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USE OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE (OPAC) IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH- SOUTH NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of OPAC in selected university libraries in south- south Nigeria. In actualizing this, four (4) research questions were formulated which are: How frequently do the users in university libraries in South-South Nigeria use OPAC? What are the purposes of use of OPAC? How frequently do the patrons search for various information resources through the OPAC? What are the challenges faced by library users with the use of OPAC? The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study is made up of 18,332 registered under -graduate library users and the sampling size of 920, which led to the distribution of 460 questionnaires to each of the University libraries. The findings from the study are as follows: Students' use of OPAC in university libraries in South-South Nigeria is low, the main purpose for using OPAC by the respondents are to locate documents, to know about a document without physically visiting the library, to find out if a document is available in the library, as well as to search and retrieve information. The frequency of use shows that a large chunk of the respondents rarely and never use OPAC for searching for information resources in the library while a few respondents sometimes use OPAC to source materials in the library. From the findings the following challenges were identified: Poor/irregular power supply, lack of OPAC knowledge and unfamiliarity with the OPAC system, Inadequate computer terminals, Navigational frustrations, OPAC is not user friendly enough, Lack of assistance from library staff and failed search or no records retrieved, Inability to use appropriate search terms, Complicated/Confusing to me, retrieve unmanageably large number of records and search requests/terms are too broad or too narrow. The study thus concluded by giving the following recommendations: Efforts should be geared towards inculcating on university students the knowledge and skills required to use OPAC, Universities should be equipped with the enabling infrastructure such as adequate power supply, effective Internet connectivity etc. that will encourage the use of OPAC and University libraries should formulate policies that would encourage mandatory use of OPACs.

Keywords: OPAC, Information Retrieval, Database, Academic Libraries, Library Users.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Library activities and functions have undergone changes over the years. The libraries today are more proactive in their activities especially with the introduction of online public access catalogue (OPAC) facilities to university libraries, which has brought about an advanced way in the techniques of accessing and retrieving information resources that a library acquired to serve its users; it has also changed the ways of providing services offered to users community. That is why Swaminathan , (2017) opined that “OPAC is a device of change in today’s libraries as it helps users search for library resources and to find out the availability of such documents in the library at a given point in time. OPAC system is one of the technologies that provide access to any of the information contained in the records of the library. Libraries in universities are now moving from the manual retrieval system in terms of traditional card catalogue to the use of OPAC as an information retrieval system characterized by short bibliographic records, mainly of books, journals, and audio-visual materials available in a particular library (Thanuskodi, 2012). The OPAC has greatly influenced the very nature of libraries and users of information resources by opening them to a variation of portals through which they can access and retrieve information. Measuring the effectiveness of the use of computer catalogue (OPAC) according to Villen-Rueda, Senso & Moya-Anegon, (2007) has been a steady realm of study for some decades, this has led to perceiving how data extraction systems might be improved, to better satisfy the informational needs of the users. Adeogun (2003) reported that the convergence of computers and telecommunications technology has made possible the activities which were considered impossible in the past.

Online public access catalogue (OPAC) may be defined as a database of bibliographic records describing the holdings of a library. It allows users to search a document by authors, titles, subject and keywords from a terminal and also allows printing, downloading or exporting of records via different electronic means (Gohain & Siakia, 2013). OPAC has revolutionized the traditional accessibility to resources of libraries in general and academic libraries in particular. It is an interface of information retrieval system which assists information searchers to access resources of libraries using several access points (Fabunmi & Asubiojo, 2013). According to Rouse (2018), OPAC is an online bibliography of a library collection that is available to the public. The ALA Glossary of Library and Information Science (2000) defined OPAC as a computer-based and supported library catalogue (bibliographic database) designed to be accessed via- terminals, so that library users may directly and effectively search and retrieve bibliographic records without the assistance of a human intermediary such as a specially trained member of the library staff. This implies that an OPAC is a computerized library catalogue that is available to the public, which provides bibliographic information about information resources in the library.

In simple language OPAC is an electronic version of the card catalogue; OPAC is the gateway to library's collection. This is to say that OPAC is an online bibliography of the library collection, which includes print and non-print such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, audio-visuals, government publications, theses and electronic resources. That is why Ukpebor (2012) highlighted the features of an OPAC as a system that: provides the public with direct access to a library bibliographic database through the use of terminal that is searchable through a variety of access points greater than those available through card form catalogue; is searchable with a common command language, which may be transferred when the public moves from one library to another; retrieve information from local library field, and if not successful, locally,

retrieves information from other libraries' files; provides instructional help and display search result in readily understandable form; provides link card catalogues, reference help, circulation files etc. and maybe access remote library's location; and multiple users can query the database simultaneously unlike the traditional catalogue box where users have to queue when they are searching for similar materials with same search option.

