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User Satisfaction with Library Resources and Services in Nigerian Agricultural Research Institutes

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Introduction

Agriculture is an important sector in the economy of all countries, developed or underdeveloped. In most developing countries like Nigeria, it is an important sector of the economy. Many countries, including Nigeria have realized the value of agriculture and are making attempt to sustain it by pragmatic agricultural policies. One of such policies in Nigeria is the establishment of specialized institutions otherwise known as research institutes, to carry out research in agriculture for socio-economic development of the country. These specialized institutions which enhance agricultural development largely rely on libraries and their information services. Consequently, recent empirical studies by librarians and information scientists are not only concerned with the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of 'hard' information to individuals and organizations for their use, but also concerned with the manner in which the information provided is put to use. They have also become concerned with the outcomes in terms of satisfaction the recipient of the information services has in carrying out their several functions (Tiamiyu, 1990).

Aina & Adedigba (1995) acknowledged the immense contributions of the agricultural research institutes in Nigeria towards agricultural production through the efforts of researchers who have researched into various areas of agriculture. In their study, it was revealed that the information sector has not contributed enough to the provision of information to agricultural information user populations. The government of Nigeria was blamed for their inadequacy in funding and staffing of the libraries. They recommended adequate funding and recruitment of special librarians with relevant subject background in agriculture, as advocated by Aina (1989). When this is done, librarians need to carry out assessment of their resources and services from time to time to ensure continual relevance to their parent organizations. It is, however, observed that assessment of library resources and services has not taken place for many years in most research libraries for reasons to be identified, among other things, by this study.

Literature Review

The Origin of the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARIs)

The agricultural research institutes in Nigeria started during the period of colonial administration (1861 – 1950). They passed through the periods of internal self-government (1951 -1960), and have continued to develop and grow during the post-independence era after 1st October 1960 till date.

There are fourteen agricultural research institutes in Nigeria, as observed by Idachaba (1987), and they grew out of different circumstances at different times with the objective of satisfying different needs. For instance, National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike, Umuahia and National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI) Shika, Zaria, started as regional research stations at Umudike and Samaru (Zaria) aimed at effectively addressing the agricultural problems of different regions of Nigeria. Forest Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN) and National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) Vom sprang up from the research units of different ministries; National Institute for Horticultural Research (NIHORT), Ibadan, was developed through the assistance of UNO agencies like FAO/UNDP to combat poor nutrition/low standard of living etc.

As a very important unit of the agricultural research institute, the institute's library is established at the inception of the organization. The need is to house the collection of information relevant to the institutes' research in various forms and effectively manage the increased information generated. Guidelines for the management of national agricultural research institutes (2005) itemized the reasons for establishment of the National Agricultural Research Institutes as follows:

§ To generate new agricultural technologies that are appropriate for the improvement of goods and services;

§ To modernize indigenous technologies for improved production in agriculture and related issues, and;

§ To develop appropriate agricultural systems that will domesticate imported technologies to the Nigerian situation.

The Place of the Library in the Research Institutes' Activities

The advancement of science depends to a large extent on the accumulation of past findings. Thus, every scientist builds on the knowledge of other scientists. Scientists, therefore, spend a great deal of their time communicating, and rightly so, because the consequences of not communicating are serious. They include duplication of work, waste of money and portrayal of ignorance of relevant facts. The library, therefore, stands as a viable channel through which this scientific information can be passed across to the users and researchers in return. Adegbola (1997), quoting Jacques Loeh, a world-famed biologist, and one generally acknowledged as the founder of general physiology in America, described the place of the library in research in the following words:

We imagine that it is the laboratory that men discover new truth and that if we can only provide well-equipped laboratories important truth will soon be discovered. That is not the case. Real discoveries are actually made in the library and subsequently tested out in the laboratory. A new discovery is a new combination of old ideas, and those ideas are most likely to occur to the mind of the scientist, not when he is handling material things, but when he is brooding over the thoughts of other men and rethinking them himself. In those hours of profound reflection the new combination may occur to him and he goes to his laboratory to verify or

disprove. The library remains the greatest essential to discovery...

