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An Evaluative Study of Library use by Military Personnel: A Case Study of 2 Mechanized Division, Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment Ibadan, Nigeria

Itunu Mary Adepegba
College Library, College of Nursing and Midwifery Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria,
itunu.okunmuyide@gmail.com

Iseoluwa Adedokun
College Library, College of Nursing and Midwifery Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria,
iseoluwaadedokun2014@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

An evaluative study of use of military library by military personnel is of utmost importance for libraries to positively impact on human race collective security. The ability to make informed and correct decision is in correlation with the availability of rich information sources, which is the stronghold of libraries worldwide. 2 Mechanized Division, Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment, Oyo state Nigeria is used as a case study to unravel this phenomenon, to understand the type of information required by military personnel and use the outcome as a template to run efficient military library services. This research was conducted to ascertain if military personnel use their libraries or not. If not, find out the factors responsible for it and offer solutions. The research instruments used are questionnaire and observation. The gathered data revealed that time constrain, nature of the military personnel job, unawareness of the benefits that could be derived from the library, lack of interest, non-availability of new and current information materials, location of some units within the cantonment are responsible for the ineffective library use. Therefore, there is still much to be done for military libraries to reach its full potentials and the responsibility lies on the librarians within this base library to be proactive, create awareness and diversify the information sources to reflect the current trends in information technology.

Keywords: Library, Library use, military, information Needs

Research objectives

This study was conducted to find out the information needs and the available information materials for military personnel. Also, to ascertain if they make use of their library, if not discover factors militating against the effective use of the library and propose ways by which these anomalies can be corrected.

Research Questions

1. Do the Military Personnel make use of the library?
2. Are the library users registered?
3. Are there set of rules and regulations guiding the library operations?
4. What type of Information do they seek when they go to the library?
5. Is there room for improvement?

Introduction

In this information age where everything is tied to information, it is important for us to determine if those in charge of the security and defence of our dear Nation are adequately informed and if they could effectively make use of the information available to them in their Libraries. One of the hallmarks of the best practices of a library is through the encouragement of the users' feedback. According to Mohanan (2020), users' feedback is collected from library users in different formats and at a regular interval.

"If materials to be acquired into the library collection must meet the information, education, and recreation needs of library clients's Hossain (2012) this was collaborated by Alcober (2022) "the librarian who will choose and acquire library materials must have knowledge of the library clients and their necessity regarding library resources". This study is therefore embarked upon to know the information needs of the military personnel and if they are using the available library facilities. Also, to determine if the materials in the libraries are meeting their information needs and if there is room for improvement(s).

The study population group comprise personnel of the 2 Mechanized Division Nigerian Army, Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment, Ojoo, Ibadan and a total number of one hundred and sixty (160) military personnel were administered to them, retrieved and analyzed using simple calculated percentage and frequency. Add history

The Nigerian Army started in 1863 and it was referred to as the Clover's Hausas. It metamorphosed into the Hausa constabulary and later formed part of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF), amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria led to remaning of the Northern and Southern Regiments to the Queen's Own Nierian Regiment QONR. When Nigeria was granted military autonomy, the QONR was redesigned the Nigerian Military Force (NMF) and at independence in 1960, the name changed to the Royal Nigerian Army. The present designation, Nigerian Army (NA) came into use when Nigerian assumed a Republic status in 1963.The Library Department was established under the Institute of Army Education (IAE) in July, 1979 and was later excised from the IAE. The 2 Mechanised Division benefited from this set up and a library was established in the division.

Literature review

Today we live in a society known as knowledge society, because it is being driven by knowledge management processes. The role of libraries in providing widespread and inclusive access to knowledge is widely acknowledged. In today's context, Murugan and Krisha (2018) describe libraries as the collectors and stewards of our heritage; they are organizers of the knowledge in the books they collect – adding value by cataloguing, classifying and describing them; and, as public institutions, they assure equality of access for all citizens. They take the knowledge of the past and present, and lay it down for the future Abdulsalami L. T. et al (2013)

The issue of security of lives and properties of the citizen of country by military personnel has gone beyond what it was in century past. Increase in population, occupation of more geographical land, development of warfare and mass destruction equipment has forever changed security matters and the way military personnel discharge their duties. The role of libraries in providing adequate, current, correct information can not be emphasized enough, according to Morath, Leonard and Zaccaro (2011) in military contexts, the ability to make decisions is more challenging and important than in other settings. Modern warfare implies a number of factors that affect the type of decisions that have to be made, as well as their degree of uncertainty and stress.

