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# Provision of Effective Rural Library Services for Users' Satisfaction in Anambra State

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#### Introduction

Public libraries have locations in rural areas that are called rural libraries. These rural libraries are established to bring education to the grassroots. The public libraries and their branches are managed by the State Library Boards. Hildareth (2007) asserts that the rural library is a catalyst that strengthens and unites the community. Rural library exists to care for the rural dwellers' informational, educational and recreational needs. For rural libraries to achieve their objectives, they must have both human, financial and material resources. Human resources are the personnel (staff) while the material resources are the information materials which could be book and non-book materials as well as furniture and equipment found in the library.

They also render services in diverse forms for the benefit of the users. These services according to Achebe (2008), include:- guidance in locating materials, provision of book lists, book exhibition, provision of telephone information services, guidance in reading and instruction in the use of books. Others are photocopying service, provision of reading accommodation and skill training of users like in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), literacy and trade skill acquisition. This is apart from traditional functions of circulation, lending, reference and reading as obtainable in other public libraries.

Users of community library are those people living in rural communities that come to access and utilize the services and resources of the library. Nwalo (2003) posits that a user is anybody who visits the library for the purpose of exploiting its resources to satisfy his information needs. Users are the most important in any library setting. The resources when properly harnessed will contribute to users' overall satisfaction in the rural library users. Users' satisfaction include how good a user feels after visiting and using the library, their

likeness to return back to that library when next information is needed by them. Users' satisfaction can be measured by the extent to which a library user's information needs are fulfilled with the available service and information resources of a given library. It is based on this background that the study on provision of effective rural library services for users' satisfaction in Anambra State is being carried out.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Rural libraries as offshoot of public libraries are significant in stimulating development because they acquire, preserve and make available relevant information resources to the public for their intellectual growth. Intellectual growth is basic for social and economic reforms which improve good health, improves agricultural methods and other vocational techniques. But the argument remains as to the extent to which these resources and services are provided in the rural libraries, the awareness of the rural populace of their availability, the extent to which they are patronized and the satisfaction derived from the use of such resources and services.

This study on provision of effective rural library services for users' satisfaction in Anambra state is therefore carried out to find the basis for these arguments.

# **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to determine the impact of provision of effective rural library services on users' satisfaction in Anambra State. Specifically, the study seeks to;

- i. find out the resources provided in these libraries.
- ii. determine the services available in these rural libraries.
- iii. determine the extent of patronage of these services by rural library users.
- iv. determine the extent of user's satisfaction with the services rendered in the libraries.
- v. ascertain challenges militating against effective provision of rural library services to users.

# **Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis is formulated at 0.05 significant levels for the study.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction.

#### **Literature Review**

A rural library is a public library located in a rural community that provides the inhabitants of the locality with the services that are provided by public library. They have all the characteristics of the public library, but they are smaller and their patrons fewer than those in the urban setting (Akanwa, 2013). In support of the above definition, Mbagwu and Nwachukwu (2008) asserted that the rural library is a branch of a public library, which has the same roles, functions and services like its master, the main difference is the location and characteristics of the area where it is located. This means that the characteristics of the individuals that make up the rural area where the library is situated must be taken into consideration before information materials are sent to them. Ekere (2006:47) stated that "no meaningful development can really take place in the rural areas until their illiteracy level is reduced". It should be noted here that the rural library is one of the organs that will reduce literacy in rural areas through its services.

Diso (2008) broadly categorized rural people into two: those of rural origin, mostly peasant farmers, weavers, potters, butchers, mat makers, blacksmiths, barbers, praise-singers, petty traders, students, religious and traditional leaders, local teachers etc. and those who come from urban areas who live and work in rural areas. They include civil servants, agricultural and health extension workers, teachers, judicial officials, sales agents etc. Olajide (2008) identified the characteristics of rural dwellers as; low level of literacy and high level of illiteracy; limited educational and economic (including jobs) opportunities; strong cultural, tribal and religious adherence; absence of large business and commercial

institutions; and limited social facilities e.g. electricity supply, educational institutions, communication system, etc.

Their possible information needs according to Orji (2008) are for personal development, job and economic enhancement, political and social awareness, cultural stability and proper use of leisure. Those illiterate masses that form the main agricultural sector need to be encouraged on the necessity of using fertilizers, insecticides, and to avail themselves of the credit facilities meant for the average farmers. The school children and other teachers in rural areas need printed and non-print materials to support classroom teaching and learning and out of class activities. Retirees in the village with much time at their disposal may be interested in politics and social issues at local, national and international level. They may require also light reading materials like magazines and periodicals. It is universally agreed that every individual whether literate or not, has information need.