Therefore, in using the library OPAC, information seekers can access bibliographical records of a variety of available information resources independently. As a means of meeting up with the challenges of ensuring that information materials are available and accessible, libraries provide catalogues to display what is available in the library and where they can be obtained. Aina (2004) opined that OPAC is the most modern form of library catalogue whereby bibliographic records of all the documents in a collection are stored in the computer memory disk; it is efficient and possesses all the advantages over other forms of catalogue. It is important to occasionally assess the effectiveness of the OPAC especially from the users' point of view. This is necessary considering the uniqueness of each university library and the fact that periodic assessment will provide a realistic picture of OPAC performance; therefore, aiding managerial decisions on issues affecting the library catalogue (Onuoha, Umahi & Bamidele, 2013). OPAC thus provided users a means of searching and accessing information, users can see the collections and issue status of each document of the library and can reserve and renew a document of their interest when needed (Swaminathan, 2017). Here numerous users can make inquiry on the database simultaneously unlike the traditional card catalogue. Bibliographic records are stored in a database and can be quickly retrieved for display on computer terminals. The development of OPAC has made users as well as library professionals to locate and access library resources easily without wastage of time and energy.

Many researchers have carried out studies related to OPAC use, Swaminathan (2017) studied the use and awareness of OPAC by Students and Faculty members of Anna University Regional Campus, the result shows that 85 (55.20%) of the respondents are using it daily which includes 68 (58.62%) of them students and 17 (44.74%) of them faculty members. 31(20.13%) of the respondents are using OPAC once in a week which includes 23 (19.83%) of them students and 8 (21.05%) of them faculty members. 8 (5.19%) of respondents were using OPAC once in a month. Kumar and Vohra (2011) examined OPAC usage by the students and faculty of Panjab University Library, Chandigarh; findings from the study revealed that out of 190 respondents, very few. 3 (1.6%) were not aware of OPAC service. However, only 13 (6.8%) used OPAC very frequently, almost one-third of users used frequently, 53 (27.9 5%) used it occasionally, 19 (10%) rarely used it, and 36 (18.9%) never used OPAC. It result further showed that majority of users regularly (very frequently and frequently) used OPAC and a little more than one-fourth users moderately/occasionally used OPAC. Adedibu (2008) studied card catalogue/OPAC use by science students at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State. Findings from that study revealed that the users of the OPAC represented a small portion with 33 (7.9%) respondents. Salaam (2000) studied Users' reaction to an OPAC in a Nigerian Agricultural University Library, Abeokuta. The study, however, revealed that users of Nimbe Adedipe Library appreciate the services provided through the OPAC.

Statement of the Problem

Access and retrieval of information has been a major cause of concern in all libraries and information centers; as such, libraries have developed different methods for accessing their collections. While most university libraries have moved from card catalogue to OPAC, literature reveals that even with the use of the OPAC, information retrieval still proves to be problematic and results are not always satisfactory. Where such is the case, users would spend more than the time required in searching for information materials and end up not getting what they want, even when such materials exist in the library's collections

The researcher has observed that even when enough infrastructural facilities are made available in terms of OPAC computer terminals and enabling environment, very few users still utilize the OPAC system in moderate capacity. This observation requires an empirical study. Hence, this study is designed to examine the use of OPAC amongst university libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in this study:

- i. How frequently do the users in university libraries in South-South Nigeria use OPAC?
- ii. What are the purposes of use of OPAC?
- iii. How frequently do the patrons search for various information resources through the OPAC?
- iv. What are the challenges faced by library users with the use of OPAC?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

FREQUENCY OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS (OPAC) USE BY LIBRARY USERS

The library is the heart of the education enterprises. It is also the reservoir of knowledge communicated through information resources (Yusuf, 2010). Frequency of online public access catalogue (OPAC) indicates the quality and degree of importance attached to the use of OPAC by library users. Where there is an increased frequency rate, it is a positive sign of OPAC use. Ansari and Amita (2008) opined that the frequent use of OPAC among students has brought about the decline in the use of the traditional card catalogue in the library. Similarly, Join (2009) reported that the frequency of the OPAC use has increased tremendously among students in recent years due to the enormous benefits derived from the use of OPAC system and this has equally led to the decreased use of the manual catalogue in the library. That is why Danskin (2006) noted that OPAC plays an essential role in helping users to locate library resources effectively; but there is some evidence of a decrease in student usage of OPAC. The question of how frequent patrons use the OPAC cuts across so many dimensions which makes it important to investigate the rate at which users use OPAC to locate their required documents, this is to assist the library management to find out if the purpose of the OPAC is been achieved and they on their part may be able to proffer solutions to problems arising from their investigation.

