Users Satisfaction with Library and Information Service in Plateau State Special Education Institution
By
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Abstract
The study investigated Users Satisfaction with Library and Information Service in Plateau State Special Education Institution. Survey research method was adopted for the study and the population of the study consists of staff and students of the special educational institutions in Plateau State. The three selected institutions were the Plateau State School of the Deaf, Gindiri School for the Blind and University of Jos Special Education Department. Data was collected using questionnaire and data collected analyzed using frequency and percentage tables. The study found among others that a high percentage of the respondents were not satisfied with the Library literacy skills services provided by the selected institutions. The study also concluded that libraries in the special education institutions in Plateau state provide their patrons with some basic information resources and services that are mostly specific with the nature of the physical challenge of their patrons. Recommendation for the acquisition of more current and relevant information resources and facilities as well as training on how to use the facilities to maximize the level of satisfaction of the use of the facilities were made.

Introduction
For the physically challenged, information is also power. The ability to obtain and use information on any subject gives them the opportunity to choose a path from the many alternatives instead of being limited to a few, perhaps unwanted, or unfeasible choices. Williamson et al. (2007) states that physically challenged individuals will often require specific information about their disabilities and ways of coping with life activities. Similarly Roth (1991), asserts that the information needs of individuals with disabilities are likely to include, but not limited to service information, the nature of handicapping conditions, environmental accessibility, civil rights, financial assistance and advice, research and statistics, and service delivery models. In addition to these, the physically challenged will need information that will help them in their educational activities. Unlike the natural school setting, access to information is hampered by several challenges depending on the severity of the disability, their institution and, the society at large. Bopp and Smith (2001) assert that each category of the physically challenged requires different adaptations of information service delivery.

All human beings are born equal and all have rights to education, equal opportunities and participation in society. But in the real world, there are some groups of people that do not have these rights due to their physical, mental, and social conditions. These people include the physically challenged. There is no single definition appropriate to all people with disabilities. Definitions are only useful in that they indicate how different disabilities affect the use of facilities such as libraries. However, there are distinctions among the terms impairment, disability and handicap. As

defined by the World Health Organization (1996) impairment refers to an abnormality of body structure, appearance, organ and system functioning. Disability is the consequence of impairment in functional performance and activity. Handicap, on the other hand is the consequence which is reflected in interaction with, and adaptation to the surroundings. According to Bopp and Smith (2001), the physically disabled population includes persons who are blind and visually impaired, individuals who are deaf and hearing-impaired, and persons with mobility impairment.

Special Education in Nigeria
Many physically challenged attending conventional educational institutions are disadvantaged because appropriate accessible buildings, facilities and information resources to cater for them are not provided. This gave rise to special educational institutions in Nigeria. According to Jimoh (2009), special education is the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community than would be available if the students were only given access to a typical classroom education. According to John (1989), while the physically challenged students may have no restrictions on what they can do and learn, others could be extremely limited in their activities and require intensive medical and educational help. A physical problem can hamper a student's mobility, coordination, stamina, communication, or learning abilities to such an extent that educational objectives

are difficult to accomplish and special education intervention is required. For example, children with cerebral palsy typically have deficits in gross and fine motor development as well as speech and communication problems. Some children have extremely debilitating physical conditions that result in low intellectual functioning, serious limitations in activities, and multiple primary handicaps. This makes it necessary to modify and adapt the school environment to make it accessible, safe, and less restrictive.

Students receiving special education fall into many categories. How to provide them with the most suitable education measures in order to give them the opportunity to fully develop their potential has become the chief task of special educational institutions. The Nigerian government has put into place policies and programs which world ensure that educational opportunities are extended to the physically challenged in the society. To achieve this there are various organizations involved. Some are governmental sectors, some are private, and some are non-profit organizations. The governmental organizations include Federal and State Ministries of Education in which the Division of Special Education is responsible for special needs the students.

Special education policies are embedded into the overall educational policies set by the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria. A department of the Ministry was created to provide divergent contexts for advancing special education in Nigeria. In addition according to Obiakor (1998) the Federal Ministry of Education established a committee to conduct special education activities in collaboration with the Ministries of Health, Local Welfare and Labour. Teacher training colleges were required to provide general and basic courses for all prospective teachers who were willing to teach in special educational institutions.