In most organizations, business or otherwise, a systematic systems-based method is used for information management, which provides the service of information supply to the managers enabling them to take informed decisions. Technological advances have led to an abundance of information to process at all levels. Decision-making cycles have been cut while at the same time, consequences can be dramatic. Military personnel deals with decisions that often have to be made in a few seconds may, if incorrect, lead to "wrong" casualties, worsened relationships and international complications. This new environment thus poses special challenges for decision-makers, as well as new risks and uncertainties. Laurence (2011)

According to Ayilara and Adegboyega (2020), the management and organization of knowledge have long been regarded as the domain of librarians and libraries. Libraries of all types play five major roles in a knowledge economy. These roles are code-named RICER for research, information, custodian, education and recreation. In this regard though military libraries cannot

directly engage in security duties; it is comforting to know that it can support our military personnel and help them reduce information overload and cognitive fatigue.

Military libraries also known as base libraries provide the following service; carry specialty materials required for certain military personnel, provide free public education for all military personnel, provide supportive, encouraging, educational environment for children and families who need consistency. Today, libraries—digital and physical, help disseminate information that is a powerful means of social empowerment that drive community literacy and learning (Chatterjee, Samanta & Dey, 2021). Once relevant and appropriate information and resources are identified and organized by libraries, they need to be disseminated and promoted to users and referred to and linked throughout numerous information channels and platforms (Walker, 2021)

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULT

Participant Demographic Data

Table 1   Sex

SEX	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
FEMALE	36	22.5%
MALE	124	77.5%
	160	100%

The table shows the total number of the respondents and percentages of female and male which is 36 (22.5%) and 124 (77.5%) respectively. The male respondents constitute the majority of the military personnel of the Nigerian Army 2 Mechanized Division of Nigerian Army.

Table 2
Unit Distribution of The Nigerian Army

UNIT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GARRISON	10	6.25%
INTELLIGENCE	10	6.25%
FINANCE	10	6.25%
EDUCATION	10	6.25%
ENGINEERS	17	10.6%
52 SIGNAL	11	6.9%
525 SIGNAL	12	7.5%
BATALION	23	14.4%
PUBLIC RELATION	7	4.4%
ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL SERVICES	16	10%
SUPPLY & TRANSPORT	20	12.3%
MILITARY POLICE	9	5.6%

ORDINANCE	4	2.5%
ARMOURY	1	0.6%
	160	100%

The table presents the distribution of the respondents according to their units in the Division Nigerian Army. The highest respondent was gotten from Battalion Unit which provides 23(14.4%) and while 20(12.5%). Supply and Transport, 17(10.6%) Engineers, 15(10%) Administration and Legal Services, 12(7.5%) 525 Signal, 11 (69%) 52 signals, 10(6.25%) Garrison, 10(6.25%) Intelligence, 10(6.2%) Finance 10(6.25%) Education 9(5.6%) Military Police 7(4.4%) Public Relation 4(2.5% Ordinance, 1(0.6%) Armoury respectively.

Table 3
Registered User of The Division

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	64	42.3%
NO	91	58.7%
	159	100%

The table present the registered user out of the participant. Non-registered military personnel were the highest with 91(58.7%), while the registered users are 64(41.3%). This shows that a great number of the military personnel are not registered user of the library.

Table 4

Use of Library Materials

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	121	76.6%
NO	37	23.4%
	158	100%

The analysis of the data shows that 121 (76.6%) respondents make use of the library materials while 37(23.4%) do not. This also shows that non-registered personnel also make use of the library.