PURPOSE FOR WHICH LIBRARY USERS USE OPAC

Automation of library resources and the use of ICT have brought about significantly different products and services in the library among which the online public access catalogue (OPAC) is one. Library users are in need of timely access to relevant information and information sources. Without any reasonable doubt, one can state that the main duty of the library is to use every

techniques of modern science to accelerate access to printed books and other information sources (Adenike & Akin, 2014). The basic purpose of a library catalogue is to provide a record of the library holdings so that the resources in the library can be better utilized (Jetty et al 2011); it has also made some other services possible for the very first time. Aina (2004) opines that OPAC is the most modern and most efficient form of catalogue because it possesses all the advantages of other forms of catalogues due to its flexibility. Kani-Zibihi, Ghinea and Chen (2008) reported that regardless of user's information technological backgrounds, their expectations of the functionality of OPACs were the same because users continued to expect OPACs also to facilitate easier ways to achieve their tasks.

The purpose of OPAC according to Gohain and Saikai (2013) includes- location of document on shelves, to know whether a particular book is on the shelves or not, to know what a library has on a given author, title and subject, to know about a document without visiting the library, ease to search different categories of documents such as books, thesis, back vol., CD by changing the types of documents. In their study, it was indicated that 52.05 % (203) respondents used OPAC to locate document on shelves. 33.59 % (131) respondents admitted that they use OPAC because it helps them to know what a library has on a given author, title and subject. 8.72 % (34) respondents used OPAC to know whether an identified book is on the shelves or not? 3.59 % (14) respondents indicated that they used OPAC because it is easy to search different categories of documents such as books, thesis, back vol., CD etc. by changing the type of document. Only 2.05 % (8) respondents revealed that they used OPAC to know about a document without visiting library. It is clear from these findings that the majority of the users used OPAC to locate documents on shelves & to know what a library has on a given author, title and subject.

FREQUENCY OF USERS SEARCH FOR VARIOUS INFORMATION RESOURCES THROUGH THE OPAC

The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is an information retrieval system characterized by short bibliographic records, mainly of books, journals, and audio-visual materials available in a particular library (Thanuskodi, 2012). Information resources are the information bearing item acquired, processed and made available in the library to the patrons (Adomi, 2009). Informed library users know that libraries have resources that are more comprehensive and scholarly than most Web sites provide. Libraries provide access to scholarly literature that, as a rule, is not freely available on the Web, or may not be online at all. Often, it is in universities that users become aware of libraries' information resources, usually while having to write research papers or do an assignment (Waldman, 2003).

Information resources located in the library catalogue according to Adomi (2009) include the following-Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Bibliographies, Biographies, Yearbooks, Handbooks, directories, Manuals, Gazetteers, index and Abstracts, textbooks, periodicals, electronic-books and electronic journals. Universiteit Leiden (2014) stated that the catalogue contains not just books, journals and articles. Through the Catalogue (file tab Special Collections) you can look for manuscripts, letters, illustrations, maps, prints and photographs. Sridhar (2004) study on OPAC vs. Card catalogue revealed that (228) 87.85 of users search the OPAC to located books, (12) 3.7% to locate reports, (4) 1.2% searched for non-book materials, (1) 0.3% to search for Standards, (3) 0.9% for project reports (of trainees) and (20) 6.1% for journals.

LIBRARY USERS CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE OPAC USE

As a means of meeting up with the challenges of ensuring that information materials are available and accessible, libraries provide catalogues to display what is available in the library

and where they can be obtained. Kumar and Vohra (2013) opined that OPAC provide great flexibility and numerous varied options to users to access information pertaining to library resources by combining two or more bibliographic fields or access point. However, many of the search options available in OPACs tend to create complexity for users. User expectation from any information system is to make available directly or remotely and in real time the needed information, format notwithstanding. In the university environment, the library a major information providing system supports teaching, learning and research with information materials of various types (Anunobi & Edoaka, 2010).

