative services and practices are the buzzwords in today's libraries. Changes brought about by the electronic environment has impacted on libraries and caused a transformation in services and practices. Consequently, the library of the Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) has keyed into this paradigm by changing its conventional approach. This article explored various innovative services and practices in FUTO library. It also identified the benefits and extent of innovative services and practices in the library. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study while questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. Findings revealed a remarkable increase in library patronage, library visibility, use of library resources (databases), access to OPAC and supportive staff among others. It was also discovered that the extent of innovative services and practices in the library was high in various areas such as: library visibility (Mean=3.54), library patronage (Mean= 3.45), dependence on the library for research (Mean=3.27), longer hours by patrons (Mean=3.05), more followers on social media (Mean=3.00) etc. The study also identified some challenges hindering effective innovative services and practices. It was discovered that constant electricity coupled with inadequate funds were major roadblocks. Despite these challenges, it was observed that the library is not relenting in efforts to unleash her full potential in providing services that align with the needs of the present environment.

Keywords: Innovation; Services; Practices; Academic libraries; Innovative libraries; Nigeria; Library innovation; FUTO library; Library services; Innovation model.

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a turnaround in different spheres of life. Academic environment and libraries are not divorced from this paradigm. According to Deiss and Petrowski (2009), academic libraries are affected by three drivers of change: the poor economy and its negative impact on higher education; the changing needs of students; and rapidly evolving technologies. From the authors' statement, there is no musing that information and communication technologies have transformed library's nature and structure. Librarians are equally evolving to meet with changing roles. The 21st century has often been described as the era of electronic information (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2009). Thus, dependence on electronic information has escalated more than ever before. Gone are the days patrons must be within the library walls to get access

to information resources. The current electronic information landscape has opened up channels for anytime anywhere access. A very significant aspect of the current electronic dispensation is the techno savvy characteristic of present day patrons who live in an environment saturated with internet availability, massive growth of digital content and plethora of mobile devices. These developments have challenged libraries to reorder their modes of service delivery and remain vital to patron's needs.

Academic libraries are the fulcrum of educational activities in higher institutions hence, academic libraries provide support for teaching, learning and research. To achieve this, libraries collect, process, organize and provide information sources in various formats. More recently, libraries are creating environment that attune to present day needs. Kutu and Adesanya (2008) admit that the library is one of the most important units in a developing environment; it facilitates the information acquisition, organization, storage and dissemination of information for effective decision making and development of socio economic progress in a nation. Without mincing words, libraries have always been in the business of providing access to information. In the current networked environment, manual methods of service provision have metamorphosed into electronic modes of delivery. Interestingly, library's traditional confines have collapsed into borderless access where users can connect to resources from remote locations. With these trends, it is clearly visible that the goal post has changed in the technology era. Like the proverbial mountain going to Mohammed, todays libraries are taking their services to millennial patrons who now reside on the net. (Emezie & Nwaohiri, 2017).

Additionally, the library environment is changing from a noiseless zone to a user friendly and relaxing atmosphere. Atkinson (2001) remarks that the new library must be mainly a social gathering place, somewhat noisy, with plenty of coffee while Connor (2005) views that a commodious atmosphere with state of the art equipment draws patrons. This suggests that modern libraries are no longer reading places but learning spaces where people gather to participate in group discussions, trainings, and conferences. In today's libraries, patrons can watch television, play games and listen to music. Beyond the physical visits, social media are employed to enable communication and provide interactive services. These innovations are products of the networked environment. Consequently, academic libraries are stepping up the ladder to meet user expectations through innovative services and practices.

Conceptual framework

Innovation has been defined as the introduction into the organization of a new product, a new service, a new technology, or a new administrative practice; or a significant improvement to an existing product, service, technology, or administrative practice (Damapour, 1996). Johanessen, Olsen, & Lumpkin (2001) states that innovation means creating new products, creating new services, developing new production, new service methods, opening to new markets (creating new user/reader groups for libraries), finding new sources (sponsors, suppliers, etc.). In the views of Rogers (2003), innovation is an idea, object, or practice that is perceived as new by an

individual or organizational unit. According to Ramjuan (2009), innovation is redefining processes that encourage finding new and better ways to make library collections and facilities more useful. Furthermore, Gomano (2011) defines innovation as change that has been harnessed and focused in order to provide something new that represents a benefit or set of benefits for a user or customer. Similarly, Selçuk (2013) provides that innovation means not a real discovery, or to find new land but to look through a new perspective while Çolaklar (2014) avers that innovation covers all processes which are conducted to develop new or improved product, service, or production method, and to make this useful.