For the rural library to fulfill its objectives which is attainment of users' satisfaction. It cannot do without resources and facilities not just when it was established but on a continuous basis. Sivanthanasan and Chandrasekar (2013) revealed that information resources, facilities and services are the factors which influence users' satisfaction. Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) were of the view that users must get the desired information resources, facilities, and services expected to be provided by libraries for satisfaction to occur. Sometimes, users are not satisfied with the services provided. This statement confirms the findings of Onuoha, Omokoje and Bamidele's (2013) which stated that users were satisfied with library services to a little extent which means that users are yet to derive maximum satisfaction from all the library services provided.

Library and information services are not conveyed in a vacuum; rather services are offered using various types of books and non-book materials in various formats formally known as library stock, library materials or information infrastructure (Agbanu et al, 2010). They can also call them print and non-print materials. We also have Electronic Information Resources (EIRs). In this regard, the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA 2001) set the minimum standards for information resources, facilities and services to be provided by public libraries. The information resources include fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, newspaper/magazines, pictures and posters, records and tapes, audio and video, toys, CD-ROM and Braille materials. Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2004) observed that the use of library by users and indeed their satisfaction with library services depend on availability of suitable learning materials, accommodation and competent staff in the library.

Ebiwolate (2010) opined that the library can have an important role in enhancing literacy and advancement of knowledge among these rural dwellers. This role can be effectively carried out with well-structured and well-planned library services which include; book mobile service, circulation service, reference service, lending service, library services to children, services for special groups, Information Communication Technology (ICT); community contact scheme service and user education, outreach extension service, information referral service, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI); Current Awareness Services (CAS) and photocopy service. Onuoha, Omokeje and Bamidele (2003) found in their study that photocopying and reference services were the most utilized library services while binding and audiovisuals were the least used services, while Itumeleng, Malcolm and Anis (2014) found out that users do make significant use of the library, its services and resources.

User satisfaction is considered as a reliable criterion for determining library effectiveness. Zeithalm and Bitmer (2000) defined satisfaction as "the customers' evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. Failure to meet needs and expectations of the customers assumed to result in dissatisfaction with the product or service. From this explanation we derive the notion that for satisfaction to result there has to be a need from the user and that need has to be fulfilled. If it is fulfilled, the user becomes satisfied and the library as a provider achieves its mission if it succeeds in doing this regularly for most users. Satisfaction may lead to users using the services of the library over and over again and even recommending it to others.

It is therefore very important for the library to keep their users satisfied Thakuria (2007) described different factors which contribute to user satisfaction as, availability of upto-date information, organized facilities, accessible library services and resources, courteous and friendly library staff, user friendly and comfortable environment. The importance of satisfaction in libraries is stressed by Wang and Shieh (2006) who maintained that libraries should be concerned with bringing satisfactory services when offering information and data to readers even though they are nonprofit organization. Aina (2004) buttressed this fact by adding that any library that ignores the satisfaction of its users, does so at its own peril. Mbashir and Adeoti's (2008) study showed that when the library has adequate resources and the needs of users are met, satisfaction occurs.

Rural libraries in Nigeria are facing a lot of problems and this has affected the way they discharge their duties. Akanwa (2013) identified them as ineffective services, lack of maintenance, inadequate library resources, dilapidated buildings, moribund vans for mobile library services and unmotivated library staff. Ajegbomogun's (2008) study revealed that

library collection is obsolete and inadequate hence, the readers were not satisfied with the available materials. Nwachukwu (2006:13) rightly put it that "the problem of funding is crippling the services of the public library". Also, Ikem and Ajala cited in Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu, (2012) noted that the problem of funding is the major constraint of ICT application in libraries. Some of these rural libraries are no longer offering library services to children and the handicapped because they lack the staff to perform the required duties (Egbufor, 2004). Ekweme (2012) identified lack of instructional facilities like computers and internet as one of the problems facing rural library development. Okiy (2010) asserted that the general low supply of electricity in most parts of Nigeria has been identified as another constraint in satisfaction with traditional librarianship.