Despite the attention that OPAC is receiving worldwide, little seems to have change in Nigeria. Research studies continue to report that users have great difficulties because their design does not incorporate sufficient understanding of searching behaviour. Wilson and Given (2010) discovered that users experience difficulties in using OPACs. Users also lack the basic skills required to search an OPAC, tending not to use all facilities and features offered by OPACs (Markey, 2007a). Besides this OPAC now face another challenge from the internet search engines because users generally prefer search engines (Google in particular) to conduct their searches (Urquhart et al 2005; Urquhart & Rowley, 2007). The OPAC is an important tool in helping users for the localisation of library resources effectively. But the usage of OPAC is decreasing among users (Danskin, 2006).

According to Adenike and Akin (2014) Research in information seeking indicates that users formulate questions in stages gradually coming to the point where they can begin to articulate a query.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will focus mainly on frequency of online public access (OPAC) use by library users, purpose to which library user's use OPAC, frequency of users search of various information resources through the OPAC, library user's Challenges to effective OPAC use. The study will be limited to university libraries which have functioning OPAC in South- South Nigeria. These include the University of Benin (John Harris library) and University of Port-Harcourt (Donald Ekong Library).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study is made up of 18,332 registered under -graduate library users

S/N	Name of Institution	Number of Users
1.	Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt, Choba.	10,107
2.	John Harris Library, University of Benin, Benin.	8,225
	Total	18,332

Source: Records of the circulation units of the university libraries

The sample size for the study is nine hundred and seventeen (920) respondents constituting 5% of the population this proportion was used as a result of the large size of the population. The study employed the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The research instrument employed for the data collection is the questionnaire. The data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed using percentage, mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation

DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire was administered with the aid of two research assistants from the two universities library (University of Benin, Edo State and University of Port-Harcourt; Rivers State).

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Research Question 1: How frequently do the users in university libraries in South-South Nigeria use OPAC?

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students's Frequency of OPAC Use

S/N	Frequency of OPAC use	No	Percentage (%)
1	I always use OPAC	61	8.9
2	I use OPAC most of the time	89	13.1
3	I use OPAC sometimes	112	16.6
4	I rarely use OPAC	322	47.5
5	I never use OPAC	94	13.9
Total		678	100

Table 1 shows that though 61 respondents affirmed that they always use OPAC and 89 respondents claimed that they use it most of the time, majority (322) of the respondents rarely use OPAC while 112 respondents sometimes use OPAC. And 94 of the respondents claimed that they have never used their library OPAC. With this result it is clear that students' use of OPAC in university libraries in South-South Nigeria is low. This result corroborated poor OPAC use by students as reported in the Findings of Onuoha, Umahi and Bamidele's (2013) study on students of the Redeemer's University (RUN) and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB); Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) on the students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and; Kumar and Vohra (2011) which examined OPAC usage by the students and faculty of Panjab University Library. Moreso, Abdulazeez (2011) reported that most users of both card catalogue and OPAC only do so occasionally or never. Thanuskodi (2012) also investigated the

use of OPAC at Annamalai University Library and discovered that only one third of the respondents used OPAC frequently.

On the contrary, Join (2009) reported that the frequency of the OPAC use has increased tremendously among students in recent years due to the enormous benefits derived from the use of OPAC system. Adigun, Ojo, Olayokun, Yewande and Babatunde (2011) in a similar study on students of the University of Lagos found a high frequency in the use of OPAC. Sankari, et al (2013); Gohain and Saikia (2013) in their investigations also found out that majority of the users use OPAC on a daily bases. In the study of Net library (2009) the students indicated that they frequently use the OPAC system because of their inability to familiarize themselves with the use of card catalogue. The study further reported that searching for information material using the OPAC system saved the students quality time, effort and lead to increased user satisfaction. Danskin (2006) noted that OPAC plays an essential role in helping users to locate library resources effectively.

Research Question 2: What are the purposes of use of OPAC by library users in university libraries in South-South Nigeria?