According to a publication by the Federal Ministry of Education (1981), Nigerian institutions of higher learning have been instrumental in training special educators, and frantic efforts have been made to train some of the needed specialists abroad. However, there continues to be an insufficient number of special educators to meet the *special* needs of students (Ihunnah, 1984; Obiakor, 1991; Obiakor, Maltby and Ihunnah, 1990; Ogbue, 1975; Oluigbo, 1986). It is becoming increasingly apparent that students in special educational institutions in Nigeria are not acquiring the knowledge, skills and competencies they will need to be contributing members of society.

Nigeria National Policy on Education Section 8 contains a policy that sets the stage for educational services for the physically challenged, (Federal Ministry of Education, 1977). The policy aimed at the following:
i.   Give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical and emotional disability notwithstanding.
ii.   Provide adequate education for all handicapped children and adults in order that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation

The policy went further to recommend the establishment of the committee on special education, National Council for Rehabilitation of the disabled, and the National Council on special education. Despite this laudable policy the plight of the physically challenged in Nigeria can clearly be seen, in education. For instance, they do not have access to education with regards to accessible buildings, information resources and facilities to aid in education.

In their own efforts to complement the federal government efforts in providing education and rehabilitating the physically challenged State governments have set up special institutions that will provide education and vocational trainings for them. One of such state is the Plateau state, which has a rehabilitation board that seems to be geared towards assisting the physically challenged. Plateau state Ministry of Education list the following as the rehabilitation boards aim to include;
i.   To training and retrain physically challenged persons. This includes those that are trainable through vocational trades and adult education in order to give them some degree of independence (self-reliance).
ii.   Assessing and reporting to the government any major natural disaster anywhere in the state and providing relief materials to the affected persons and places

The aims and functions of the board, is to provide training for the trainable rehabilitee admitted from all parts of the state and beyond.

Library and Information Services Delivery and the Physically Challenged
Like every educational institution, the library plays an important role in the attainment of the goals/aim of the curriculum. The institutional library makes information resources and services accessible and available to students, teachers and administrators. In general sense, in an educational institution the central function of the library will be to support the

curriculum of the school. Access to information to support teaching and learning in special educational institution is hampered by several challenges depending on the severity of the disability, their institution, the society at large, and failure to address their needs. Wright(1979) posits that all library and information services available to other persons should be made available to the physically challenged individual in a manner which does not stress the individual. Information should be in a format that the physically challenged can use and one readily acceptable to such individuals. He suggests for the construction of ramp for the handicapped to have access into a room or building, or an isolated ramp attached to one side of it with special sign to indicate where the physically challenged should go through. Tashi (1990) posits that the Nigerian libraries are not suitable for the disabled because of space limitation. That the sitting space, shelves, offices and library catalogues are too close together with very little room for movement. Hence, people on wheel chair find it almost impossible to use the library because of the problems of mobility and inaccessibility. Unfortunately, according to Ibironke (2007) out of the 36 state and the FCT libraries in Nigeria, only Oyo, Imo, and Abia offer library services to the physically challenged particularly the blind and visually impaired students. They receive Braille books from donors and make them available in their libraries.

Wright (1979) suggests that libraries should begin to think on how they can modify their programmes and services to serve the physically challenged, such library services according to Zaki (1990) will help to re-orientate the thinking of the disabled and make them live better lives. This can help them overcome the educational cultural and economic deficiencies in their lives.

Different types of disability require different types of specialized services such as library and information services. Pulman (2004), categorized services to be provided by libraries for the physically challenged in general into four main areas:

a. Physical access to buildings, service counters, workstations, reading rooms, and shelves where possible. This can include providing:
  i. entrances with suitable, clear openings or automatic doors (preferred door width 900mm);
  ii. ramps outside and within the building; in case of stairs: no open treads, handrails on both sides; ideally: elevators;
  iii. barrier-free hallways (no floor mats or furniture);
  iv. colour contrast in carpets and on walls (also to function as warnings near stairs and doorways);
  v. effective lighting;
  vi. accessible tables, computer stations and public service desks (table height and width, turning spaces, ergonomic chairs, lighting);
  vii. accessible public areas such as toilets and public telephone;
  viii. shelving: should ideally fall within 750-2000mm from floor level;
  ix. signage: plain typeface (sans serif such as Helvetica, Univers or Arial) on signs and websites;