If the research libraries are to play their role in agricultural research institutes' activities creditably, they must possess adequate and appropriate information resources and services; give user-oriented services such as selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services, indexing and abstracting services, interlibrary loans and so on. They must also facilitate maximum provision of information to their users by giving out and receiving information resources from other libraries.

Library Resources and Services Evaluation

It is natural for human beings to evaluate things, events and other people around them. Librarians too indulge in this practice. They have the need to periodically measure the resources and services of their library as a way of ensuring that they are meeting the set objectives of the library. According to King, D.W and Brant E.C (1971) library evaluation began with the evaluation of retrieval systems in libraries, with parameters based on answerable questions revolving around recall and precision ratios of retrieval systems. Cullen (1993) also pointed out that the quest to evaluate library resources and services in recent times has led to the design of Total Quality Management (TQM) systems. Consequently, libraries, including research libraries, have been faced with challenges of justifying their contributions to the achievement of their parent organizations' goals. Evaluation is carried out to justify and quantify benefits of research library resources and services to users' information utilization for research.

Swanson (1979) posits that for a library to be sure that it is carrying out its mandate to its users, "the totality of features and characteristics of its resources and services must be able to satisfy all users' stated or implied needs." Questions about how far the totality of library resources and services meet users' needs are answered during library evaluation. Nwalo (1997) defined library evaluation as the quantification and comparison with laid down standards of library provisions and services. Lancaster (1978) also sees library evaluation as an evaluation of user satisfaction, which can be checked at three possible levels:

- effectiveness evaluation
- cost-effectiveness evaluation; and
- cost-benefit evaluation.

In simple terms, library evaluation is carried out to check and balance library activities with its mandate. This helps to see how the library is meeting its users' needs and also what decision to take and those to be revised. This is the reason why library evaluation has been referred to by some scholars as a management activity.

According to Oyelude (2004) a good research library, after proper evaluation, should have the following qualities:

§ *relevant resources*

§ *ensure that adequate storage is provided for the collection*

§ *provide access to the collection through classification, cataloguing and other arrangements.*

§ *develop strategies for access to grey literature and other formats of information that are unpublished or in non-traditional formats.*

§ *put in place special library services to make library resources and services available through inter-library loans, telephone calls, and other means.*

§ *facilitate retrieval of resources through self-help, or an intermediary who could*

be librarian or other information expert.

§ have trained staff to organize resources and services.

§ provide strategies for evaluation of information resources and services at stated intervals.

Research library evaluation is specifically carried out to confirm if the foregoing criteria are present in research libraries. Cullen (1993) observes that several ways could be adopted to evaluate library resources and services. He noted that input evaluation based on finances, staff resources and collection, and output evaluation based on process efficiency measures are indices of how research library users perceive library resources and services provided by the library. Cullen (2000) specifically pointed out that libraries take pride in the early years of the 20th Century "in the size and quantity of the collection often focused on the number of rare and valuable items it contained, and the distinction of the staff as scholars and luminaries in their own right..." Hence, evaluation is based on these values expressed in terms of quantity of resources and quality of staff.

From a different perspective, Swanson (1979) posited that library evaluation can be carried out through internal inspection and external inspection. He states that internal inspections are carried out by librarians for evaluation but noted that "it is much harder for the person who has developed and operated the system to stand back and evaluate it objectively." External inspections solve the objectivity problem associated with internal inspection. Basically, Cullen's perspective of library evaluation (1995) and (2000) were based on aspects evaluated and who carried out the evaluation. This is a further pointer to the problems of limitations surrounding ideal research library evaluation. Irrespective of the perspective in question, library evaluation is carried out to understand the position of the library within the research institutes' information environment.