From the above definitions, innovation is about new ideas, inventions, changes, repackaging and rebranding of old procedures. Hence, this article provides that innovation is creatively transforming old processes as well as inventing and incorporating new programs and practices to add value to organization's products or services. The terms innovative services and practices have been used either simultaneously or singly in library literature (Chunli & Jinmin, 2011; Colaklar, 2014; Waghmare & Salve, 2014; Jange, 2015; Gunjal, 2017) to explore emerging trends. This is because both terms are intertwined and form part of library's emerging functions.

Innovative services and practices are channels through which transformation takes place in the library. However, innovative services appear to be organization centered while innovative practices appear to be personnel centered. In other words, the organization provide services by laying down infrastructure while the personnel harness these services through professional practice. Both innovative services and practices are geared towards satisfying the end-user. This is so because every innovative service and practice is aimed at user satisfaction. It is therefore reasonable to state, that innovation stands on a tripod which consists of the organization, personnel and end user as represented in the diagram below:
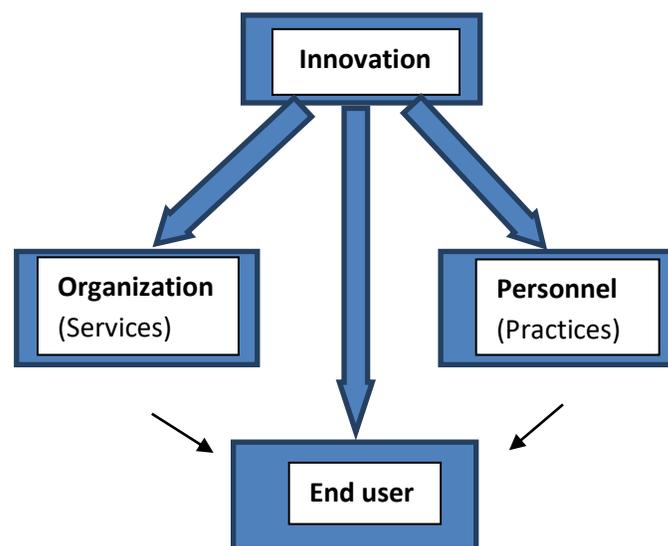
Fig 1: Model of innovation

Organization: organizations provide the enabling environment for innovation. Organizations are responsible for the services that promote innovation in that they provide the fundamental structures to support best practices. These structures are instrumental to achieving set objectives and include facilities, programs, human and material resources, technological infrastructure, conducive environment, basic amenities etc which will be harnessed by personnel to deliver the required services.

Personnel: Innovative practices are personnel centered. This means that personnel actualize services provided by organizations through professional practice. In so doing, they will have to reinvent themselves through training, retraining and mentorship. Ramjuan (2009) writes that librarians must endeavor to re-invent themselves and re-engineer their services while keeping their clientele at the heart of all operations. Innovative practices include improved work ethics, rebranded administrative procedures and processes, interpersonal/public relations, skills/competency, customer support etc.

End-user is the focal point for innovative services and practices. Every innovative activity is geared towards a goal which is customer satisfaction. The changing user needs places a demand on libraries to incorporate new services that promote patronage. As a result, libraries are changing in nature and structure to meet user needs through innovative services and practices. Thus innovation creates value on the end user as they engage with the library.

Literature review

Innovation in libraries appear to be born out of speculations that environmental influences that is, information technologies will threaten the existence of libraries and equally relegate their importance. Jantz (2012) observed that during the last half of the 20th century, many researchers and practitioners have claimed that academic libraries must make dramatic changes or face the possibility of being marginalized. As far back as 1973, Taylor speculated on whether the library can meaningfully adapt to changes expected in the next several decades. While pondering on this in later years, Campbell (2006), wrote that given the events of the past decade, academic librarians perhaps know better than anyone else that the institutions they manage—and their own roles—may face extinction over the next decade. The expressions by Jantz (2012) and Campbell (2006) portrayed a bleak future of libraries and librarians in the face of the changing environment. However, Housewright and Schonfeild (2008) provided a positive outlook in suggesting that, these institutions will need innovation if they hope to retain the interest of academic faculty.