b. Intellectual access to the content of information carriers, including the availability of alternative format materials, adapted workstations and special software. Access can be facilitated on a wide variety of levels, requiring both technical and human solutions. Alternative format materials including Braille, large print audio-cassettes and digital files are part of the solution

c. Training for library staff members in helping physically disabled. All staff, regardless of where in the library they work, should be sensitive to and have a basic knowledge of different forms of impairments. Also the ways in which different conditions affect the ability to make use of services and the built/physical environment as designed for the general population.

d. Virtual access to library services for those not able to visit the actual building. People who are prevented from getting to a library because of disability should not be denied access to any of the library's services. The services offered should provide the same quality of access to information about stock as the services offered in the actual library building, and the same opportunities for reserving or requesting books.

Similarly, Maina (2009), Roy and Bandyopadhyay (2009) and the Library Association of Australia (1998) guidelines on library standards for people with disabilities stated that librarians will need to take into consideration the following points for effective library and information service to the physically challenged:

  i. Library services for the blind must enable them to have access to equipments such as Braille printers, Braille embosser and tape duplicators, Kuzweil reader (a text- to speech reading machine with synthesized speech output), closed circuit TVs for magnifying regular text, PCs with CD

ROMS, Power Macs with CD ROMS, large print type writers, special track tape recorders, computers that are having adaptable equipments such as voice eyes.

ii. The library facility must be barrier free to wheel chairs and other mobility devices and ensuring that all devices including door handles are designed for easy manipulation.

iii. Provide information resources for the deaf and hearing impairment which include collection of books, caption videos, assistive listening device, specialized alerting devices, technological communication aids.

iv. Reader service section to increase the accessibility of their library. As all documents are not available in their technological form like Braille or talking book and some documents are needed by these users. According to Roy and Bandyopadhyay (2009) reader service is the only way to provide 'right information to the right user at the right moment'.

v. Employ librarians who are qualified in sign language and use of Braille technology.

vi. Sign interpreters for effective communication with the deaf

Statement of the problem

The researcher has observed that the physically challenged in Nigeria who do not have access to rehabilitation or any form of educational training end up being fully dependent on their extended families or engaged in begging as the only source of livelihood. It can be argued that this is part of the reasons why the government of Nigeria and some states like Plateau established special institution to cater for their educational needs. The library as one of the hubs for educational training has been established by special educational institutions to support the training of the physically challenged. Williamson et al. (2007) stated that libraries have always had problems in providing information for people with disabilities. This is because, unlike the other types of libraries, library services for the physically challenged must enable them have access to equipments such as Braille, Braille embosser, tapes, hearing aids, Kuzweil reader, talking books, and services such as sign language. In the light of the above, to what extent have the special educational institutions in Plateau State equipped the libraries with relevant information resources to meet the needs of their students, and how accessible and satisfying are the users of these libraries with the resources and services available?

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine Library and Information resources and services provided to the physically challenged by the libraries in Plateau State Special Educational Institutions. In specific terms the study has the following objectives:

1. To identify the type of library resources and information services available in the special educational institutions for the physically challenged in Plateau State.
2. To identify the available facilities and human resources available in the special educational institution
3. To determine if the clients of the special educational institutional libraries in Plateau State are satisfied or not with the information resources and services

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research is survey method. Interview and questionnaire methods of survey research were adopted for this study. The population of the study is made up of all management staff, heads of library, all the professional and paraprofessional staff working in the library that supports the special educational institutions in Plateau state. In addition, all the students attending these special educational institutions formed part of the population.

Due to the small number of library staff working in the libraries if the physically challenged the researcher decided that the entire library staff will be selected for the study while a random sampling of 106 students was sampled for the study. Of the 106 respondents involved in the study, 28 were from the University of Jos Special Education for the physically challenged, 50 were from Plateau School of the deaf while 28 were from the School of the blind Gindiri.

