Availability of Library Aesthetics for Enhanced Educational Purpose of Library Patronage by Users in Federal University Libraries in South East, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability of library aesthetics for enhanced educational purpose of library patronage by users in federal university libraries in South East, Nigeria. Three specific objectives guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population consist of twenty-four thousand, two hundred and sixty three (24,263) users. The sample size is three hundred and eighty-eight (388). Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample respondents. A questionnaire titled Influence of Library Aesthetes on Users' Patronage Questionnaire (ILAUPQ) and observation checklist were used in data collection. Simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. The result shows that theavailable library aesthetics facilities are ventilation, signage, lightning, art drawing; interior and exterior decoration; library aesthetics influence users' educational purpose of library patronage; and users' perception is that library aesthetics make the library conducive, comfortable and exciting for reading, learning and research.Based on these findings it was recommended that library aesthetics should be considered in the design, renovation, refurbishment and redesign of university libraries to appeal to the taste of users. High quality and standardized library aesthetics facilities should be used in building university libraries for sustainability and long lifespan. Proper maintenance measures should be created in order to preserve the library aesthetics facilities.

Key Words: Library aesthetics, Library patronage, Users, Educational purpose of library use.

Introduction

University library users are a composite of people who visit the library to make use of her collections, use her space for academic, social and entertainment activities, and consult the various services that she offers. They are members of the university community, who include the students (undergraduates and postgraduates), the staff (academic and non-academic), researchers (internal and external), the university alumni, and the entire members of the university host community. Amanze (2009) posits that the composition of university library users is wide and varied. It includes undergraduates of various age groups, postgraduate students, the faculty members, the non-teaching staff members or the

administrative staff. VUEB (2018) note that students, faculty, and academic staff are their primary target groups. These users patronise the library to meet and satisfy their various information needs.

Library patronage is the use of library services and resources by the users in order to satisfy their various information needs. The essence of providing library and information services (LIS) is for users to consult the library frequently. In other words the essence of library existence is users' patronage. Without users patronizing the library, the library will go into extinct and will become valueless. Association of College Research Libraries(2015)relate that university libraries contribute to students' learning and success in four ways which are students benefit from library instruction in their initial coursework; library use increases student success; collaborative academic programs and services involving the library enhance student learning and information literacy instruction strengthens general education outcomes.Users patronise libraries for various purposes. The purposes could be educational, social or entertainment. Educational purpose is the main reason why users patronise university libraries. The educational purposes include reading, learning, studying as individual or as a group, doing assignments or term papers, preparing for exams, writing projects or thesis, carrying out research, study discussion and leisure reading.

This is so because the major activities in the university revolve around these educational activities. Also the major objective of being in the university is to pursue academics; therefore, the users of the university library are expected to frequent the library for educational reasons.Vienna University of Economics and Business [VUEB] (2018) reveal that her university library is a strategically vital part of the learning and research environment.Users have come to accept the library as the most comfortable space for reading, learning and research. "Places of connection not collection" (Gemma, 2016, p. 5). Therefore, the library should be designed and beautified in a manner that is appealing, attractive and adoring. In essence, there is need for aesthetic consideration in the design, renovation and refurbishment or new and old libraries.

Library aesthetics has to do with the design and beauty of the library in a way that is attractive and appealing to the taste of library users. Library aesthetics consists of the interior and exterior library decoration, the painting and color choice of the library building, signage, floor plans, furniture, art drawings, landscape, lightening, ventilation etc. Ibrahim and Sakiyo (2015) aver that aesthetics facilities are those items in libraries that add to the beauty and attractiveness of library usage in terms of indoor and outdoor environment, such as good landscaping; color, interior decoration, lightning, ventilation, temperature and

signage/direction. University libraries should be designed in such a way that users will enjoy using the library, will find the library pleasant and adoring.

Library aesthetics connote the design and facilities in the library building that make users' library experience a memorable one. Library aesthetics is the philosophy of the beauty, refurbishment and art or exhibition of the library. According to Ugwuanyi, Okwor and Ezeji (2011) aesthetics is an important factor in the library building. New library buildings should pay attention to the expression of beauty as representing knowledge and culture. This idea is shown in the combination of such aspect as exterior look, interior layout, artistic design and natural environment. Library aesthetics is important for the enhancement of users' library experience, to make them enjoy their stay/visit in the library and to earn their frequent library patronage. Library aesthetics will induce oomph feeling in users when they enter the library. Thus embrace the library as the most comfortable space to study, learn and research as individuals or as a group. Irrespective of the importance or influence of library aesthetic on users' library patronage there is decline in library patronage. Okiilu and Otike (2016) lament that there is a declining trend in library usage all over the globe and hence an increase of library non-users. Therefore, there is need to aesthetical design, refurbish and renovate university libraries

Review of Literature

Library patronage can be enhanced through library aesthetics. Studies have been conducted on library aesthetics and library patronage. Ibrahim and Sakiyo (2015) studiedaesthetics and utilization of university libraries in North East Zone of Nigeria.The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between library aesthetics facilities and utilization in the library institution understudied. Oyewumi, Oladapo and Adegun (2014) investigatedusers' perceptions and library patronage among postgraduate students: A Case Study of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology. The study revealed that because of information explosion most postgraduate students' access information vie the web/Internet. It also revealed that the provision of ICT resources is not enough to guarantee users' patronage. Amusa and Iyoro (2013) researchedon influence of library environments, instructional programs and user-librarian collaborations on library use by undergraduate students in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the academic libraries are less used because of the availability of alternative information systems (such as the Internet, reading-rooms in residence halls and apartments), poor library environment, inadequate user education programs, and absence of formal user-librarian collaboration programs.