It is good news that so far, the physical death of the library has not happened. This is because innovation appears to be the magic bullet for libraries to thrive in the electronic age. While new practices are being introduced, old methods are being rebranded to align with the needs of the present environment. Clayton (1997), emphasize that innovation is no longer an option but a necessity while Neal (2009) views that innovation will become the litmus test for success. In the light of the above,

libraries are leveraging on innovative services and practices to respond to the changing needs of patrons and equally remain afloat in a technology saturated environment. Various innovative practices are employed by libraries to increase their visibility and strengthen their role in the academic environment. Ramjaun (2009) opines that innovation in libraries may involve the following initiatives:- the discovery of unmet user needs; The introduction of new services or the retooling of traditional services resulting in a better user experience; Creative collaboration among libraries or between libraries and other institutions; Explorations of the future of libraries; Implementing new technologies to improve and extend library services to meet user needs; Redefining processes that encourage finding new and better ways to make library collections and facilities more useful; Incorporating best practices from foreign libraries wherever possible.

Along the same lines, Harle (2009) provides a picture of evolving innovative practices in libraries. According to the author "libraries are now assisting institutions in their teaching and learning objectives, helping students to develop their critical and analytical skills through library-led information courses, and working with ICT departments to develop new online facilities to allow library catalogues to be searched more effectively, or to offer entry points for information in certain subject fields. They are also serving research in new ways, not only building and managing the traditional collections that researchers need, but harnessing digital library technologies to offer these collections in new formats and to a wider audience, as is evidenced by the many digitisation projects in which libraries internationally are engaged (p.12)". Also, Jantz (2012) includes archiving research data, Compact shelving, Faceted browsing in OPACs, Information commons, Institutional repository, Publishing e-journals, Shared digital repository, Shared annexes for storage (so library space can be used in a different way), Shelf-ready books, Streaming video to classrooms.

Furthermore, Çolaklar (2014) add the following: interactive programs to realize and improve research and learning culture, author activities, seminars, exhibitions, competitions, song, dance, music shows, work and career planning, assistance in filling out job application form, social responsibility projects, information literacy among others while Waghmare and Salve (2014) lists creation of the databases of the books and other material using library application package like SMART Lib; automation of different housekeeping operations of the library; providing OPAC as tool for browsing & searching the library collection; provision of services in electronic environment; developing Local Area Network; providing online access to leading E-Journals and E-books to library users/readers at no cost; newspaper clipping depository; scanning the daily news, improving existing service conditions etc. Gunjal (2017) also lists LibGuide, Library website, mobile applications, QR Code, User Awareness Workshops (UAW), Open access to institutional repositories, Liaison Programme with Departments (LPD) to conduct Orientation/User education programme, Research/Project Support Services (RPS) to users, knowledge sharing session for all library staff (weekly).

From an empirical perspective, scholars have identified innovative services provided by some academic libraries. For instance, Vaughan (2013) examined technology innovation in academic libraries and discovered that Web scale discovery systems received the highest average score. Other items that received high rankings included

makerspaces, cloud hosting, and patron driven acquisition. A range of resources were indicated as being made available for pursuing innovation, including staff development, dedicated staff time, and hardware and software purchases.

Çolaklar (2014) evaluated university libraries in turkey with the aim to determine the innovative services and practices in the libraries of Turkish Universities. Findings of the study show that majority of the respondents indicated seminar as innovative activities in Turkish libraries. Other activities include interview, and author event. Also, few of these libraries organize competitions and exhibitions. However, few of the respondents marked other options which include work and career planning, supportive programs for distant learning etc.

In 2015, IGI Global carried out a survey on academic libraries as centers for the advancement of technology to identify the roles librarians play in support of technological innovation. Findings revealed that over half of the surveyed libraries are acquiring books/e-books, loan technology components, acquiring journals/e-journals, labs for instruction or collaboration, instruction on programming/coding and facilities reflection. Also, technology advancement programs libraries currently offer include: technology related classes, learning communities, technology fairs, webinars/seminars, collaborative visualization space, and blogs. Furthermore, the majority of technology-orientated projects that exist at the instruction are student projects/research and faculty research. However, the study revealed librarians faced challenges such as lack of staff and resources to keep their institution up to date on technology innovation goals.

The above empirical underpinnings reveal evidence from literature that libraries are engaging innovative services and practices to remain relevant and overcome challenges of user decline posed by the technology revolution.

