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UTILIZATION OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE (OPAC) AMONG LIBRARY USERS IN SOME SELECTED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at presenting the results of a survey conducted to determine the utilization of online public access catalogue (OPAC) among library users in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Five objectives was design for the study which are awareness, the frequency of use, the purpose of use, method of search and challenges of using OPAC. Total 420 questionnaires were selected for the study out of the 448 filled questionnaires received. The data received from the respondents is analyzed using simple percentage approach. The findings of the study revealed that OPAC usage rate is quite low among the library users in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The majority of the respondents indicated that they were moderately successful in locating documents through OPAC. It is also found that most of the users are unaware of the all the facility available in the OPAC and encounter problem while searching. Some of the problems observed from the study includes: difficulty in query formation, maximum time search failure, no scope for spelling correction, inadequate instruction in the OPAC software, OPAC not functioning properly and lack of proper guidance from the library staff. Hence, the study suggested that improvement of OPAC functionality is the urgent need for the effective and proper utilization of OPAC.

Key words: University Libraries, Lagos State, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), Searching Problem, Use pattern, User study

INTRODUCTION

OPAC stands for Online Public Access Catalogue, is a computerized form of library catalogue which is available online. It has made searching and retrieval of bibliographic records easier and faster, it also offers other facilities such as online renewal and reservation; borrower status checking and so on. It allows the user to request items from another library through inter-library loan service and to view their library registration details. It allows multidimensional searches providing as many as access points through author, title, subject, keywords as the data element depending upon the ILM software used (Naik, Devendra and Nikam, Khaiser, 2014). It has enabled post-ordinated searches using Boolean operators and other combination of searches (Sridhar, M. S., 2004). From its inception, it has been passed through the different stage of development and presently accessible via the internet with graphical browsers known as Web-OPAC. But in the present internet environment, current OPAC system is not attractive and appealing to library users. Library users are relying more on web search engines to fulfill their information needs rather than libraries. In this context, to know the usefulness of the present OPAC system, the study has been undertaken in libraries of tertiary institutions of Lagos State to ascertain the user's awareness, method of usage and constraints of using the OPAC.

The use of the library is decreasing day by day due to the enormous growth of digital content and advent of web search engines. It has also drastically changed the searching behaviour of library users. Nowadays, users are more preferring Google searching instead of OPAC. The libraries of higher educational institutions in Orissa are in a developing stage having sufficient infrastructure, automated and spending lot of funds in the purchase of library resources. The present study was conducted to investigate user's opinion about the OPAC system. The findings of the study will be helpful in understanding attitudes and expectations of library users in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State towards OPAC. It is expected that this study will assist the libraries to improve the performance and quality of present OPAC systems.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives
i.   To know the awareness and use of OPAC among the library users in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State;

ii. To investigate purpose of using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State;

iii. To analyze the search pattern of the library users while using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State; and

iv. To find out various problem faced by the library users in using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study has the following objectives

i.   find out the level of awareness and use of OPAC among the library users in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State;

ii. what are the purpose of using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State;

iii. what are the method of usage of search pattern of the library users while using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State; and

iv. find out various problem faced by the library users in using OPAC in some selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ansari and Amita (2007) conducted a survey on awareness and use of OPACs in five Delhi libraries and found that a high percentage of users are not much aware of the expert search facilities available in OPAC and suggested OPAC interfaces need to be more user- friendly and brief explanations of the search process should be available in the form of abstract. Mulla, K.R. (2009) attempted to know the use and satisfaction of users about Web-OPAC in engineering college libraries in Karnataka and revealed that OPAC is a useful tool but there were different constraints which hindered OPAC usage such as lack of awareness and IT competency among the user community, OPAC is not user friendly etc.