Table 5
Frequency of Library Materials Usage

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
DAILY	13	11.1%
WEKLY	7	6.0%
ONCE IN A WEEK	20	17.85
ONCE IN A MONTH	77	65.8%
TOTAL	117	100%

The table presented the frequency of the use of the materials in the library by the respondents and it reveals that those who make use of the materials on a monthly basis constitute the majority

with 77 (65.8%). Once in a week users constitute 2(17.1%), Daily users constitute 13(11.1%) while few numbers of user make use of the material on a weekly basis 7(6.0%).

Table 6

Frequency of Borrowing Library Materials

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Once in a month	11	7.4%
Twice in a month	9	6.1%
Occasionally	58	39.2%
I don't borrow book	70	47.3%
	148	100%

The question was designed to know how often library materials are borrowed; this table provides analyzed data on how often the military personnel borrow books from the library. The respondent with the highest percentage 70(47.3%) do not borrow books at all, 58 (39.2%) borrow books occasionally, 11(7.4%) borrow books once in a month, and 9(6.1%) borrow books twice in a month.

Table 7

Reasons For Not Borrowing Library Materials

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
My type of book is not available	11	6.9%
I don't have time to read outside the library	25	15.6%

I only read in the library	51	41.9%
Other	73	45.6%
	160	100%

When asked why respondents do not borrow from the library and the following was gathered 73(45.6%) claim other reason for not borrowing the materials that ranges from lack of awareness to lack of interest on the part of users, 51(31.7%) only read in the library, 25(15.6%) do not have time to read outside the library, 11 (6.9%) claimed that their type of books is not available.

Table 8
Purpose Of Using the Division Library

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
read my magazine	4	2.5%
read journal and newspaper	68	42%
Research	39	24.1%
borrow Library Materials	5	3.1%
Others	46	28.9%
	162	100%

The respondents reason for using the library is as follows. 68(42%) use the library for reading journal and newspaper, 48(28.4%) it for other reasons 39(24.1%) use it for research purposes,

5(3.1%) to borrow library materials and lastly 4(2.5%) to read their own personal journal.

Table 9

Library Use Education

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	105	68.2%
NO	49	31.8%
	154	100%

The question was designed to know if the 2 division military personnel have been exposed to any form of library use education. The data collected reveals that 105(68.2%) of the respondents have been expose to library education, while 49(31.8%) have not been expose to it.

Table 10
User Information Need

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Current Affairs	29	18.6%
General Knowledge	100	64.1%
Information for service to the Society	15	9.1%%
Military	13	7.7%
	156	100%

This question was design to know the type of information the military personnel need, the type of information needs that constitute the highest majority is general knowledge. 100(64.15%) need materials on general knowledge 29(18.6%) need information on current affairs. 15(9.1%) need information on service to the society and 12(7.7%) on military.

Table 10.1

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE

Business	21	12.9%
Basic amenities	5	3.1%
Health	30	18.4%
Politics	60	36.8%
Religion	21	12.9%
Culture	9	5.5%
Others	17	10.4%
	163	100%

The is a follow up question of table 10 to streamline the of information material the personnel desire. The available gathered data result shows that more respondents are interested in Politics 60(34.8), 30(18.4%) wants information on health, 21 (36.9%) needs information on religion, 17(10.4%) other (e.g. documentary and philosophy), 9(5.5%) needs information on culture and lastly 5(3.1%) needs information of basic amenities.

Table 11
Use of Journal

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	101	65.6%
NO	53	34.4%
	154	100%

The data gathered on the reading of military journal by its personnel is encouraging because it shows that a higher percentage of the personnel reads its journal and also the information gathered during observation shows that more of the military personnel goes into the library to read the dailies and periodic journals. The table presentation 101(65.5%) reads journal frequently

and 53 (34.4%) do not.

Table 12
Information Sought Most

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Appointment and promotion	10	9.7%
War reports	33	32.0%
Your division news	17	16.5%
Others	43	41.7%
	103	100%S

This table shows the type of information that the personnel sought most while reading military journal.   43(41.7%) seek other type of information, 33(32%) seek information on their division news and 10(9.7%) seek information on appointment and promotion.