Innovative services and practices in FUTO library

The Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) is one of the oldest universities of technology in Nigeria established in 1980. It became the first of three such universities set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria who sought to establish a university of technology in each geo-political region and particularly in a state which did not have a conventional university. Located in the South eastern part of Nigeria in a large and expanse land, FUTO has increased in breadth and depth over the years. Because the university offer specialized courses in science, engineering, technology and health, there is need to constantly keep the students interest alive by providing innovative library services that connect with their needs.

The library which is the intellectual warehouse of the university is continually evolving to remain at the apex of academic support. As a result, various innovative services and practices have been developed to sustain the interest of users especially in this era where patronage is on the decline. In addition to introducing new library services, infrastructural renovations have been made to provide a more conducive and comfortable environment. The library building has been expanded to accommodate new learning spaces. While some of these initiatives may appear as routine in libraries

of the developed nations, some libraries of developing countries may find it nouveau and useful. Hence, this article explores efforts made so far by FUTO library with a view to inspire academic libraries in developing nations as well as reduce some uncertainty in the minds of other library managers thinking in this direction.

OPAC services/FLIR package: The Online Public Access Catalogue popularly known as OPAC complements the traditional catalogue to provide access to library resources. The FUTO library OPAC runs on the Alexandria Library Management platform. The platform is a library package known as FLIR (Futo Library Information Resources) and serves as a gateway to the library's resources such as online databases, library website, social media and institutional repository. From remote locations, users can access the resources of the library. Professional librarians are always available to help users effectively conduct quick searches.

Fig 2: The FLIR package (OPAC) on Alexandria Platform.

Social media: Social media have become an integral part of todays academic libraries. Through social media platforms, academic libraries create a virtual presence and can connect with a wide range of users. Dhanyasree (2013), views that libraries use social media potentially for: Outreach purpose; Promotion and marketing of library services; Making announcements; Reference service; Creating discussion threads; Networking with other libraries. Furthermore, Harris and Lessick (2007) observe that an increasing number of libraries are facilitating access to their resources by developing and incorporating tools for patrons to use in the social media space. These tools are used to complement the traditional methods used by libraries 'guiding the patrons through the library experience without forcing them to leave the familiarity of their favorite sites.

FUTO library has established online presence on social media to complement her services and transform the library into an attractive area for patrons. Social media serves as a viable tool to market the library's resources and is increasing the FUTO library's visibility. The social media sites include facebook, twitter and blog pages.

Fig 3: FUTO library social media pages

Library website: The FUTO library website serves as a medium of interaction with users. The website is the information base for users about library's services, operational hours and staff. It serves as a window through which patrons can quickly view the library and have a feel of its nature and structure. The FUTO library website also provides a gateway to online databases and other electronic resources such as theses, inaugural lectures, question papers etc. It provides updates on university events, library activities and staff publications. It is a channel for online reference service.

Fig. 4: The FUTO library website

Embedded librarians: The library houses various resources which are sometimes not fully exploited by faculty and students due to lack of awareness. As a result, embedded librarians were initiated to bridge the access gap and link users with library resources. Ricco (2012) views that the key element of embedded librarianship is to move librarians out of the traditional library setting, whether physically or virtually, and into a new framework for providing library services. The statement by Ricco (2012) appears to have set the ball rolling for embedded librarians in FUTO library. Embedded librarians in FUTO are part of innovative practices geared towards bringing library services closer to the university community. These professional librarians engage in the following activities: Market the university library's resources and services to faculty; Assist students in their academic work by linking them to relevant resources; Liaise between faculty and the university library for resource sharing; Play advisory role in departmental library development in terms of facilities; Help in building collections for departmental libraries.

Digitization, ETDs, Institutional repository/FUTO-OER: Digitization, Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) and Institutional Repositories, FUTO-OER are products of the electronic environment. Providing information resources that meet patrons' current need is the central focus of FUTO library. As a result, new operations such as digitization and, services such as ETDs, IR and FUTO-OER have been introduced. FUTO library digitizes rare manuscripts, question papers, inaugural lectures, public lectures and other indigenous publications of intellectual value for wider access through the institutional repository known as FUTOSpace. The FUTO-OER which is the short form for FUTO Open Educational Resources provides quick access to various publications from FUTO including lecture notes, conference and workshop proceedings of FUTO staff, lecture videos, courseware, project reports, journal articles etc. Electronic theses and dissertations are made available online through the repository and FUTO-OER. Also, due to network issues which can sometimes be challenging, a database of ETDs has been developed offline. With the hyperlink technique, full text of ETDs can be searched and accessed offline. This in essence promotes continuous access.

