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## **Effectiveness of Library Resources in the Libraries of Agricultural Research Institutes in Nigeria**

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### **Introduction**

Nigeria's agricultural research institutes in Nigeria were founded 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. There are fourteen agricultural research institutes in Nigeria, which were founded in different circumstances at different times to satisfy different agricultural needs (Idachaba 1987). The purpose of these institutes is to conduct research in various areas of agriculture to enhance agricultural production. Research results are communicated to farmers through agricultural extension. Each institute's responsibilities call for specialized information collections to achieve their objectives and to function efficiently. The agricultural research library is responsible for supplying and organizing information that is relevant to the work of the institutes.

The agricultural research libraries face problems that may make them ineffective: poor funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of technology. These libraries cannot improve without evaluation of the present situation. This study assesses the level of user satisfaction with agricultural research institutes' library resources in order to identify impediments to effectiveness and offer research-based solutions.

### **Literature Review**

Nigerian agricultural research institutes face rising demand for scientific data and information, which places more demand on the libraries. Fabunmi (2004) describes library effectiveness as including information customized to meet individual needs, stating that effective library systems are timely in delivery, meet their specific needs, are easy to understand/use, and are delivered by courteous and knowledgeable staff.

Effective research libraries provide ICTs that aid timely delivery of information in response to researchers' needs. ICTs are combined with standardized information delivery techniques. Librarians in administrative and management positions coordinate these things to provide an effective system. Nwalo (1997) advises that library effectiveness be measured in terms of the satisfaction expressed by library users.

The effectiveness of library resources and services can be measured in various ways. Nwalo (1997) citing Ene (1978) states, "libraries are judged by set objectives... [And] application of set standards to measure the quantity of operations..." Ifidon (1977) observes that library evaluation can use both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Irrespective of whether the evaluation is quantitative or qualitative, parameters are set to be judged by users, who are in the best position to evaluate the effectiveness of the library. Agricultural institute researchers should have the prerogative of evaluating the

agricultural research institute libraries. Kellaheer (2005) gives six reasons why library evaluation from user's perspective is very important.

- the place of initiative services;
- the quality of these services;
- the flexibility of these services;
- users ability to effect changes to services they receive;
- how initiative service can fit with mainstream services; [and]
- how the library might develop mechanisms for assuring quality in library resources and services.

The scope of this study covers facilities available in the libraries, serials collection, library services, and special services such as selective dissemination of information (SDI), current contents search, and reprography. Library adequacy variables in this study are internal to the library.

### **Methodology**

This is social survey research that involves systematic collection of data about opinion, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors of people (Aina, 2002). The survey technique was chosen for this research, which involves evaluation of the information services of many research libraries and their diverse resources. This total population for the study consists of research officers in the fourteen agricultural research institutes in Nigeria. The research officers include veterinary doctors, medical laboratory scientists, animal health scientists, horticulturists, 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.

The objectives and the hypotheses of this study necessitated the use of questionnaire, structured interview and direct observation to collect the required data.

## Result and Interpretation

**Table 1: Assessment of user satisfaction with Electronic Resources**

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

Table 1 shows that respondents are unsatisfied with electronic resources in the libraries. Buckland's (1975) views on library services state 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 must enhance electronic access to be in line with current trends in information selection and distribution to spur productivity.

**Table 2: User Satisfaction with the Library's Collection**

Types of Library Collection	Responses											
	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Undecided		Satisfied		Very satisfied		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Text books	35	14.0	77	30.8	34	13.6	92	36.8	12	4.8	250	100.0
Journals	36	14.4	85	34.0	21	8.4	90	36.0	18	7.2	250	100.0
Reference books	29	11.6	75	30.0	53	21.2	79	31.6	14	5.6	250	100.0
Newspapers	36	14.4	37	14.8	37	14.8	92	36.8	48	19.2	250	100.0
Magazines	58	23.2	89	35.6	57	22.8	38	15.2	8	3.2	250	100.0
Microforms	102	40.8	63	25.2	68	27.2	15	6.0	2	0.8	250	100.0
CD –ROM	98	39.2	64	25.6	56	22.4	28	11.2	4	1.6	250	100.0
The entire collection	28	11.2	83	33.2	77	30.8	57	22.8	5	2.0	250	100.0
Mean	53	21.1	72	28.7	50	20.2	61	24.6	14	5.6	250	100.0

Table 2 shows that respondents find their library's collections unsatisfactory. The libraries are not meeting user expectations. The books that are available are not current as reported by the respondents in Table 1. Electronic resources can substitute for print collections, which are not available in most of the libraries.

**Table 3: Overall Assessment**

Effectiveness of the library	Frequency	Percentage
Very Ineffective	13	5.2
Ineffective	177	70.8
Effective	58	23.2
Very effective	2	0.8
Total	250	100.0

More than three quarters of the respondents indicate that the libraries are ineffective, which implies that the productivity of the research scientists could be hampered.

## Conclusion

The results of the survey show that the agricultural research institute libraries in Nigeria are ineffective in supporting their institution's research mandate. This ineffectiveness has resulted from gross underfunding of the libraries by the parent institutions and failure by the management to give the library

the status it deserves. This has adversely affected the resources and services of the library. The low research and publication productivity of agricultural research officers may be attributable in part to the ill-equipped libraries.

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