A Comparative Study on User Satisfaction with the Management of Library Services in Three Academic Libraries in Benue State-Nigeria

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Abstract. This study sought to compare user-satisfaction with services in three academic libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. A sample of 500 registered library users was randomly selected for the study. Instrument for data collection was a 25 item questionnaire. A research question and hypothesis was tested using one-way analysis of variance and Fisher's protected t-test analysis at 0.05 alpha levels. The findings of the study revealed that; type of institutions was a function of user satisfaction with library service and those users of Federal University of Agriculture library Makurdi were significantly more satisfied with their library services than users of Benue State University and College of Education Katsina-Ala libraries. The study recommends that academic libraries should store information materials in the right quantity and quality and they should be properly organized to meet the needs of clientele.

Keywords: User satisfaction, Academic libraries, library services, Information materials.

Introduction

Information is vital to the overall development of man. Libraries generally are established to cater for the information needs of people in the community. Libraries acquire and organize both printed and electronic information for accessibility and use of its clientele. Oyegade, Nasarawa and Mokogwu (2003) posited that libraries are the people's university, the local gate-way to knowledge

23

providing opportunity for life-long learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

According to Olanlokum and Salisu (1985) a library is a nerve centre of an educational institution and also a place where information in print and in other forms are collected and arranged to serve all ages and interests. It is based on the above core reasons that a library most serve people of all ages and interests that the researcher has observed some dissatisfaction among users of the library over time now and would want to find out the reasons for the dissatisfaction. At regular intervals it could be read on their faces that they are not all that satisfied with the library services either because of inadequate resources and services or due to the attitude of library personnel toward them. There are complaints from users about the quality and quantity of materials available, finding numbers of materials in the catalogue cabinet but the book may not be found on the shelf, not ventilated, entrance areas, and library location unsuitable for learning. It is against this background that the researcher is motivated to venture into this study. We have various libraries such as; public libraries, national libraries, special libraries, family libraries, academic libraries, etc the researcher is interested with the management of three academic libraries in Benue State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to compare user-satisfaction with the management of library services among three academic libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The academic libraries are found in Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi and College of Education Katsina-Ala. The study specifically seek to determine whether user-satisfaction with the management of library services vary from one tertiary institution to another.

Research Question

What are the variations in user-satisfaction with the management of academic library services from institution to institution?

Research Hypothesis

The variations of user-satisfaction with the management of academic library services do not significantly affect the type of institution.

Concept of Academic Libraries and Services

Academic libraries are libraries found in institution of higher learning like colleges of Education, Polytechnics, universities and research institutions. The major aim of establishing them is to serve the academic needs of the institution in terms of research, teaching and learning, community development/extension services as observed by Nwosu (2000).

Library services are regarded as social services which are bound to stimulate the reading habit of the society, including people in the academic environment. Library services present a picture of remarkable variety and play a vital role in the education, economic, cultural and recreational life of the entire population.

The fact remains that any library is in the business of offering services to its users. For the library to be functional the services it provides should correspond with the needs of its users because the user is the very reason for the existence of the library and it ensures that the service so provided are exploited to the maximum. Any library that wants to improve its services to met with views, opinions and perception of its users must solicit the help of its users to identify areas of weakness in order to improve upon them.

According to Withers (1994) academic library services include;

a. Circulating materials to eligible patrons under equitable policies

b. providing reference referral services

c. providing indexing and abstracting services covering the professional periodicals received in the library

d. providing current awareness services

e. providing continuing instruction to patrons in the effective use of the library (user education)

f. preparing a library handbook giving details of the rules, resources, services and staff of the library and making it available to patrons free of charge or at minimal cost

g. promoting inter-library cooperation loan

h. providing of computer services and convenient hours of services

i. displaying newly received books in an appropriate place and arranging book exhibitions.

The degree to which these services satisfy the needs of users will show how efficient and effective a particular library is.

Concept of User Satisfaction

An academic library satisfying the requests of users implies providing the actual information or services that will meet the needs of an information seeker or user. In the word of Solola (1983) the quality of services rendered to users or readers in any library reflect the quality of the staff. He argued that if a library is managed by well qualified, experienced and cultured staff, users will always be encouraged to make use of the library. Sowole (1995) stated that users are described as the raison-datre (reason of existence) of the library. It is typically and entirely on their behalf that the organization and administration exists.

Lamenting on user-satisfaction and the need for libraries to be well equipped to satisfy its user Abagai (1998) observes that the use of the library include how to locate information including the technicalities of using the catalogue, the classification system in use, getting assistance from the library staff and having knowledge of library approach to reference services, borrowing pattern, knowledge of opening and closing time in the library and others. In other words availability of library materials, knowledge of their existence and acquisition of some basic skills on how to locate such materials and information depend on the objectives, policies and pursuance of same by the institutions for user-satisfaction.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The design was used because it is considered best in identifying and describing the present conditions and needs, vital facts and opinions of users regarding their satisfaction with library services. The area of study is three Academic libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in the selection of 500

registered users for the study (220, users from FUAM library, 160 users from BSU library and 120 users from COE-K/Ala).