Information literacy: Library decline is often associated with patrons' inability to find their feet in the information search and retrieval process. Patrons often find it frustrating and complicating to locate resources within the library due to poor information literacy skills. To curb this anomaly, library skills are transferred to patrons through information literacy programs. Until recently, information literacy was offered at the undergraduate level only. However, due to proliferation of databases and electronic information resources which sometimes present challenges for the researcher in terms of keyword searches, information literacy programs have been extended to the postgraduate students. Also, staff support is another devised method of transferring information literacy skills to students. Library staff can initiate a one-on-one IL transfer while rendering assistance. Through this medium, patrons are acquainted with search techniques. This method has proved effective as patrons are connecting with information resources in the library. Furthermore, postgraduates and lecturers acquire skills for referencing (Mendeley, Zotero) through the help of professional library staff.

Research commons, Learning spaces: The library has expanded its reading areas and established learning spaces to cater for the needs of all categories of users. There is a research common specifically provided for postgraduate students and lecturers. The Research Commons is a scholarly common room for academic staff and postgraduate students at master's and doctoral level (UCT Libraries, n.d). The room is situated in a serene corner in the new e-library building equipped with air condition facilities. Researchers have unlimited access to electronic resources. There is a convenient relaxation point after a thorough academic exercise. A professional librarian is available to render assistance as the need arises.

Figure 5: Research commons and relaxation areas

New arrival bookstand: Books are to be read and exploited. Newly purchased books are conspicuously displayed to create awareness. The new arrival bookstand which is an excellent deviation from the past is a product of library innovation. The bookstand is a cynosure for all eyes as it is strategically positioned at the entrance of the main library. This stand is a four sided shelf which allows the display of books on all of its corners. Patrons are allowed to browse through the new collections.

Figure 6: New arrival book stand

Fliers /Infogate board: While taking cognizance of techno savvy patrons who possess voracious appetite for e-things, librarians understand the needs of users who are slow with technology. These users prefer to "copy on paper rather than copy and paste". The library produces fliers which provide quick information on library services, social media sites, databases and links to online resources. The Infogate board strategically positioned in the ICT Unit displays the URLs of various online and social media sites.

Figure 7: Infogate board and Flyer

Games corner/light Reading: To lighten the burden of reading which may appear strenuous, the FUTO library's games corner provides a safe haven for relaxing the mind. While the saying "all works and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is true, FUTO library provides games such as scrabble, Whot, Ludo, Chess, Snakes and Ladder etc and, a native game called Ncho (Ayo) to lighten academic burden. Patrons can play games to relax their nerves and refresh their bodies from the task of reading and other academic exercise.

Fig 8: Games unit and students playing games

Staff Training: Various in house trainings take place within the library to update knowledge and skills of staff in order to cope with the new roles, responsibilities and challenges of the changing electronic environment. The train the trainer initiative led by the current university librarian Dr. Mrs Chinwe Anunobi has provided opportunity for staff to acquire rare skills which may not have been possible due to paucity of funds for staff development. In her bid to carry everyone along, library staff have acquired various skills on computer applications, computer appreciations, nature and types of online resources, Search and Retrieval strategies, DSpace and Institutional Repositories, Digitization, Public Relations among others. These have been facilitated by FUTO library staff who have attended trainings within and outside the country. The aim is to ensure that library staff are on the same pedestal as much as possible.

Reference Hotline: The FUTO library reference desk has a dedicated mobile phone line for answering quick reference questions, providing date due reminders and library notices as the need arises.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the various innovative services and practices in FUTO library.
2. To identify the benefits of innovative services and practices in FUTO library.
3. Ascertain the extent of innovative services and practices in FUTO library.
4. To identify challenges that can hinder innovative services in FUTO library.

Method

This quantitative study adopted a descriptive survey using the questionnaire to collect data from respondents. The structured questionnaire was designed using a four point Likert scale and directed at 250 patrons who were available in the library during the period. Questionnaire distribution was constrained by an industrial action of the academic staff of Nigerian universities at the time of study. As a result, 178 copies of questionnaire representing 71% return rate were retrieved and found usable.