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Purpose of OPAC Use by Library Users

Purpose	No	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean
To find out the location of required document	672	222	401	-	-	49	4.1
To find out whether required documents are available in the library	665	71	301	109	75	109	3.2
To retrieve needed information material	662	45	280	121	88	128	3.0
To know about a document without visiting the library	671	78	332	144	21	96	3.4
To search for information for my research	669	25	259	141	97	148	3.0
To improve my OPAC searching skills	670	12	121	325	101	111	2.7
To compile bibliography of books on a particular subject	656	8	58	304	122	162	2.4
To reserve the book borrowed by someone else	663	11	54	444	121	33	2.8
To check the number of copies in library stock	671	-	41	411	194	35	2.4
Cumulative Mean							3.0

From Table 2 the main purpose for using OPAC by the respondents are to locate documents (4.1), to know about a document without physically visiting the library (3.4), to find out if a document is available in the library (3.2), as well as to search and retrieve information (3.0). This findings corroborate that of Gohain and Saikai (2013) where it was reported that the purpose for using OPAC includes location of document on shelves, to know whether a particular book is on the shelves or not, to know what a library have on a given author, title and subject, to know about a document without visiting the library. Chowdbury (2004) stated that student use OPAC because they can see the library collections and location of the needed information material on the shelf through the screen and easily accessing it.

Similarly, a study by Kumar and Vohra (2013) on user perception and use of OPAC revealed that a majority of users in the three universities (Panjab University, Chandigarh (PUC), Panjab University, Patiala (PUP) and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (GNDU)) reported that they consulted the OPAC to ascertain the availability of required document, to locate the required document and to know the status of the document whether it has been issued or checked out. Also, Yusuf (2012) noted that the reasons why majority of students frequently use the OPAC is because it facilitates quick information search, easy retrieval of information materials, search convenience, improved technological skills and user friendliness. Amune (2013) reported that it is the enormous benefits derived from the use of the OPAC system that lure majority of students into using the OPAC system for information searching and retrieval. OPAC provide student the opportunity to search and retrieve information instantaneously and with less stress compared to the manual system.

Research Question 3: How frequently do the patrons search for various information resources through the OPAC?

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Frequency of Use of OPAC

Use	No	Percentage (%)
Always	5	0.7
Most of the Time	23	3.4
Sometimes	229	33.8
Rarely	201	29.6
Never	220	32.5
Total	678	100.0

Table 3 showed that a large chunk of the respondents rarely (29.6%) and never (32.5%) use OPAC for searching for information resources in the library while a few (33.8%) respondents sometimes use OPAC to source materials in the library. The result of this study buttresses that of Thanuskodi (2012) revealed out of 268 only 31.35% of students frequently used the OPAC, 25.38% of students used OPAC occasionally, 28.89% of respondents used OPAC rarely and 22.38% of students never used the OPAC. Thus means only one-third of the respondents used OPAC frequently. Peltier-Davies (2009) also reported that 68% of student used the OPAC occasionally. Thanuskodi (2012) revealed that out of 268 only 31.35% of students frequently used the OPAC, 25.38% of students used OPAC occasionally, 28.89% of respondents used OPAC rarely and 22.38% of students never used the OPAC which translates to only one-third of the respondents used OPAC frequently. Similarly, Onuoha, Umahi and Bamidele (2013) on OPAC usage by the students and faculty members of Panjab University Library, Chandigarh

revealed that out of 190 respondents 79 used the OPAC very frequently. Majority of respondents (111) used the OPAC occasionally, rarely and not at all. Moreso, a study by Onuoha, Umahi and Bamidele (2013) on OPAC usage by the students and faculty members of Panjab University Library, Chandigarh revealed that out of 190 respondents 79 used the OPAC very frequently. Majority of respondents (111) used the OPAC occasionally, rarely and not at all.

On the contrary, Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) reported that library patrons prefer and frequently use the OPAC system and they do not see the need to go through the rigorous activity of searching through the manual catalogue. Sankari, Chinnasamy, Babasubramanian and Muthuraj (2013) revealed that 51 (39.23%) of the respondents have been using the OPAC 32 (24.62%) of the students used it, once in two days. 19 (14.62%) used it, twice in a week, 9 (6.92%) of the students used it, once in 2 weeks, only 5 (3.85%) of them used it, once in a month. Nearly 40% of the members used the OPAC at library, almost every day.

Peltier-Davies (2009) reported that 68% of student used the OPAC occasionally. while, Walter (2008) reported that the frequency of use of OPAC among student ranges from very frequent, occasionally, rarely and never Walter (2008) noted that majority of student use the OPAC system very frequent and frequently respectively while others use the OPAC system occasionally and rarely as the case may be.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges faced by library users with the use of OPAC?

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 10.