It is pertinent to state that considering the mandates of agricultural research institutes in a developing country like Nigeria where food shortage is still glaring and the expectation of research libraries is high, frequent evaluation of library resources and services should not be compromised. Research library evaluation would help re-position the libraries to better serve their users and also would increase users' utilization of research libraries which in the past has been adjudged to be very low. Apart from supporting the management with both immediate and strategic management information, research library evaluation would also help libraries understand their positions within the cycle of other research libraries. This would lead to upgrading of library resources and services according to needs found out during the evaluation.

Methodology

This is a social survey research. It involves a systematic and almost comprehensive collection of data about opinion, attitudes, feelings and behaviors of people. It was therefore considered appropriate to adopt the survey technique for this research which involves evaluation of the information services of many research libraries and their diverse resources.

This study involved the total population of officers in the fourteen agricultural research institutes in Nigeria. NAERLS in Zaria is not included in the study because it is a liaison office for the institutions within the Nigerian Agricultural Research Institutes. The research officers comprised of veterinary doctors, medical laboratory scientists, animal health scientist, horticulturist, biochemists, agricultural scientists, and so on. The research officers in the branch offices (Outstations) were not involved because a majority of such branches do not have libraries. Where the library exists, they are mainly reading rooms and therefore cannot provide meaningful data for evaluation.

The objective of this study necessitated the use of questionnaire, structured interview and direct observation to collect the required data. frequency counts and percentages were used in the analysis of data

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Agricultural Research Institutes

This is a frequency table showing distribution of agricultural research institutes under study. All the research question tables are based on this distribution table.

Results and Interpretation

Table 2: User Satisfaction with Library Services

Types of Library Services	Responses											
	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Undecided		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Registration of users	66	26.4	90	36.0	37	14.8	34	13.6	23	9.2	250	100.0
Duration of book loan	56	22.4	127	50.8	25	10.0	29	11.6	13	5.2	250	100.0
Compilation of reading lists for users	31	12.4	63	25.2	73	29.2	56	22.4	27	10.8	250	100.0
Bindery services	39	15.6	43	17.2	53	21.2	60	24.0	55	22.0	250	100.0
Photocopying services	27	10.8	57	22.8	34	13.6	75	30.0	57	22.8	250	100.0
SDI	59	23.6	27	10.8	84	33.6	42	16.8	38	15.2	250	100.0
Answering user's queries	39	15.6	93	37.2	57	22.8	42	16.8	19	7.6	250	100.0
Opening hours	67	26.8	103	41.2	21	8.4	40	16.0	19	7.6	250	100.0
Special service on request	39	15.6	84	33.6	57	22.8	51	20.4	19	7.6	250	100.0
Inter library loan services	26	10.4	40	16.0	86	34.4	48	19.2	50	20.0	250	100.0
Library orientation services	33	13.2	63	25.2	58	23.2	66	26.4	30	12.0	250	100.0
Weekend library services	35	14.0	23	9.2	36	14.4	49	19.6	107	42.8	250	100.0
CD-ROM Services	33	13.2	22	8.8	46	18.4	47	18.8	102	40.8	250	100.0
Indexing and abstracting services	30	12.0	51	20.4	62	24.8	59	23.6	48	19.2	250	100.0

Internet services	41	16.4	49	19.6	30	12.0	45	18.0	85	34.0	250	100.0
Recency of library books	27	10.8	50	20.0	58	23.2	73	29.2	42	16.8	250	100.0
Compilation of subject bibliographies	33	13.2	60	24.0	73	29.2	51	20.4	33	13.2	250	100.0
Mean	40	16.0	62	24.6	52	20.9	51	20.4	45	18.1	250	100.0

In Table 2, the respondents scored their levels of satisfaction with library services as satisfied (41%) and dissatisfied (38%) Others are undecided. This rating may not be unconnected with the level of hard work among library staff.