The main instrument for the study was a 24 item Likert type scale user evaluation questionnaire (UEQ). The instrument was validated by some researchers/Librarians from FUAM and BSU Makurdi. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trail test was conducted using test-retest reliability estimate method. The correlation coefficient was 0.76 and considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level using analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Data Analysis and Results

The data collected for the study was analyzed and in order to test the hypothesis the mean (x) and standard deviations (SD) of user-satisfaction with the management of library services in the three academic libraries were calculated before the application for of the one-way analysis of variability (NAOVA) in user-satisfaction with libraries services due to library types. The outcome of the analysis is as shown below in the tables.

Table 1 Analysis of variability (one-way ANOVA) user-satisfaction with the management of library services in three Academic libraries in Benue State.

Library	N	X	SD
FUAM	218	15.16	4.96
BSU	122	14.39	5.63
COE-K/ALA	160	14.82	4.88
TOTAL	500		

Analysis of variability (one-way ANOVA) of user-satisfaction with the management of library services in three Academic libraries in Benue State

Source of	SS	df	MS	F-Value
Between	48.29	2	24.145	7.473
Within group	1576.65	488	3.231	
Total	1624.94	490		

At df 2, 488, F-critical = 3.020.05 alpha level

The ANOVA in user-satisfaction with the management of library resulted in an F-ratio of 7.473. Calculated is more than F-critical of 3.02 at 0.5 alpha level at df 2, 488, we can say that library types has a significant impact on the user-satisfaction with library services. With the result the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. The implication is that, the extent of user-satisfaction with the management of library services vary significantly with type of institution library.

Comparative Analysis Using Fisher's Least Square Difference

With the result gotten i.e. F-value of 7.473 a detailed multiple comparison analysis using Fisher's least square difference (LSD) was done to ascertain exactly which of the institutions (FUAM, BSU & COE/K-ALA) differed significantly from each other in terms of user-satisfaction with the management of library services.

Table 2 Results of Fisher's LSD Multiple Comparisons Analysis of the influence of type of institution on user-satisfaction with the management of library services

Type of institutions	FUAM	BSU	COE/K-Ala
FUAM	15.16[a]	0.77[a]	0.34
BSU	3.73[cx]	14.39	-0.43
COE-K/ALA	180	-1.96	14.82
	MSW = 3.231		

[a] = Group means are placed along the major diagonals

[b] = Difference between group means are above the major diagonals

[c] = Fisher's t-values are below the major diagonals

[x] = significant at .05 alpha level (t-cri = 1.96)

Table 2 which shows significant fisher's t-value of 3.73 indicates that user-satisfaction with the management of library services in FUAM (mean = 15.16) is significantly higher than user-satisfaction with the management of library services in BSU (mean = 14.39).

The non-significant fisher's t-value of 1.80 indicates that user satisfaction with the management of library services in FUAM (mean = 15.16) is not significantly higher than user satisfaction with library services in COE/K-ALA (mean = 14.82). Also, the non-significant Fisher's t-value of -1.96 indicates that

user-satisfaction with library services in COE/K-ALA (mean = 14.82) is not significantly higher than user satisfaction with library services in BSU (mean = 14.39).

Discussion of Results

The results of this study showed that, type of institution was a significant variable in user-satisfaction with the management of library services. The implication is that user-satisfaction with library services in libraries which are well stocked and the materials properly arranged, conducive environment, decentralized to meet needs, available reprographics services, manned by well qualified, experienced and cultured staff would be significantly higher than user-satisfaction with libraries with minimal stock of information materials, haphazard arrangement, less qualified and impolite staff. Users will always be encouraged to make use of the library where the quality of services rendered to them will help to satisfy their requests. This finding confirms the earlier findings of Solola (1983), Sowole (1995) and Abagai (1983) as aforementioned in this work.

The finding of this study also reveals that users of Federal University Agriculture Makurdi library are more satisfied with their library services than users of Benue State University Makurdi library and College of Education Katsina-Ala library. This finding is not surprising because it could be that the quality and quantity of information materials in the Federal University of Agriculture library are higher than those in the other two academic libraries. Undoubtedly, the quality and quantity of library staff in FUAM is higher than those of library staff in both BSU and COE-Katsina-Ala library. Conclusively, therefore, there is need for improved library services in the three academic libraries in Benue State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A critical look at the findings of the study, it was concluded that users of FUAM library were more satisfied than that of BSU and COE-K-Ala library. Notwithstanding empirically user satisfaction with library services in the three academic libraries were not found to be sufficiently high and therefore, there is room for improvement in the services provided in these libraries.

In the light of these, the study recommends that library authorities should create easy access points, educate users on how to exploit these access points to encourage them to visit the library more frequently, stay longer and have easy to the materials in the library vis-à-vis their satisfaction with services rendered by the library. The library should also propose a well-planned user instruction and information skill program in an up date technology environment with at least 100 personal computers with internet access, network CD-ROMs access to the OPAC and the audiovisual gadgets needed for a hand on information search experience.

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