Result

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean, percentages and graphs were employed to present data. In calculating the mean from responses based on Likert scale, the following was used: Strongly Agree =4; Agree =3; Strongly Disagree =2; Disagree =1 for research objective 2 whereas Very High =4; High =3; Low =2; Very Low =1 was used for research objective 3. To obtain the mean value, 4+3+2+1 =10. Where mean value is 10/4 = 2.5. So, for objective 2, statements with mean of 2.5 and above were Accepted, whereas below 2.5 were Rejected. In objective 3, statements with a mean of 2.5 were considered high whereas below 2.5 were deemed low.

Background of respondents

The number of males was 103 which represent 58% while the females were 75 representing 42% of the respondents. This could be attributed to the non-conventional nature of the university. As a university of technology which offers more courses on engineering, science and technology, males have a greater population than females.
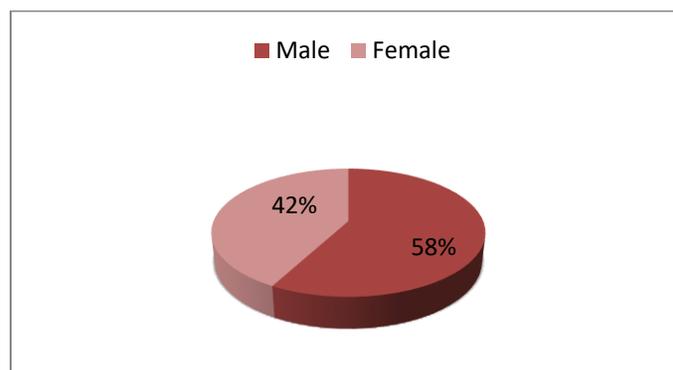
Category of library patrons

The questionnaire administered revealed categories of patrons who visit the library and is represented below.

Category of patrons
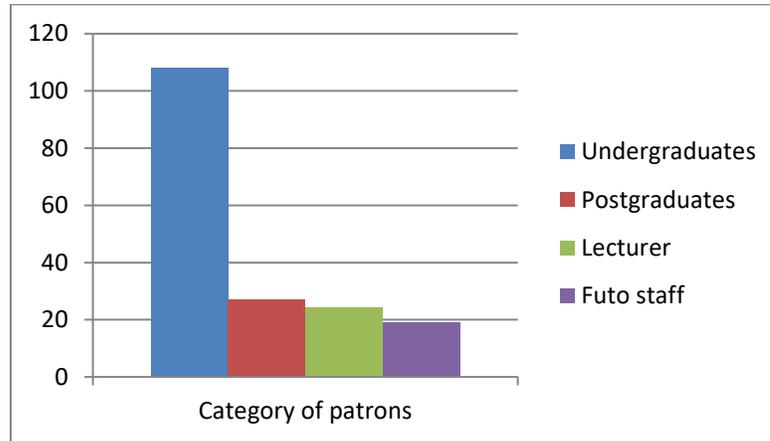
Analysis of data revealed that undergraduates were 108 (61%) while the postgraduates recorded 27 (15%). Also the lecturers were 24 (13%) whereas other members of staff were 19 (11%). From the data presented, undergraduates were larger in number. This is not surprising because undergraduates are the major library users in any university system.

Benefits of innovative services and practices in FUTO library

The study sought to identify the benefits of innovative services and practices in FUTO library. Respondents' opinion is represented below:
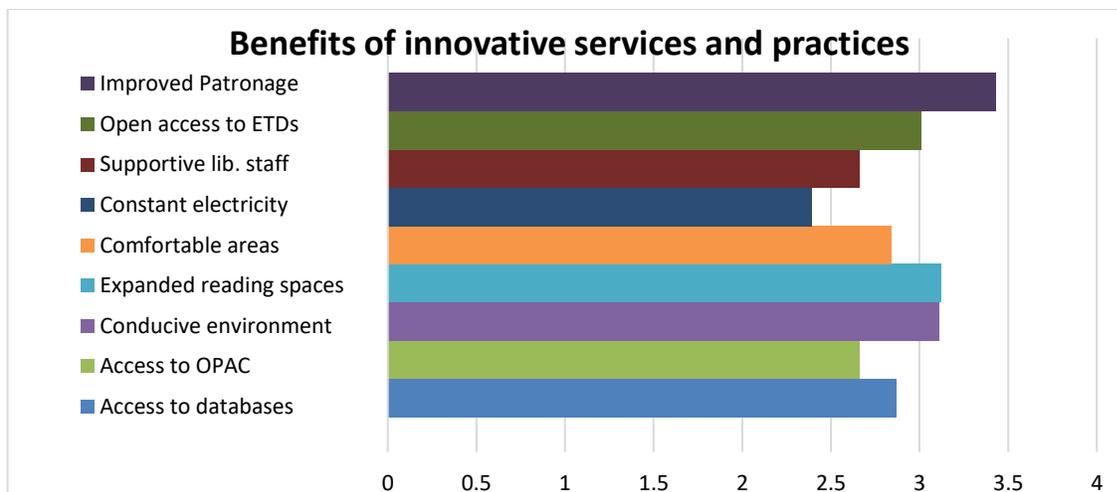