Also, Kannapanavar and Manjunatha (2010) examined library use pattern among the faculty members of the engineering colleges in Karnataka and found there is a poor usage of the library catalogue. It revealed that 53.2% of users were using online public access catalogue (OPAC)

to locate their reading materials whereas 48.8% of the users consulted the librarian and library staff to locate documents. In this connection, Kumar and Vohra (2011) also carried out a study on the usage of OPAC by the students and faculty of Panjab University Library, Chandigarh. The results of the study revealed that a significant number of users encountering problems while searching information through OPAC and majority of the users use OPAC to know only the availability and location of library materials. The major reason for not utilizing full features of OPAC was they lacked basic skills of searching.

Recently, Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) investigated the awareness and use of OPAC by Students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study found that majority of the students used manual catalogues to access library resources instead of OPAC and the reason was lack of awareness and skills to use OPAC and problems encountered during usage. Kumar, A. (2015) also study use patterns of OPAC among the faculty members in Great Lakes Institute of Management at Chennai. The result of the study clearly indicates that there is persistent need to improve the OPAC of this library. Faculty members should be taught how to use the OPAC during library orientation and a manual should be developed on how to use the OPAC and placed at the OPAC desk.

From the above studies, it is found that no such study exists in the context of libraries of higher educational institutions in Lagos State. Therefore, the present work will be useful to identify method of usage of OPAC among the library users and will help in improving the present OPAC system.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in the libraries of tertiary institutions in the Lagos State. At present, there are twenty (20) tertiary institutions in Lagos State as at the time of this study. However, the study involves only those institutions offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The library users of these 20 institutions were selected through quota sampling method. 448 numbers of questionnaires were distributed out of which only 420 responses were received and all were selected for the study. In order to identify the method of usage of OPAC among the library users the questionnaire was developed to address various issues relating to the use of OPAC.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using simple percentage approach and presented through tables and figures for drawing meaningful inferences.

Table 1: List of tertiary institutions in Lagos State

S/N	Institutions	Category
1	University of Lagos Library (UNILAG)	Fed. University
2	Lagos State University (LASU)	State University
3	Lagos State Polytechnic (LASPOTECH)	State Polytechnic
4	Yaba College Of Technology (YABATECH)	Fed. Polytechnic
5	Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED)	State College
6	Michael Otedola College Of Primary Education (MOCPED)	State College
7	Federal College Of Education (Technical) Akoka	Fed. College
8	Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology, Victoria Island, Lagos	Fed. College
9	National Open University,	Fed. University
10	Pan-African University, Lekki, Lagos	University
11	Lagos State College of Health Technology Yaba-Lagos	State College (MSI)
12	Caleb University Library, Imota Ikorodu	University (private)
13	Augustine University Epe Lagos	College (private)
14	Lagos City Polytechnic	Polytechnic (private)
15	Ronik Polytechnic, Ejigbo Lagos	Polytechnic (private)
16	Grace Polytechnic, Surulere Lagos	Polytechnic (private)
17	Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry	Fed. College (MSI)
18	Federal College Of Orthopaedic Technology, National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi, Lagos	Fed. College (MSI)
19	Administrative Staff college of Nigeria (ASCON) Topo, Badagry Lagos	University (private)
20	Nigeria Army School of Finance & Admin, Apapa- Lagos	Polytechnic (MSI)

Field survey 2019

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents   n=420

Category	Response	Percentage
Undergraduate students	360	85.7%
Postgraduate students	36	8.6%
Researchers and Faculty Staff	24	5.7%
Total	**420**	**100%**

Field survey: 2019

The finding reveals that category of respondents is indicated in Table-2. It exhibits that about 360 (85.7%) of the respondents were undergraduate students and 36 (8.6%) were postgraduate students. At the same time, 24 (5.7%) respondents were research scholars and faculty staff.

