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Availability and Utilization Enhancement of Library Services by Social Science Researchers in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria

Gabrielle Obaro
goobaro@delsu.edu.ng

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Obaro, G. O. (Ph.D)
Library and Information Science Unit, Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka
goobaro@delsu.edu.ng

Abstract

The study investigated the factors that will lead to the enhancement of the availability and utilization of library information services among Social Science researchers in the Federal university libraries in south-south Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study which employed descriptive research design. The study population comprised five hundred and forty-six researchers of lecturers and postgraduate students. Census method was used to include the entire population considered manageable. Three experts validated the Instrument which was found reliable with an overall average reliability co-efficient of 0.88. Four Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria were studied namely the Universities of Benin, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Uyo. Eight library information services were studied:- lending reference, interlibrary, lending, current awareness, selective dissemination of information, photocopying, information communication technology (ICT) and literature search services. Data collection was by questionnaire which was self designed titled "Availability and utilization of Library Information Services among Social Science Researchers in the Federal University libraries in South-South Nigeria. The mean was used to answer research questions whereas the hypothesis was tested using regression analysis at the probability level of 0.05 some findings were made which includes that, attending workshops, conferences and in-service training by researchers and library staff can enhance utilization of the services, and funding by the Federal government can enhance service availability. It was recommended that the Federal government should make funds available to it's universities to procure facilities that will help the services in the university libraries.

Keywords*: Library; Library Services; Enhancement; Availability; Utilization.

Introduction

The library is a typical example of a repository of recorded knowledge. It enhances information. This it does through its services to those who either use, visit, or refer to it for their information needs (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002, Obaro, 2019) have the views that they should be accessible to everybody.

These services include Lending, Reference, Current Awareness, (CAS), Selective dissemination of Information (SDI), Interlibrary Lending (ILL) Information commutation technology (ICT), Literature Search and Photocopying Services (Obaro, 2017). All these Services are available in all kinds of libraries including the university libraries.

The university libraries have been described by Jobs (2010) as institutions that manage and process intellectual products of the society to enable users, have their reading access. Their primary responsibility is to satisfy the instructional and research needs of the university community. No wonder they have been described as the nerve centre of any university. Lecturers, researchers, postgraduate and undergraduate students depend so much on their information services to write seminars, prepare lecture notes, conduct researchers and even augment their lecture notes.

The university library acquire all kinds of human communication records either published, unpublished, written, oral, so far they are in a recorded form and make them accessible to researchers.

Daya (2018) asserts that the university helps to encourage acquisition of knowledge and this is necessary to promote scholarship and research in all fields of learning and human endeavor through the university library which as an Information centre provide these services to people who need them; especially for researches.

Research is a studious enquiry undertaken to discover new facts for the purpose of solving problems. Onojete, Oghuvbu and Money (2007) see research as an important activity in the university library because the library has the necessary resources and services for meeting the demands made upon them which serve as necessary inputs to the research process. Research in the social science is geared towards the study of human beings interacting or acting in groups. It is a branch of knowledge that studies the society and the individuals within the society. With related subject/areas that relates to this include: Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Political science, Psychology to mention but a few.

Information Services came into being when personal assistance to library users was needed as a basic function of the library. Early libraries were regarded as store houses. Books were meant for preservation. Early librarians were seen as caretakers and custodians of books

who never encouraged the loaning out of books (Okiy, 2015). Over time and because the library is a growing organism, library functions shifted from the passive to a service oriented one which enables users use these services. And this is the crux of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The relevance of library information services in university libraries cannot be overemphasized. To get maximum benefits by researchers, library services must be provided, which complements library resources. The thrust of all these services is the provisions of up-to-date and timely information to her patron. This view was supported by Tinuoye (2010) when she opined that library information services help in the provision of speedy, easy remote ease remote access to researchers. But it is evident that among social science researchers, the utilization of these services is highly dependent on researchers being aware of the availability of them. Studies conducted by Ivwighreghewata (2012), Obaro (2020) showed the non-utilization of library information services by researchers. This was also in conformity with Obi (2020) who found out that 44.8% of their respondents (N=160) in their study were reported not to have utilized the library information services because they were not aware of these services since they were not available. Similarly, Akanwa and Aniche (2012) reported in their study that ineffective library services ranked highest of all the other challenges militating against effective utilization of these services with 100% response from researchers.