Majority of the respondents agreed that innovative services and practices in FUTO library have brought the following benefits: improved library patronage (Mean=3.43), expanded reading spaces (Mean=3.12), conducive environment (Mean=3.11), open access to Electronic Theses and Dissertations (Mean=3.01) and comfortable relaxation

areas (Mean=2.84). Other benefits include: access to databases (Mean=2.87) improved support by librarians and access to OPAC (Mean=2.66). However, the mean response on electricity was low (Mean=2.39). This suggests that poor electricity is not a benefit of innovative services and practices.

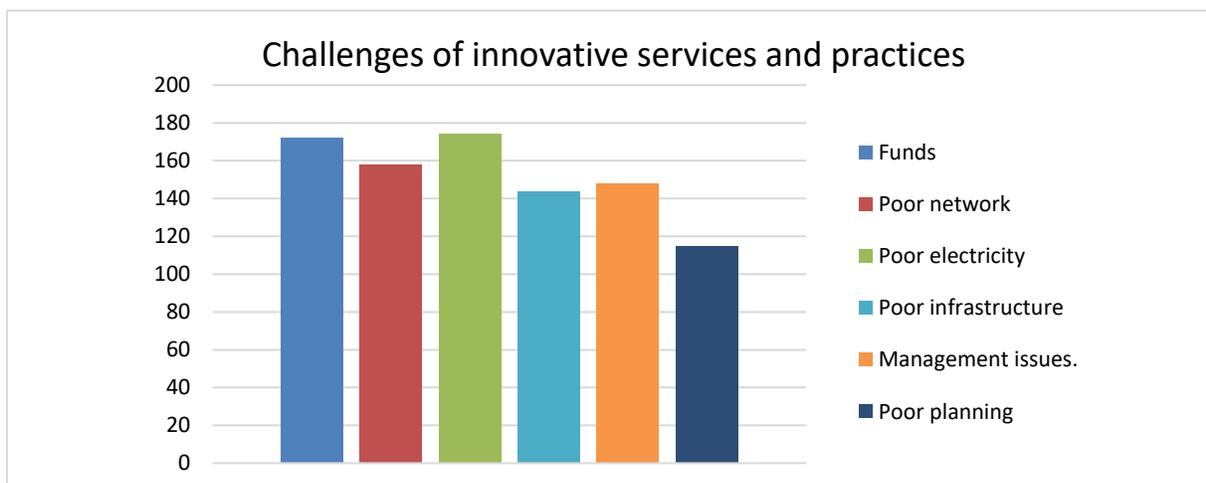**Extent of innovative services and practices in FUTO library.**

The study also sought to identify the extent of innovative services and practices in FUTO library.