Discussions and Analysis

The scores in the table, the extent of use of the available information resources and services in the table could be associated with application dictated by the types of disabilities. This means that the use as indicated in the table could be said to be high according to the need of the respective respondents. One thing is however clear in this study, the extent of use could not be generally applied for all the information resources and services equally in the institutions. This accounted for the low usage of some respondents in some of the information resources and services indicated in the table.

Table 1: Library Information Resources Available in the Special Educational Institutions

Information resources available	School of the Blind Gindri		Plateau School of the Deaf		University of Jos Special Education	
	Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available
Computers	√	X	√	X	√	X
Book scanners with software	X	√	X	√	X	√
General scanners with software	X	√	X	√	√	X
CCTV magnifying aid unit	X	√	X	√	X	√
Kuzweil reader (a text-to speed reading machine with synthesized speech out put)	X	√	X	√	X	√
Braille	√	X	X	√	√	X
Sub-titled DVD and videos (for the deaf)	X	√	√	X	√	X
Large print books	√	X	X	√	√	X
Talking books	X	√	X	√	X	√
Audio videos	√	X	X	√	√	X

Available = √   Not Available = X

Table 2: Library Information Services Available in the Special Educational Institutions

Information resources and services	School of the Blind Gindri		Plateau School of the Deaf		University of Jos Special Education	
	Provided	Not provided	Provided	Not provided	Provided	Not provided
Reader services	√	X	X	√	√	X
Sign language	X	√	√	X	√	X
Use of brail	√	X	X	√	√	X
Computer services	√	X	X	√	√	X
Adjustable furniture	√	X	X	√	√	X
Library literacy skill	√	X	X	√	√	X

Available = √   Not Available = X

Table 1revealed that computers were information resources available in all the institutions. None of the special educational institutions in Plateau State provided book scanners with software, CCTV magnifying aid unit, Kuzweil reader and talking books as shown in Table 1.

The provision of braille for the School of the Blind Gindri and University of Jos Special Education as indicated in the table clearly indicated by the staff of the libraries might be because they have blinds as their client. Sub-titled DVD and videos were available at both the Plateau School of the Deaf and the University of Jos Special Education. The availability of most of the information resources that can be used by the blind and the deaf in University of Jos Special Education Department can be attributed to the fact that they cater for the needs of almost all the physically challenged. This pattern of distribution of the information resources is reflected in the provision of large print books, talking books and audio descriptive videos in the table.

The library staff response indicated that University of Jos Special Education provided reader services, sign

language service, training on the use of Braille, computer service, adjustable furniture and library literacy services as shown in table 2.

Table 3: Available facilities and human resources available in the institutions for accessing information resources and services

Facilities and human resources	School of the Blind Gindri		Plateau School of the Deaf		University of Jos Special Education	
	Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available
Clear path for the blind	√	X	X	X	√	X
Ramp access to facilities for wheel chair	X	√	X	√	√	X
Low stack for information resources	X	√	√	X	√	X
Sign posters	X	√	√	X	√	X
Library catalogue	X	√	X	√	√	X
Skilled staff in sign language and interpreters	X	√	√	X	√	X
Skilled Braille readers	√	X	X	√	√	X

Available = √   Not Available = X

The researcher also sought to find out the available facilities and human resources available in the sampled special educational institutions. The response from the librarians are indicated in table 3

The data collected from the three special educational institutions clearly reveals that available facilities and human resources reflect the types of physically challenged clients in the special educational institutions. For example, the clearing of path for the blind was peculiar in the School of the Blind Gindri and the University of Jos Special Education because of their type of disabilities which would not allow them free movement in the presence of any obstacle on their path. On the other hand, sign posters were particularly common in the Plateau School of the Deaf and University of Jos Special Education. Only University of Jos Special Education provide its patrons with Ramp access to facilities for wheel chair and library catalogue, as well as both skilled staff in sign language and skilled Braille reader.

The researchers sought the opinion of the respondents on either they were satisfied or not satisfied with the services available in the special educational institutions and their responses are indicated in table 4 below.

Even though general scanners with software were available in all the three institutions, the percentage of those satisfied with in use are very low in school of the Blind Gindir (10.7%) and Plateau School of the deaf (26.0%) compared with the high level of satisfaction of respondent in University of Jos Special Education (64.3%). The responses revealed that book scanners and its software, CCTV Magnifying aid unit, Kuzweil reader and talking books were not available in all of the sampled institutions hence the respondents indicated they were not satisfied with the resources. This might not be connected with the fact that these equipment were relatively expensive.