Table 3 Use of the Library

Library Use Factors	Responses											
	Very agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I use the Institute library occasionally	42	16.8	136	54.4	12	4.8	39	15.6	21	8.4	250	100.0
The library is very quiet all the time	43	17.2	111	44.4	31	12.4	50	20.0	15	6.0	250	100.0
The library provides quality reference service always	20	8.0	62	24.8	54	21.6	78	31.2	36	14.4	250	100.0
Most of the library's materials are obsolete	51	20.4	84	33.6	38	15.2	45	18.0	32	12.8	250	100.0
Researchers have free access to the library networks and Internet services	33	13.2	46	18.4	32	12.8	41	16.4	98	39.2	250	100.0
Every research dept is involved in the acquisition process of the information materials in the library	31	12.4	58	23.2	57	22.8	41	16.4	63	25.2	250	100.0
The library's public catalogue is dependable	20	8.0	62	24.8	89	35.6	38	15.2	41	16.4	250	100.0
The orientation given to new staff on the use of the library is educative	22	8.8	74	29.6	63	25.2	55	22.0	36	14.4	250	100.0
Library opening hours is very conducive for the researchers	57	22.8	102	40.8	31	12.4	46	18.4	14	5.6	250	100.0

I use the cyber café instead of the library for my research most of the time	83	33.2	78	31.2	26	10.4	39	15.5	24	9.6	250	100.0
Mean	40	16.1	82	32.5	43	17.3	47	18.9	88	15.2	250	100.0

According to Table 3, the respondents indicated their feelings towards the itemized library use factors to assess their rate of NARIs library use. From the analysis, majority of the respondents indicated that they use the library occasionally. This could be because most of the library materials are obsolete (54%) and researchers do not have free access to library networks and Internet services where available (55%).

Table 4. Assessment of user satisfaction with Electronic Resources in NARIs Libraries

Types of Electronic Resources	Responses											
	Very adequate		Adequate		Fair		Inadequate		Very inadequate		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Functional Computers	16	6.4	29	11.6	38	15.2	63	25.2	104	41.6	250	100.0
Photocopying Machines	10	4.0	39	15.6	40	16.0	74	29.6	87	34.8	250	100.0
CD-ROM Resources	5	2.0	18	7.2	32	12.8	68	27.2	127	50.8	250	100.0
Microforms	5	2.0	7	2.8	23	9.2	79	31.6	136	54.4	250	100.0
Microform Readers	5	2.0	5	2.0	24	9.6	63	25.2	153	61.2	250	100.0
Fax Machines	3	1.2	12	4.8	11	4.4	37	14.8	187	74.8	250	100.0
Internet Services	25	10.0	38	15.2	38	15.2	38	15.2	111	44.4	250	100.0
Local Area Network	9	3.6	27	10.8	32	12.8	56	22.4	126	50.4	250	100.0
Radio Message	5	2.0	13	5.2	30	12.0	52	20.8	150	60.0	250	100.0
Telephone	14	5.6	33	13.2	44	17.6	48	19.2	111	44.4	250	100.0
Lighting	27	10.8	84	33.6	56	22.4	34	13.6	49	19.6	250	100.0
No. of Computer Work Stations for the Library Users	7	2.8	15	6.0	39	15.6	64	25.6	125	50.0	250	100.0
Mean	11	4.4	27	10.7	34	13.6	56	22.5	122	48.9	250	100.0

Table 4. reveals that NARIs research officers are dissatisfied with the electronic resources in the libraries. The electronic resources are supposed to be at the disposal of every research library to enhance information services in the libraries. However, from the result, a total of 72% indicated felt that electronic resources in the library were either inadequate or very inadequate. Research officers in NARIs are not satisfied with electronic resources in the libraries. Buckland (1975) posited that, "intellectual access to recorded information has quite properly been a major pre-occupation of librarians". And that "intellectual access needs to be accompanied by physical access if the documents are to be used to obtain information." The libraries need to be equipped with electronics to be in line with current trends in information selection and distribution to spur productivity.