# **Theoretical Framework**

This study, provision of effective rural library services for users' satisfaction in Anambra State is anchored on User Satisfaction and Loyalty model developed by Anne Martensen and Lars Gronholdt in 2004. According to the model, there are key determinants of user satisfaction in a library setting which include: - availability of electronic resources like library web, online catalogues, database search systems and access to electronic publications; collections of printed publications; other library services like library users courses; technical facilities like computers and copying machines. Others are; the library environment, like atmosphere, reading room and library hours, as well as the human side of user services like the library staff knowledgeability, helpfulness and friendliness. According to the model, the optimum interplay of these determinants create users' satisfaction. More so, user loyalty model is created as an interactive result of the human side of user service, user value and user satisfaction.

With reference to the model, users come to the rural library to avail themselves of rural library services and resources. They also expect to get assistance from library staff regarding their information need and how to access them. It is when these users' needs are met through the availability of the afore-mentioned resources, services and friendly atmosphere made possible through the human resources angle, that the users will go home satisfied. This means that the reverse will be the case when the users fail to find the resources, services and the needed assistance.

#### **Research Method**

The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study is one hundred and eighteen (118), made up of 13 library staff and 105 registered users of these two rural libraries. Seventy-seven (77) out of the 105 are library users at Nnewi while twenty-eight (28) are from Ozubulu. Two types of research instruments were used to collect data for this study, namely –the questionnaire and observation. Data generated from the study were analyzed using percentages and mean (x) scores. Items with values of 50%/2.50 and above respectively were positively interpreted, while items with values below 50% and 2.50 were negatively interpreted. The benchmark for rating is Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50 - 4.0, High Extent (HE) = 3.0 - 3.99, Low Extent (LE) = 2.0 - 2.99, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0 - 1.99. Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

# **Data Analysis and Presentation**

**Table 1:** Observation of the Researcher on Library Resources Provided by the Rural Libraries.

S/N	Availability of resources	Ozubulu library	Nnewi library
1	Staff	Available	Available
2	Fiction books	Available	Available
3	Textbooks	Available	Available
4	Reference books	Available	Available
5	Magazines	Available	Available
6	Newspapers	Available	Available
7	Journals	Available	Available
8	Reading tables	Available	Available
9	Chairs	Available	Available
10	Shelves	Available	Available
11	Newspaper rack	Available	Available
12	Magazine display cabinet	Available	Available
13	Computers	Not Available	Not Available
14	Audio cassettes	Not Available	Not Available
15	Phones (GSM)	Available	Available
16	Video cassettes	Not Available	Not Available
17	Pictures	Available	Available
18	Maps	Available	Available
19	DVD	Not Available	Not Available
20	Toys	Available	Available
21	Library software	Not Available	Not Available
22	Notice board	Available	Available
23	Fans	Available	Available
24	Lighting	Available	Available
25	Enough accommodation	Available	Not Available
26	T. V	Not Available	Not Available
27	Internet	Not Available	Not Available
28	Photocopiers	Not Available	Not Available
29	Catalogue cabinet	Available	Available
30	Bibliographies	Not Available	Not Available
31	Printers	Not Available	Not Available

Table 3 indicated that the available library resources in both rural libraries include staff, fiction books, textbooks, reference books, magazines, newspapers, journals, reading tables, chairs, shelves, newspaper rack, magazine display cabinet, phones, pictures, maps, toys, notice board, fans, lighting, catalogue cabinet. Ozubulu rural library has more accommodation than Nnewi rural library. However some library resources like computers,

audio cassettes, video cassettes, DVDs, library software. T.V., internet, photocopiers, bibliographies and printers are not available in the rural libraries as indicated in the table.

Even though the users expressed satisfaction with the library resources available, but they fall short of IFLA (2001) minimum standard for information resources in rural libraries which stipulates that resources of a rural library should include: fiction books, non-fiction books, textbooks, newspapers/magazines, pictures and posters, records and tapes, videotapes, toys, CD-ROM and Braille materials. This is because despite the availability of some of the required resources, absence of such resources like Braille materials, audio visuals and ICT has put a big question mark on the ability of these rural libraries to deliver library services in this information age, and thus guarantee users' satisfaction.

**Table 2:** Types of Library Services Provided by the Rural Libraries (by library staff)

S/N	Items	Available		Not available	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Bookmobile services	0	0	13	100
2	Circulation services	13	100	0	0
3	Reference services	13	100	0	0
4	Lending services	13	100	0	0
5	Library services to children	13	100	0	0
6	Services for special groups	3	23	10	77
7	Information Communication	4	31	9	69
8	Technology (ICT) services  Community contact scheme services	12	92	1	8
9	User education	13	100	0	0
10	Extension services	11	85	2	15
11	Referral services	10	77	3	23
12	Selective Dissemination of Information	8	62	5	39
13	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	13	100	0	0
14	Photocopy services	4	31	9	69
15	Bindery services	7	54	6	46
16	Information repackaging	7	54	6	46

The result in table 4 shows that Item I with 100% score is not available in both libraries. All the staff agreed that items 2 to 5, 9 and 13 with percentage scores of 100% are available in the libraries. However, items 8, 10 and 11 also have a high percentage score of

92, 85 and 77 respectively. Items 6 and 7 have the highest percentage score of 77 and 69 respectively for non-availability.