The respondents who indicated that they were satisfied with computer information resources was higher than those that indicated they were not satisfied with it as indicated by 78%, 64% and 64.3% of the respondents from School of the Blind Gindri, Plateau School of the deaf and University of Jos Special Education respectively.

Table 4: Opinion of the Respondents on the Satisfaction of the Available Information Resources

Information resources	School of the Blind Gindri		Plateau School of the Deaf		University of Jos Special Education	
	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
	Freq(%)	Freq(%)	Freq(%)	Freq(%)	Freq(%)	Freq(%)
Computer Information resources	22(78.5%)	6(21.5%)	32(64.0%)	18(36.0%)	18(64.3%)	10(35.8%)
Book scanners and its software's	0(0%)	28(100%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
General scanners with software	3(10.7%)	25(89.3%)	13(26.0%)	37(74.0%)	18(64.3%)	10(35.7%)
CCTV magnifying aid unit	0(0%)	28(100%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
Kuzweil reader(a text-to speed reading machine with synthesized speech output	0(0%)	28(100%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
Braille	23(82.1%)	5(17.9%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	10(35.8%)	18(64.3%)
Sub-titled DVD, and videos(for the deaf)	0(0%)	28(100%)	36(72.0%)	14(28.0%)	14(50.0%)	14(50.0%)
Large print books	14(50.0%)	14(50.0%)	27(74.0%)	13(26.0%)	13(46.4%)	15(53.6%)
Talking books	0(0%)	28(100%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
Audio books	25(89.4%)	3(10.7%)	0(0.0%)	50(0.0%)	22(78.6%)	6(21.4%)

Table 3: Opinion of the respondents on the satisfaction of the available information services

Information services	School of the Blind Gindri		Plateau School of the Deaf		University of Jos Special Education	
	Satisfied	Non-Satisfied	Satisfied	Non-Satisfied	Satisfied	Non-Satisfied
	F(%)	F(%)	F %	F %	F %	F %
Readers services	28(100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	33 (66.0%)	17 (34.0%)	18 (64.3%)	10 (35.7%)
Sign language services	0(0.0%)	28 (100.00%)	32 (64.0%)	18 (36.0%)	16 (57.1%)	12 (42.8%)
Braille Services	25(89.2%)	3 (10.7)%	0 (0.0%)	50 (0.0%)	16 (57.1%)	12 (42.8%)
Computer services	16(57.2%)	12 (42.8%)	39 (78.0%)	11 (22.0%)	21 (75.0%)	7 (25.0%)
Library literacy skill	10(35.8%)	18 (64.2%)	10 (20.0%)	40 (80.0%)	8 (28.6%)	20 (71.4%)

Respondents from the study revealed that computer services was provided by all the special education Institution, however many of the respondents were satisfied with the computer services as indicated by 57.2%, 78.0% and 75.0% of respondents from School of the Blind Gindiri, Plateau School of the Deaf and University of Jos Special Education respectively. A high percentage of the respondents also indicated that they were not satisfied with the Library literacy skills that can empower library users to effectively use the library and information services. This is revealed by 64.2%, 80.0% and 71.4% of the respondents from School of the Blind

Gindiri, Plateau School of the Deaf and University of Jos Special Education respectively.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study investigated users satisfaction with library and information service in Plateau State Special Education Institution. The inference that can be drawn from the outcome of the study is that the libraries in the special education institutions in Plateau state provide their patrons with some basic information resources and services that are mostly specific with the nature of the physical challenge of their patrons. These library and information services provided by the libraries are mostly to the satisfaction of the patrons.

On the basis of the findings of this study the research wish to make the following recommendations
1. That the libraries should improve on the library literacy skills they provide their patrons to ensure more effective use of the library and information resources.
2. The library should acquire more current and relevant information resources and facilities as well as provide training on how to use the facilities to maximize the level of satisfaction of the use of the facilities.
3. There should be adequate provision of the required information resources and services of the libraries to enable maximum satisfaction of the physically challenged students in the institutions.

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