Table 4: Challenges encountered in Using OPAC

CHALLENGES	No	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean
Lack of OPAC knowledge	675	102	281	161	23	108	3.6
Complicated/Confusing to me	670	99	218	132	79	143	3.0
Lack of assistance from library staff	673	107	240	151	82	93	3.2
Inability to use appropriate search terms	669	86	219	158	103	103	3.1
Inadequate computer terminals	676	125	308	101	57	85	3.5
Poor/irregular power supply	678	219	399	34	8	18	4.1

Unfamiliarity with the OPAC system	675	124	291	157	76	27	3.6
OPAC is not user friendly enough	660	100	258	139	78	85	3.3
Failed search or no records retrieved	667	115	226	129	89	108	3.2
Retrieve unmanageably large number of records	659	99	228	109	99	104	3.0
Navigational frustrations	661	122	287	89	67	96	3.4
Inadequate/ lack of cross reference	650	34	199	187	65	165	2.8
Failure to match the system's subject vocabulary	643	22	97	87	45	392	1.9
No Boolean queries formulated	621	13	64	82	43	419	1.7
Lack of perseverance	635	49	129	167	66	224	2.5
My search requests/terms are too broad or too narrow	642	89	229	112	67	145	3.0
I make a variety of errors when entering a search request	649	54	122	118	66	289	2.3

Table 4 show that poor/irregular power supply (4.1), lack of OPAC knowledge and unfamiliarity with the OPAC system (3.6), Inadequate computer terminals (3.5), Navigational frustrations (3.4), OPAC is not user friendly enough (3.3), Lack of assistance from library staff and failed search or no records retrieved (3.2), inability to use appropriate search terms (3.1), Complicated/Confusing to me, retrieve unmanageably large number of records and search requests/terms are too broad or too narrow (3.0) are the major problems encountered while using OPAC. The result of this study is buttressed by Willson and Given (2010) when they reported that users experience difficulties in using OPACs. In fact, Markey (2007) asserted that users also lack the basic skills required to search an OPAC. Wikipedia (2018) noted a number of challenges affecting student use of OPAC system in the library such as lack of adequate orientation, lack of awareness, poor OPAC skills, unfamiliarity problem and inadequate terminals. Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) in a related study on the awareness and use of OPAC by students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria and found out that the challenges students faced in the use of OPAC includes; slow speed of OPAC system, system breakdown and network failure, Inadequate computer system and terminals, Lack of adequate space for students, Poor orientation, training and user education, Library staff poor knowledge of the OPAC system, Unfamiliarity with the OPAC system, Poor

power supply, Unavailability of some information materials via the OPAC, and Irrelevant search results. Also, Findings from the study by Onuoha, Umahi and Bamidele (2013) revealed that the respondents do face challenges while using the OPAC. Thanuskodi (2012) also highlighted some of the challenges faced by students in the use of library OPAC as: Low knowledge of OPAC system among student, lack of library staff in assistance, confusion in the use of the system due to unfamiliarity with the system, inadequate computer system, slow speed, no signal notification at all due to poor network topology, poor skills of library use and OPAC use.

Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) also affirmed that irregular power supply, network failure and shortage of computer systems as factors inhibiting the use of OPAC.

However, this finding is against the assertion of Morrups and Mooko (2006) in their study which revealed that students do not have many problems when searching or using the OPAC. Antell and Huang (2008) pointed out that users rarely utilized correct and complete subject terms and obtain zero results in virtually half their searches. Oduwole et al (2002), in their study at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, found that major constraints encountered by users were the finding of appropriate keyword(s) to search database. The study recommended that users be trained on basic IT skills at first to equip them with the ability to access appropriate information retrieval.

CONCLUSION

The decisions to use OPAC are subject to a variety of factors, from the findings. The need to do more in improving the OPAC skills of students cannot be overemphasized as this will enable them effectively utilize the OPAC and tap from the enormous benefits that comes with it. Even though the respondents show a positive attitude towards OPAC the level of usage of OPAC is relatively low, this position is an indication of poor knowledge of manipulating OPAC systems. More is required in teaching students besides computer appreciation, various search methods and techniques as this will enhance their efficacy in the use of OPAC systems. Problems such as poor

power supply, lack of computer systems etc. that inhibits the use of OPAC in university libraries should be put to check.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made by the researcher;

1. Efforts should be geared towards inculcating on university students the knowledge and skills required to use OPAC.
2. Universities should be equipped with the enabling infrastructure such as adequate power supply, effective Internet connectivity etc. that will encourage the use of OPAC.
3. University libraries should formulate policies that would encourage mandatory use of OPACs.

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