The finding is in consonance with Ebiwolate (2010) who opines that library plays role in enhancing literacy and advancement of knowledge among rural dwellers can be effectively carried out with well-structured and well-planned library services which include bookmobile services, circulation services and reference services. Others are lending services, library services to children, services for special groups, ICT services, etc. However, unavailability of such services like bookmobile services, ICT services and photocopy services is capable of impairing delivery of vital services to users, and thus have ugly effect on those users whose interest in coming to the library has to do with accessing such services.

**Table 3:** Mean Scores on the Extent of Patronage of Services by Rural Library Users

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
17	Bookmobile services	1.38	LE
18	Circulation services	3.77	VHE
19	Reference services	3.92	VHE
20	Lending services	3.92	VHE
21	Library services to children	3.08	HE
22	Services for special groups	2.23	LE
23	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	2.00	LE
	services		
24	Community contact scheme services	3.08	HE
25	User education		VHE
26	Extension services		HE
27	Referral services		VHE
28	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)		LE
29	Current Awareness Services (CAS)		VHE
30	Photocopy services		VLE
31	Bindery services	2.31	LE
32	Information repackaging services		HE

The result presented in table 5 shows that reference services, lending services, circulation services, user education, referral services and Current Awareness Services (CAS) are being patronized to a very high extent with mean scores of 3.92, 3.92, 3.77, 3.75,

3.54 and 3.54 respectively. Also, extension library services to children, community contact scheme services and information repackaging services are being patronized to a high extent with mean scores of 3.23, 3.08, 3.08 and 2.54 respectively. Information Communication Technology (ICT) 2.00, Selective Dissemination of Information (2.85), bindery services (2.31) and Information repackaging services are patronized at low extent. However, book mobile service with a mean score of 1.38 is being patronized to a very low extent.

This finding is in agreement with the findings of Onuoha, Omokeje and Bamidele (2003) who discovered that photocopying and reference services were the most utilized library services while binding and audiovisuals were the least used services. This finding however disagrees with that of Itumeleng, Malcolm and Anis (2014) who found out that the users do make significant use of the library, its services and resources.

**Table 4:** Mean Scores on the Extent of Users' Satisfaction of Services Rendered in Public Libraries

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	Bookmobile services	1.4	VLE
2	Circulation services	3.65	VHE
3	Reference services	3.73	VHE
4	Lending services	3.23	HE
5	Library services to children	3.34	HE
6	Services for special groups	2.63	LE
7	Information Communication Technology (ICT) services	2.60	LE
8	Community contact scheme services	3.43	HE
9	User education	3.79	VHE
10	Extension services	3.68	VHE
11	Referral services	3.65	VHE
12	Selective Dissemination of Information	3.74	VHE
13	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	3.76	VHE
14	Photocopy services	2.59	LE
15	Bindery services	2.72	LE
16	Information repackaging	3.20	HE

The result presented in table 6 shows that users are satisfied to a very high extent with reference services, circulation services, user education, referral services, Current Awareness Services (CAS), extension services and selective dissemination of information with mean scores of 3.75, 3.65, 3.79, 3.65, 3.76, 3.68 and 3.74 respectively. Users are satisfied to a high extent with services such as lending, library services to children, community contact scheme services and information repackaging. Analysis of extent of users' satisfaction with the services further revealed that there is a low extent of satisfaction with services to special groups, Information Communication Technology (ICT), photocopy and bindery services. This is shown by their mean scores of 2.63, 2.60, 2.59 and 2.72 respectively. However, book mobile service with a mean score of 1.4 has a very low extent satisfaction.

The dissatisfaction of users with some of the services confirms Onuoha, Omokoje and Bamidele's (2013) finding that users were satisfied with library services to a little extent which means that users are yet to derive maximum satisfaction from all the library services provided. Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) are of the view that users must get the desired information resources, facilities, and services expected to be provided by the libraries for satisfaction to occur.