Extent of innovative services and practices
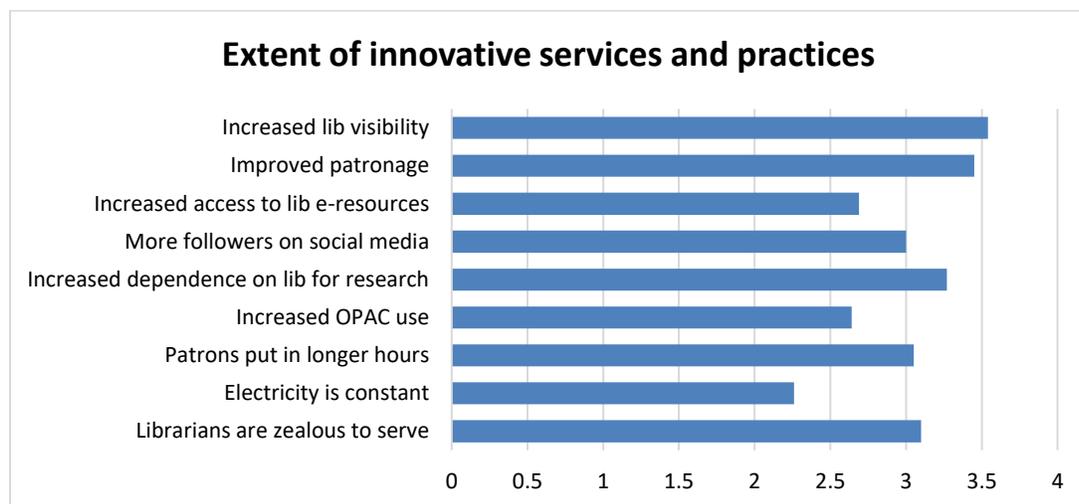
Analysis of data showed that the mean response on extent of innovative practices and services in FUTO library was high in the following areas: increased library visibility (Mean=3.54), improved library patronage (Mean= 3.45), increased dependence on the library for research (3. 27). Further findings revealed that mean responses were equally high in these other areas: librarians are zealous to serve (Mean=3.10), patrons put in longer hours (Mean=3.05), More followers on social media (Mean=3.00), increased access to e-resources (Mean=2.69). However, the mean response on extent of innovative services and practices was low on constant electricity (Mean=2.26).

Challenges to innovative services and practices in FUTO library.

The following were identified as challenges that hinder innovative services in FUTO library.

Challenges of innovative services and practices

Analysis of data revealed that majority of the respondents 174 (98%) affirmed to poor electricity as a major challenge to innovative services and practices in FUTO library while 172 (97%) agreed that funds constitutes a major challenge. Furthermore, 158 (89%) were positive on poor network; 149 (84%) indicated Management issues while 144 (81%) viewed poor infrastructure. Poor planning 115 (65%) was also considered as a challenge to innovative services and practices in FUTO library.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed the benefits of innovative services and practices in FUTO library. These findings prove that innovative services and practices has helped to improve the mode of service delivery in the library. As a result, there is increase in patronage, access to databases and e-resources through the OPAC. Also, library staff have the zeal to better support patrons in their quest for knowledge. This findings tally with Harle (2009) who states that librarians are helping students to develop their critical and analytical skills through library-led information courses and developing new online facilities to allow library catalogues to be searched more effectively.

Another finding of the study is that the extent of innovative services and practices was high. This is evidenced in the impact felt on the library. The library has witnessed increased visibility, increase in patronage, increase in social media followers and increase in access to e-resources. The finding coincides with Vaughan's (2013) finding that Web scale discovery systems received the highest average score in technology innovations in academic libraries.

The study also discovered various challenges faced by the library in providing innovative services and practices. Poor electricity was identified as a major hindrance. Electricity is the life wire of any library especially in the current information environment. The library is powered by a generator on daily basis. This poses a lot of power challenge especially when there is breakdown or need for servicing and repairs. Efforts to connect to the national power grid continues to prove abortive. Also, scarcity of funds has contributed to the frustration facing innovative services and practices in FUTO library. Funds are needed to procure, maintain and sustain innovative services. This article recognizes that inadequate funds have always been a primary hindrance to several noble pursuits. This finding supports that of IGI Global (2015) in stating that librarians faced challenges such as lack of staff and resources to keep their institution up to date on technology innovation goals.

Conclusion

Innovative services and practices are the buzzwords in today's libraries. The change brought about by the electronic environment has impacted on libraries and caused a transformation in services and practices. Consequently, the FUTO library has keyed into this paradigm by changing its conventional approach. This has been achieved through new operations, services and practices which have been discussed in this paper. Various spaces are still being provided to serve different purposes and connect with the needs of patrons. While this pursuit by the FUTO library is laudable, innovative services and practices are still fraught with challenges. For libraries to be

adjudged functional, electricity is needed to improve atmospheric conditions, power computers, access electronic resources and activate other functions. Also unds are essential to power and sustain innovative services. Be that as it may, innovation in FUTO library has come to stay and is proving as a means to remain vital and responsive in the university community. Though the library is striving to overcome some of the roadblocks, it is not relenting in efforts to unleash her full potential in providing services that align with the needs of the present environment.

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