Note: Tables of raw figures used to compute the various parameters in tables 2 and 4 are in Appendix 1

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the research data, their interpretation and discussion, one can conclude that the agricultural research institute libraries in Nigeria are ineffective in their service provisions. This ineffectiveness has resulted from gross under-funding of the libraries by the parent institutions. Had the libraries been well provided for, the users would have been more satisfied.

Recommendations

To the Committee of Executive Directors of Research Institutes (CODRI)

Funding is central to the provision of all other library resources with which services are rendered. CODRI should as a body press for adequate funding of research institutes. It must ensure that the agricultural research institute libraries have an annual budgetary provision for its services in order to enhance effectiveness for user satisfaction.

To the heads of the research institute libraries

All the agricultural research institute libraries need to institutionalize library performance evaluation by user approach. This should be done annually in order to have a feed-back from the users on how well the library is meeting their information needs. Once measured, the processed result should be published in the institute's journal or library bulletin without any bias. Apart from winning support for the library, the exercise would sensitize the library staff to put in their best towards meeting user needs.

The NUC has made a policy permitting 10% of the total annual university recurrent budget to be drawn by the library directly from source. All the research library managers should cling on to this good premise and prevail on their chief executives to enforce the policy for disbursement of funds to research libraries because roles that libraries are being asked to play require more than the monthly imprest. The library should be given clear budgetary and pragmatic authority.

To supplement funds from the parent institutions, the research libraries should explore other means of raising money from both internal and external sources. For example, the library could work with the institute's management to initiate a policy that will ensure that a certain percentage of every research grant to research officers is assigned to the library for collection development.

Pending the approval and implementation of the recommended direct budget release to the library from source, the librarian should employ public relations to ensure approval of funds for library operations by the chief executive.

There is no library that is self-sufficient. Libraries that share common goals should cooperate with one another nationally and internationally to be able to meet the needs of the users. In furtherance of this idea, there is the need to establish a network of all the agricultural research institutes' libraries for better communication and exchange of ideas and information resources.

There is also the need to take urgent steps to rescue agricultural research libraries from obsolescence through the application of ICTs in library and information services. Much of the world's best information are now in electronic form and are only accessible on-line. Only the users of those libraries that have implemented ICTs can benefit from such rich services available for research and development.

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Appendix 1

Raw figures used to compute the various parameters in the Research work.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Library Services

Institution	Satisfaction with Library Services					
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	TOTAL
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
NIFFR	0	8	17	0	0	25
NSPRI	0	1	7	2	0	10
NAERLS	0	1	4	0	0	5
IAR	0	4	4	7	0	15
NIOMR	0	4	10	8	0	21
CRIN	0	6	10	10	1	27
LCRI	1	2	12	4	0	19
NCRI	1	5	6	6	0	18
NAPRI	0	6	4	1	0	11
NRCRI	0	3	19	4	0	26
NIFOR	0	2	8	2	0	12
NIHORT	2	2	14	3	0	21
NVRI	0	5	16	11	0	32
IAR&T	1	1	5	1	0	8
TOTAL	5	49	136	59	1	250

Table 6: User Satisfaction with electronic resources

Institution	User Satisfaction with electronic resources					
	Very Adequate	Adequate	Fair	Inadequate	Very Inadequate	TOTAL
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
NIFFR	0	3	11	11	0	25

NSPRI	0	0	3	7	0	10
NAERLS	0	0	1	2	2	5
IAR	0	0	3	8	4	15
NIOMR	0	0	2	12	7	21
CRIN	0	1	2	14	10	27
LCRI	1	0	2	6	10	19
NCRI	1	2	1	5	9	18
NAPRI	0	1	2	4	4	11
NRCRI	0	0	6	13	7	26
NIFOR	0	0	1	10	1	12
NIHORT	0	0	3	16	2	21
NVRI	0	1	5	19	7	32
IAR&T	0	1	3	3	1	8
TOTAL	2	9	45	130	164	250