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Assessing Faculty Use of University Library Collection and Services in Nigeria: A Case of Covenant University, Ota

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Introduction

A university library is a part of a university organization which aims at the advancement of the functions of its parent body. Kumar (2006) asserts that a university is supposed to perform the following functions:

- Teaching
- Research
- Publications
- Conservation of knowledge and ideas
- Extension services

The well administered university library directs its activities towards the fulfillment of these objectives. One of such activities is the acquisition and organization of information resources. The university library exists in an academic context and its role is subsumed in developing a highly visible collection that is well organized and serves as academic support for teaching, learning and research by faculty and students. Considering the role library plays in the university therefore, its collections have to be broad in terms of quantity and quality for faculty to appreciate its essence and use especially in teaching and research (Weber and Flatley, 2008). These resources include both book and non book materials..The importance of the library is further underscored by the need for faculty to be abreast with current trend in their areas of research.

In view of the above, this paper evaluates the use of the library's collection and services by the faculty of Covenant University.

A Brief History of Covenant University

Covenant University is a private Christian institution situated in Canaan land, Ota, Ogun state of Nigeria. Founded in 2002, the university has built a reputation of

excellence within its short period of existence.

The University has two colleges, made up of six schools awarding degrees in over 30 programmes. The University Library, also known as the Centre for Learning Resources, caters for the learning, teaching and research needs of over 6000 students and more than 300 members of faculty. It houses thousands of books, journals, audio and video CDs as well as operates a functional virtual library that provides users with access to thousands of E-journals and books. The library's media centre provides users with access to internet using both local area network (LAN) and wireless network connections.

Statement of the Problem

Covenant University library, like other academic libraries in Nigeria, has invested heavily on acquisition of book and non book materials. This study seeks to investigate the use of these resources by the university's faculty. Findings from the study maybe taken into consideration in the university's plan for improvement of the library's resources and services.

Objectives of the Study

- To ascertain the frequency of use of the library's collection and services by faculty
- To find out the purpose of such use
- To find out the kinds of materials used
- Identify problems encountered in the use of the library
- Identify ways to improve the library's efficiency

Review of Literature

The academic productivity of any faculty in a university depends on his access to quality information resource materials for classroom work and research. The place of the library in providing these resources cannot be over-emphasized. Edoa (2000) in Obiozor and Ogbonna (2007) observed that 'the entire human and material resources in a library are put in place at considerable expense for the overall purpose of providing effective services to the library user'. Nkiko and Ilo (2006) posited that effective and efficient library services must be entrenched and treasured for Nigerian academics to continually aspire and sustain world class standards in their intellectual pursuits.

Hayden (2003) and Achebe (2004) in their respective researches asserted that continuous library use has positive multiplier effect on the academic performance and self development of any user. Ogunkoya (2002) underscored the impact of the university library collection and services on the productivity of faculty thus:

The advancement of an academic staff unlike other staff depends largely, if not entirely on his research output, which depends critically on the availability of suitable facilities including library services.

Afebende and Ebaye (2008) noted that the effectiveness of a library does not depend on only its collection/resources and other facilities per se, but also on the success of its exploitation and use. While the librarian is concerned with collection and organization of information materials, he also has the responsibility of creating awareness so that users can take full advantage of the acquired materials.

The works of Okiy (2000) and Ajileye – Laogun (2002) in Obiozor and Ogbonna (2007) assessed students and faculty use of the library. They found that both students and faculty use library materials for classroom and research works in Delta State University, Abraka and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

respectively.

Methodology

Empirical investigation was carried out using the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The study population comprised of all faculty of Covenant University, from which a sample of 300 was chosen. The same number of questionnaires was prepared and administered randomly. Two hundred and forty-two copies were returned, representing 80.7% return rate

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to College

| College | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| CST | 120 | 49.6 |
| CDS | 122 | 50.4 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents is from the College of Development Studies (CDS) with the frequency of 122, representing 50.4%, while the College of Science and Technology has a representation of 120 (49.6%).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Educational Qualification

| Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Ph.D | 60 | 24.8 |
| M.A / M.SC | 162 | 66.9 |
| B.A / B.SC | 20 | 8.3 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

The table above reveals that majority of the faculty in Covenant University have Master's Degree in their field of specialization (66.9%). This is followed by PhD holders (24.8%).

Table 3: Academic Status Distribution of Respondents

| Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Graduate Assistant | 20 | 8.3 |
| Assistant Lecturer | 90 | 37.2 |
| | | |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|------|
| Lecturer II | 48 | 19.8 |
| Lecturer I | 42 | 17.4 |
| Senior Lecturer | 18 | 7.4 |
| Associate Professor | 6 | 2.5 |
| Professor | 18 | 7.4 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

The table reveals that majority of faculty members in Covenant University falls within the Assistant Lecturer - Lecturer I status bracket.

Table 4: Frequency of Library Use by Faculty

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Daily | - | - |
| Weekly | 41 | 16.9 |
| Twice a month | 77 | 31.8 |
| Monthly | 102 | 42.1 |
| Rarely | 22 | 9.2 |
| I don't use the library | - | - |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 4 shows that most faculties use the library either twice a month (31.8%) or monthly (42.1%) none uses the library daily.