**Table 5:** Mean Scores on the Challenges Militating Against Provision of Effective Rural Library Services to Users

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
33	Inadequate funding of rural libraries	3.92	Positive
34	Insufficient personnel	3.85	Positive
35	Non operation of mobile libraries	2.85	Positive
36	Inadequate information materials	3.23	Positive
37	Inadequate accommodation	2.77	Positive
38	Lack of adequate community analysis	2.69	Positive
39	Poor remuneration	3.23	Positive
40	High cost of transport	3.00	Positive
41	Lack of modern infrastructural facilities	3.92	Positive
42	Epileptic power supply	3.85	Positive
43	Bad roads	3.08	Positive
44	Lack of skilled staff	3.69	Positive

From results in Table 7, items 33 to 44 have mean scores ranging from 2.69 to 3.92. This shows that all the items scored above 2.50 which imply that the respondents agreed with all the items listed as challenges militating against provision of effective rural library services to users. Though public library staff agreed with all the challenges listed, inadequate funding of rural libraries and lack of infrastructural facilities have the highest mean scores of 3.92 while lack of adequate community analysis has the least mean score of 2.69.

This is in consonance with Akanwa's (2003) findings that public libraries in Nigeria are facing numerous problems which include lack of funding, inadequate library materials, irregular shelving, insufficient personnel, irregular staff meeting, inadequate facilities, non operation of mobile libraries etc. The finding also supports that of Ajegbomogun, (2008) that library collection is obsolete and inadequate hence, the readers were not satisfied with the available materials.

# **Testing of Hypothesis**

**H**<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction.

**Table 6:** Test for the relationship between provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction (N=105)

Variables	R	p-value	Remark
	0.495	0.000	S
Users' satisfaction			

# S – Significant correlation at 0.05 level of significance

The relationship between provision of effective rural services and user satisfaction was determined at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result in Table 8 showed that the relationship between the provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction (r = 0.495,  $\rho < 0.05$ ) is significant. The relationship between the provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction is also moderate and positive. The null hypothesis was rejected, thus it was concluded that there is significant relationship between the provision of effective rural library services and users' satisfaction.

This finding agrees with that of Mbashir and Adeoti (2008) whose study showed that the library has adequate resources and the needs of users are met, hence, satisfaction occurred and confirms the statement of Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2004) who observed that the use of library by users and indeed their satisfaction with library services depend on availability of suitable learning materials, accommodation and competent staff in the library.

#### Conclusion

Although the findings showed that there are some available resources and services in the rural libraries, there is still need for provision of adequate library resources and services especially those related to provision of effective rural library services in this technological era like ICT. If this is not done, it will lead to users not being satisfied with the library and they may not patronize the library again.

As the study showed that users are not satisfied with some services, this implies that provision of modern resources and services will bring about a great extent of users' satisfaction with services in the libraries. On the other hand, users may look for alternatives to satisfying their information need.

As the study revealed challenges to provision of effective rural library services for users' satisfaction, this implies that addressing the challenges by management of the libraries, policy makers and state government will bring about user-satisfaction of services of the libraries.

Findings of the study showed that there is significant relationship between provision of effective rural library services and user-satisfaction. This implies that when adequate library services are provided, users will be satisfied. Therefore the government through the central library should provide staff, information resources to these rural libraries so that to they can provide adequate library services that will invariably satisfy their clientele.

Conclusively, Ozubulu and Nnewi rural libraries lack vital resources and services that will guarantee user-satisfaction in the libraries especially in this information age. Users are ready to come to the libraries, though they expressed little satisfaction with library resources and services of the rural services. Lack of satisfaction emanated as a result of unavailability of modern resources and services.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions made in this study.

- Adequate modern resources like ICT should be provided in the rural libraries by management and state government to guarantee availability of adequate services in the rural libraries.
- ii. Rural library workers should endeavor to host public enlightenment programs to improve the level of awareness of users about services provided in some areas that are not patronized to a large extent, like services for children by organizing Saturdays classes, special holidays programmes and Christmas party for children and special group.
- iii. Services like bookmobile, services for special groups as well as photocopy and binding services should be made available as we can see from the findings, that users are ready to patronize available services.
- iv. The level of satisfaction with library services by users' was also found to be low, especially in ICTs and other Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) which calls for improvement in general service provision and delivery in order to increase the level of user's satisfaction.
- v. The management of the libraries, the state library board, the state government and other stakeholder should address other challenges as revealed in the study like funding and power supply problems for attainment of effective rural library services and subsequent user-satisfaction in the libraries.