Table 3 Awareness Level

| Respondents | Awareness of OPAC | |
	Aware	Not aware
UNDERGRADUATE	245 (68.1%)	115 (31.9%)
POSTGRADUATE	25(69.4%)	11(30.6%)
RESEARCHERS & STAFF	15(62.5%)	9 (37.5%)
TOTAL	**285**	**135**

Field survey, 2019

The finding reveals the level of awareness of use of OPAC in their respective institution of respondents is indicated in Table-3 and 245 (68.1%) undergraduate students indicated that they are aware of the use of OPAC while 115 (31.9%) were not. Also 25(69.4%) postgraduate students were aware and 11(30.6%) were not.

Table 4: Frequency of OPAC Use among Different Category of Users

Frequency of OPAC Use	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Researcher & staff	Total	Percentage
Daily	22	0	0	22	5.2%
Once a week	34	5	0	39	9.3%
More than once a week	73	6	4	83	19.8%
When necessary	99	10	12	121	28.8%
Rarely	132	15	8	155	36.9%
Total	360	36	24	420	100%

Field survey, 2019

The result of these findings reveals how frequent the respondents are using OPAC to fulfill their information need. From the table-4 it is found that there is the very low usage of OPAC among the users. Majority of the respondents around 36.9% rarely use OPAC, 28.8% respondents use it when necessary. 19.8% respondents using once a week whereas 9.3% users using more than once a week, and only 5.2% respondents using daily. It is also found that in comparison to other category of users, OPAC is maximum used by the researcher scholars.

Table 5 Purpose of Using OPAC

Purpose of using OPAC	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Researcher & staff	Total	Percentage
For journals and other reading materials	55	9	3	67	16.0%
To find out if documents that are available in the library	30	5	-	35	8.3%
To get information material	71	4	5	80	19.1%
To get information for my research work	128	14	16	158	36.6%
To compile bibliography of books on a particular subject	52	4	-	56	8.6%
Borrowed book	24	-	-	24	5.7%
Total	**360**	**36**	**24**	**420**	**100%**

Field survey, 2019

The main purpose of OPAC is to help users identify and locate items that may contain information pertinent to the user's research work. Results of this study support this whereby a total of 36.6% of the respondents use OPAC to know the availability and locate books on the library. Adetimirin (2015), who reported that students do not usually make use of OPAC. Also Ogbole and Atinmo (2017) reiterated that literature revealed low patronage of OPAC by undergraduate students in university libraries due to several factors such as ICT infrastructure, complex OPAC interface design. poor awareness on OPAC use, inadequate library space, erratic power supply, inadequate funds to support automation projects, inadequate ICT skilled staff among others all of which inhibits OPAC use in Nigeria University libraries.

FINDINGS

i.   The findings revealed that a good number of respondents 285 (67.9%) are aware of the OPAC facility.

ii.   The usage rate is quite low among the library users of Lagos State. A majority of the 28.8% of the respondents are using OPAC when necessary not on regular basis.

iii. It is found that research scholars are the regular user of OPAC in comparison to other categories of user.

iv.   Majority of the respondents replied that they have difficulty in locating books through OPAC.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The tertiary educational libraries of Lagos State have a lot collections and good infrastructure. Most provides various valuable services along with OPAC facility to their users but they are not properly used by the users due to the fact that users are used to web searching and using OPAC for their information needs. Notwithstanding, this study revealed that there is the very low usage of OPAC among the library users. In order to overcome this, there is a need to upgrade the present OPAC system to render better services to the users. There is urgent need to displayed on a board close to the OPAC area instructions on how to use and the important of using OPAC.

Major recommendations are given for better utilization of OPAC services in libraries of the tertiary institution in Lagos State and they can be outlined as follows:

i.   Need to trained users to acquire basic skills in searching;

ii.   Trained staff should be provided to pay attention to library user;

iii.   Library software vendors to develop a user-friendly OPAC system for easy search;

iv.   Libraries should ensure that the OPAC is web-based so that users can be accessed it from anywhere and anytime.

v.   Librarians should update entries in the OPAC from time to time and keep it up to date.

vi.   OPAC has so many services that are useful for users, hence the need for users to be guided properly.

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