Table 13
Awareness of Other Information Materials

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	93	68%
NO	57	38%
	150	100%

The table shows the response of respondents on the awareness of other information materials 93(68%) of the respondents are aware of other information materials apart from books while 57(38%) are not aware of other information materials. It then can be assumed that majority of the respondent are aware of other materials.

Table 14
Respondent Rating of The Library

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE

Very Adequate	40	28.8%
Fairly Adequate	42	30.2%
Adequate	18	12.9%
Inadequate	26	18.7%
Irrelevant	13	8.4%
	139	100%

This table presented the opinion of the respondents about the 2 Mechanized division library, 42(30.2%) of the respondent considered the library to be fairly adequate which is the sample majority. 40(28.8%) considered it very adequate 26(18.7%) considered it inadequate, 18 (12.9%) considered it adequate, 13(9.4%) considered it irrelevant.

Table 15
Seeking Library Staff Assistance

RESPONSE	**FREQUENCY**	**PERCENTAGE**
YES	29	84.3%
NO	24	15.7%
	153	100%

When questioned about asking for help from the library staff in locating materials and doing some other things in the library, large percentage of the respondents responded in affirmative. The table reveals that 129(84.3%) ask for the help from library staff while 25(15.7%) do not bother to ask for the help from library staff.

Table 16
Willingness of the Library Staff to Assist

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Cooperative	106	77.4%
Not always cooperative	21	15.3%
Indifferent	4	2.9%
Others	6	4.4%
	137	100%

The table shows the response of the respondents rating the library staff willingness to help in the library. 106(77.4%) accepted that Library staff are corporative, 21(15.3%) believed not always cooperative, 6(4.4%) some give other reasons and 4(2.9%) claimed that the library staff are indifferent when ask for assistance.

LIBRARY OBSERVATION FINDINGS

❖ All Military personnel of the division registered or not are free to make use of the library materials.

❖ Most of the library user do not have library card.

❖ Newspaper and Magazine reading is the most frequent activity that takes place in the library.

❖ The library is use as a venue for Education unit meeting.

CONCLUSION

There is a huge difference between what the library is supposed to be and what it is. There is also a gap between the information needs of the military personnel and meeting of their information needs. Moreover, there is a huge gap between library use and non-use of the library.

The findings of the research revealed that higher percentage of the military personnel are not registered member of the library and that they make use of the library more in the role of entertainment (reading newspapers, magazine and place of meeting for the education unit) rather

than for study or research purpose. Information material that is in high demand is that of general knowledge and politics for self-improvement of the military personnel.

It could also be summaries from the processed data that there are many factors affecting the effective use of the library among which are time constrain, nature of the military personnel job, unawareness of the benefits that could be derived from the library, lack of interest, non-availability of new and current information materials, distance because of the location of some units within the cantonment e.g., supply and transport unit, not all come to the headquarter complex all the time.

All this and many more can be taken care of by going extra mile in the provision of information and creating awareness for information. The onus of this responsibility lies on the library which invariably means the librarian, the custodian of knowledge, to see to and to wake up to the task.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The library should acquire new and recent materials and also to diversify in terms of the materials to be acquired i.e., getting more materials on security, intelligence, politics, business management, philosophy and documentary to meet the information needs of the military personnel. Audiovisual and ICT materials can also be added to the library collection to encourage patronage.

Compulsory library registration and user's education should be encouraged and practice to initiate the new personnel into the best and effective means of sourcing for information in the library. Library card and manual should be made available to the users.

Publicity of the library materials is also an effective means of encouraging library patronage. This can be done through selective dissemination of information (SDI) by making available photocopy of relevant table of content of books journals to each unit.

More importantly, maintain good relationship. The library should cultivate good relationship within and outside the cantonment, cordial relationship is also paramount between the library and the Division's general officer in command (GOC) and commandants of the different units so as

to facilitate cooperation and allocation of sizeable funds to the library for acquisition of library materials.

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