Therefore, this study is set to identify ways of enhancing the availability and utilization of library information services among researchers in the social sciences in the Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to determine ways of enhancing the availability and utilization of Library Information Sciences by researchers in the Social Sciences in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study is geared to:-

(a)   Determine the measures that can enhance the availability of library information services by Social Sciences researchers in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

(b)   Identify how to enhance the utilization of Library Information Sciences by Social Sciences researchers in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used:

1) What measures can enhance the availability of library information services by the Social Science researchers in the Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

2) How can the utilization of Library and Information Services by the Social Science researchers in the Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria be enhanced.

Hypothesis

This hypothesis was used to test the study.

Hoi: There is no significant relationship between availability enhancement and utilization enhancement of Library and Information Sciences by researchers in the Social Sciences in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

The concept of availability as relating to this study examines the ability of patrons to have the services provided in libraries to enable them conduct their research. Contextually, utilization refers to the extent to which a given resource is made use of at least to the larger proportion. Its utilization is essential for the attainment of the University and its research goals.

Similarly, adequate usage of Information Services is essential in any research study. Obaro (2017) asserts that resources may be available and accessible but not sufficient and adequate for researchers because they are cardinal to the success of any research work.

The studied library information services include lending service which is a library information services which enable users of a library to have the privilege to borrow library materials for their use.

Reference Services enables the library to provide information to meet the needs of individual library users.

Photocopy Services scans the original documents, making it accessible to researchers, giving them ownership of the copies.

Current Awareness Services (CAS) on the requested subject areas, keep researchers up-to-date with their current literature.

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) routs to researchers news alerts on their research profiles. It is a customized service.

Literature search helps the researcher interpret and report new research findings when undertaken.

Inter-Library Lending (ILL) through his own library allow the borrowing of library materials Information resources for researchers by a user in other libraries.

ICT as described by Aina (2004) is an Omnibus term combining telecommunications and computer technology in libraries.

Social Science research is the advancement of Knowledge through information gathering of facts and data in the human sciences.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the five laws of Librarianship by the Indian thinker Ranganathan stated this: books are for use, which as relates to this study, making books available for users is a service as libraries are service oriented organizations.

The second law states every reader/user his book meaning all researchers have their books which can be referred here as their information source through the services offered in libraries.

The third law reads: Every book it's reader/user. And this implies that every book/information resource through the services studied has a researcher that will find it useful.

Fourthly, save the time of the reader/user implies that through the services, information sources like books can be given to the user who is the researcher timely and precisely thereby saving his time.

Lastly, libraries are a growing organism implies that both libraries and the Services, they offer are dependent on life and change. Early libraries for example have metamorphosed from store houses to global villages.

Methods

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. It was considered appropriate because the questionnaire was used as a data collection medium. South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria which comprises of six states namely. Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states were the bedrock states of study.

This zone has six Federal Universities, nevertheless four were studied. They are above twenty years since inception and are therefore considered researchable.

The group of the study dwelled on lecturers and post graduate students in the Social Sciences Faculty in these Universities at the time of the study. There were 546 respondents comprising of 313 lecturers and 233 post graduate students. The Universities studied are Universities of Benin in Edo State, Calabar in Cross River State, Port Harcourt in Rivers State and Uyo in Akwa-Ibom State.

A self-developed questionnaire titled "Availability and utilization enhancement of library and information services questionnaire (AUELISQ) was used for the study. It was

divided into two sections A & B. Section A has personal characteristics of the responders while section B was designed to obtain data on the respondents view on issues in the study.

The instrument is the Likert type (4) points scale of response ranking from strongly agreed (SA), to agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Agree (SD). The (AUELISQ) was face validated by 3 professors from Library and Information Science Department and Measurement and Evaluation Department of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. The instrument were administered to 20 Social Science researchers in the University of Nigeria Nsukka, estimating the reliability and it yielded the overall average reliability co-efficient of 0.087 and this was considered reliable. The instrument was later administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants. They were filled and collected back immediately. The data collected were canvassed analyzed using mean scores. The acceptance standard was based on SA (3.50-4.49), A, D, SD., with a cut off mark on 2.50 for acceptability response. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at the probability levels of 0.05 level of significance.
Hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance regression was analysed.

Results

Mean Scores of

Table 1:1 Measures to enhance the availability of Library Information Services by the Social Science researchers in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

N=546

S/N	Items status	University of Benin (115) Mean scores	University of Cal (183) Mean scores	University of P.H. (151) Mean scores	University of Uyo (97) Mean scores	Total Mean	Decision level	Ranking
1.	Provision of adequate fund for Library and Information Services	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	SA	1
2.	Collaborating with Donors	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9	2.7	SA	3
3.	Maintenance culture	2.6	2.5	3.1	2.7	3.3	A	7
4.	Adequate Preservation and storage of materials.	3.6	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.3	A	4

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S/N	Items							Ranking
5.	Library Education should be enhanced.	3.8	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	A	5
6.	ICT application.	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	SA	1
7.	Inter-Library encouragement of inter library loaning service University Libraries	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	A	6
8.	Overall Mean for Universities.	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.5	SA	

From the result presented all the items were seen as measures to enhance the availability of library information services. They all have criterion mean of above 2.50.