Table 5: Purpose for Using the Library

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Review literature for Research / Conference Papers | 33 | 13.6 |
| To borrow library materials | 104 | 43.0 |
| To use the library multi-media centre | 75 | 31.0 |
| Prepare lectures / teaching notes | 20 | 8.3 |
| For general reading / leisure | 10 | 4.1 |
| | | |

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Total | 242 | 100 |
|-------|-----|-----|

Table 5 reveals that majority of faculty use the library for the purpose borrowing library materials which account for 43% and making use of the library multi-media centre (31%).

Table 6: Kinds of Materials used (the most) in the Library

| Material | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Text books | 104 | 43.0 |
| Reference materials | 20 | 8.2 |
| Journals (Hard Copies) | 13 | 5.4 |
| Magazines / Newspapers | 45 | 18.6 |
| Electronic Resources | 60 | 24.8 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

The table shows that textbooks with a response of 104, representing 43% are the most used materials in the library.

Table 8: Most used Library Service

| Library Service | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Inter-library and document delivery | - | - |
| Lending service | 95 | 39.3 |
| Reference Service | 10 | 4.1 |
| Exhibition and displays | - | - |
| Referral Service | 47 | 19.4 |
| Abstracting and indexing Services | - | - |
| Binding Services | 15 | 6.2 |
| Internet Services | 75 | 31.0 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 7 shows that most members of faculty, 95, representing 39.3% use the library's lending respondents representing 31%.

Table 8: Summary Analysis Rating the Quality of Service

| Quality of Service | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Excellent | 72 | 29.8 |
| Good | 119 | 49.2 |
| Fair | 51 | 21.0 |
| Poor | - | |
| Very poor | - | |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 8 presents the analysis rating the quality of services rendered. 72 (29.8%) respondents rated library services as excellent, 119 (49.2%) rated them as good, while 51(21%) rated the services as fair.

Table 9: Problems Militating Against Use of Library

| Problems | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Lack of awareness of library materials/services | 79 | 32.6 |
| Inability to access electronic databases | 75 | 31.0 |
| Inability to access materials from the shelves | 60 | 24.8 |
| Insufficient materials in the area of study | 28 | 11.6 |
| Lack of assistance from librarians | - | - |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 9 reveals that lack of awareness of library materials / services with 79 (32.6%) respondents posed as the greatest problem militating against the use of library by faculty. This is followed by 75 (31%) who responded that inability to access electronic databases posed as a problem. A significant number, 60 (24.8%) indicated inability to access materials from the shelved as a problem. Insufficient materials in the area of study also posed as a problem with 28 respondents, representing 11.6%

Table 10: Services to Improve Library's Efficiency

| Services | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Scanning services | 55 | 22.7 |
| 24 hour library service | 80 | 33.1 |

| | | |
|--|-----|------|
| Giving out reference / journal sources on loan for a token fee | 62 | 25.6 |
| Recreation / relaxation service | 45 | 18.6 |
| Total | 242 | 100 |

Table 10 presents suggested ways to improve library's services. Faculty responses show that 80 (33.1%) agreed that 24 hour library service would improve the library's efficiency. 62 (25.6%) advocated giving out referee / journal sources on loan for a token fee. 55(22.7%) agreed that scanning services would enhance their use of the library, while 45 (18.6%) want recreation / relaxation service.

Discussion

Findings from the study revealed that faculty of Covenant University make use of the library's material and services. However, majority of them use the library either twice or once a month.

Also, it was discovered from the study that majority of faculty visit the library either to borrow books or use the internet facilities at the library's media centre. Very few visit the library for general reading or leisure. On the kind of materials and services used in the library, the study revealed that most faculties make use of text books. It is therefore not surprising that most of them make use of the library's lending service. The quality of services rendered by Covenant University library was highly rated as 119 respondents, representing 49.2% rated the services as good, while 72 (29.8%) rated the services as excellent.

The findings further revealed lack of awareness of library materials / services as the greatest problem militating against faculty's use of the library. This could be responsible for the non-daily use of the library as Torina & Vakkari (2004) averred that knowledge and awareness of available resource in a library is a high prediction of a library's frequency, exploitation and use. Two other problems identified are inability to access electronic databases and materials from the shelves. This could be as a result of the faculty's inability to seek and take full advantage of the library's user programmes.

Mitchell, Radford & Hegg (1991) in Afebende and Ebaje (2008) concluded that the greatest causes of patron failure in the library were either library malfunctions or inability of patrons to use the library retrieval tools.

Finally, the study revealed that majority of faculty agreed that 24 hour library service could help to improve the library's efficiency. Giving out reference / journal materials on loan for token fee, scanning services and recreation / relaxation services were also solicited as tools to improving the library's efficiency.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of study led to the conclusion that faculty of Covenant University make use of the library's resources for personal research and classroom teaching. They borrow most of these resources for use outside the library. Members of faculty also take advantage of the library's media centre to access materials from the internet.

However, most faculties claim they are not aware of all available library resource / services. They also indicated inability to access electronic data bases and materials from the shelves as problems inhibiting library use.

Based on the above finding, the following recommendations are made:

1. The library management should collaborate with members of faculty in planning and executing an elaborate user – education programme. Such a programme should include exposing faculty to practical use of the library's online public access catalogue (OPAC) and how to access materials on the shelves. Management should print and distribute library information flyers, hand bills, hand books outlining the library resources available and how to access them.
2. Members of faculty need to take more advantage of the library's reference services. All questions and enquires should be directed to the Reference Librarian for necessary attention.

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