Table 1:2

Measures to enhance the use of Library Information Services by the Social Science researchers in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria.

N = 546

S/N	Items status	University of Benin (115) Mean scores	University of Cal (183) Mean scores	University of P.H. (151) Mean scores	University of Uyo (97) Mean scores	Total Mean	Decision level	Ranking
1.	Provision of adequate fund for Library Information Service.	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	SA	2
2	Organization of workshops seminars and conferences	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	SA	3

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No.	Item						Decision	Rank
	for University Library staff.							
3.	In-service training for University library staff.	2.6	2.5	3.1	2.9	2.7	Agreed	7
4.	Adequate preservation and storage of materials.	3.6	3.1	3.5	2.8	3.3	Agreed	4
5.	Library education should be enhanced.	3.8	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.3	Agreed	5
6.	Researchers should avail themselves opportunities to utilize library services	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	S A	1
7.	Inter-Library lending Services should be encouraged among University Libraries	35	32	32	29	33	A	6
8.	Overall mean for Universities	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.5	SA	

From the data collected, items 1-7 ranked positive as their means are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that all the items were accepted by the researchers as measures to enhance Library Information Services utilization.

Testing of hypothesis

Ho$_1$:   There is no significant relationship between availability enhancement and utilization enhancement of Library Services by researchers in the Social Sciences in Federal Universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 3

Standardized Beta Co-efficient of availability and use enhancement of Library and Information Services by researchers.

Name of School	Model	Unstandardized co-efficient		Standardized co-efficient	T	Sig.
		B	Std Error	Beta		
University of Calabar	1	(Constant)	1.514	.117		12.923	.000
		Level of availability	10.025	.075	10.025	12.333	.040
University of Benin	1	(Constant)	1.447	.149		9.712	.000
		Level of availability	5.026	.094	5.026	6.280	.030
University of Port Harcourt	1	(Constant)	1.571	.135		11.600	.000
		Level of availability	3.008	.081	3.008	6.100	.020
University of Uyo	1	(Constant)	1.411	.166		8.479	.000
		Level of availability	6.113	.101	6.113	13.111	.019

The results reveal that availability enhancement has a highly significant relationship in all the Universities: University of Calabar (B=12.333 P<0.05), University of Benin (B=6.280, P<0.05), University of Port Harcourt (B=6.100, P<0.05) and University of Uyo (B=13.111, P<0.05), Since this test is significant, the null hypothesis is spurned.

Discussion

The evidence obtained from the study, shows the affirmation that provisions of adequate funding, collaborating with donors, maintenance culture, ICT application, and encouraging inter library loaning can enhance the availability of library services. In collaboration with the above, organization of workshops, seminars, conferences, and In-service training, for library staff, also researchers availing themselves opportunities to utilize the available library services can also enhance the quality of services and research undertaken by Social Sciences researchers.

Jobs (2012) opined that if well-equipped library services are made available to those who require them, it makes them habitual library users. This assertions corroborates Karem (2012) who asserts researches to Inform and contextualize it's findings with the body of research.

Similarly, Edekarabo (2020) suggested the provisions of adequate funds for the library to introduce more library services, and meliorate on the existing ones. Still supporting these, Obaro (2020) opined that the organization of workshops, seminars, in-service training and conferences has increased library services utilization because it helps update knowledge to the attendees. Obi (2020) also agree with these views when she wrote that when one attends workshops and other forms of in-service training, one will be abraced with new Information in his area of specializations.

Recommendations

These recommendations are made, based on the findings of this study.

1) The federal government should make funds available to the Universities, since they are all owned by the national government, to help them provide new Information services and to make the available services efficient.

2) The University agencies should advocate library staff for workshops, conferences, and seminars. This will improve their knowledge and skills on services provision.

3) The available library services should be enhanced by libraries and librarians, to make their services more beneficial to researchers.

4) Regular in-training services should be devised both for librarians and researchers especially on the services available in University libraries. This will create awareness to the researchers on the existing likely services for their utilization thereby making them competent researchers.

Conclusion

Enhancing availability and use of library services in University libraries will in no doubt improve researches especially in federal Universities as conducting researches is one thrust and cardinal objective of Universities. This will thereby Impact positively on the researchers in the Social Sciences in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigerian Universities.

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