Kuliga, Dalton and Holscher (2013) carried out a research on aesthetic and emotional appraisal of the Seattle Public Library and its relation to spatial configuration. The study discovered how users described their aesthetic and emotional judgments of the building (Seattle public library), the locations where users identify difficulties in understanding the building, and to what extent space syntax measures correspond to user statements. As a result, aesthetic stimulation in the Seattle public library might get in theway of functionally accomplishing tasks, and instead excite a need for environmental understanding and exploration.

From the available literature, it was necessary to investigate the availability of library aesthetics for effective educational purposes of library patronage in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. This study is based on the premise that the availability of library aesthetics can influence users to frequently patronise the library.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the availability of library aesthetics for enhanced users' educational library patronage in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the available library aesthetics facilities in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria.
2. Determine the influence of library aesthetics on users' educational purpose of library use.
3. Determine users' perception of library aesthetics' influence on their patronage

Research Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 24,263. The sample size was three hundred and eighty eight (388). The study adopted simple random sampling technique in choosing the respondents. Questionnaire and observation checklist was used in collecting the data. Simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were adopted in the data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The available library aesthetics facilities in federal university libraries in South East Nigeria

Table 1:Result from observation checklist on the availability of library aesthetics facilities

s/n	Items	Nnamdi Azikiwe Library		Prof. Festus Agabo Library		MOUAU Library	
		Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available	Available	Not Available
1.	Ventilation	A		A		A	
2.	Lightening facilities	A		A		A	
3.	Library signage		NA	A		A	
4.	Painting	A		A		A	
5.	Landscape		NA		NA		NA
6.	Exterior design	A		A		A	
7.	Interior decoration	A		A		A	
8.	Floor plan	A		A		A	
9.	Modern furniture and cabinets	A		A		A	
10.	Hygienic restroom		NA	A			NA
11.	Art drawings and frames	A		A			NA
12.	Spartial consideration		NA		NA		NA
	Total/Percentage	**8**	**4**	**10**	**2**	**8**	**4**
		66.6%	**33.3%**	**83.3%**	**16.6%**	**66.6%**	**33.3%**

Table 1 reveals the available library aesthetics facilities in the libraries understudy. It shows that the available library aesthetics are in Nnamdi Azikiwe library are 8(66.6%) which include ventilation, lightening facilities, interior decoration, exterior decoration good floor plan etc. The available library aestheticsin Prof. Festus Agabo library are 10(83.3%) which include ventilation, interior and exterior decoration, lightening facilities, paintings, signage tools, modern furniture, hygienic restroom, and floor plan. Finally, it revealed that the available library aesthetics in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture library are 8(66.6%) which are ventilation, lightening facilities, paintings, hygienic restroom, modern furniture and floor plan. This finding is in line with Ibrahim and Sokiyo (2015) that library aesthetics

facilities are those items in academic libraries that add to the beauty and attractiveness of library usage in terms of indoor and outdoor environment, such as good landscaping; colour, interior decoration, lightning, ventilation, temperature and signage/direction.

The availability of library aesthetics is important for the beauty, tasteful and inspiring look of the library. Library aesthetics will captivate the mind and give convivial feelings, hence, should be made available in university libraries. At the design stage of the library or renovation of a new or old library, the aesthetically look should be prioritized.

The influence of library aesthetics on users' educational purpose of library use
Table 2: Mean rating of responses on the influence of library aesthetics on users' educational purpose of library use

S/N	Items	UNN	NAU	MO UAU	Σx	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Makes reading comfortable	3.60	3.48	3.49	3.52	.70	1st	Strongly Agree
2	Makes library the most preferred studying space	3.45	3.36	3.43	3.41	.79	2nd	Agree
3	Creates encouraging learning atmosphere	3.25	3.39	3.36	3.33	.80	3rd	Agree
4	Makes research interesting	3.06	3.04	2.98	3.03	.84	4th	Agree
5	Attracts me to frequently use the library for learning and studying.	2.82	3.00	3.07	2.96	.83	5th	Agree
6	Makes leisure reading inspiring	2.79	2.78	2.96	2.84	.87	6th	Agree
7	I enjoy using the ICT section	2.61	2.73	2.34	2.56	.96	7th	Agree
8	I feel discomforting using the library because of the state of aesthetic facilities and design features.	1.78	2.09	2.06	1.97	.88	8th	Disagree
	Grand Mean	**2.89**	**2.98**	**2.95**	**2.94**	**.84**		**Agree**

The result show that library aesthetics influence users' educational purpose of library use by making reading comfortable (3.52), makes library the most preferred studying space (3.41), creates encouraging learning atmosphere (3.33) and makes research interesting (3.03). It shows that 8 items were accepted and 1 item was rejected. The grand mean 2.94 reveal that users' agree that library aesthetics influence users' educational purpose of library use. The standard from .96 to .70 shows low variation in respondents' responses. The finding corresponds with Chou, Cheng and Cheng (2016) that after the physical class reading environment was adjusted into aesthetic perspective, children's reading motivation and attitudes were triggered. Consequently, Oyedum (2011) identified physical facilities as one of the environmental factors that could influence the students' use of library. Thus university libraries are expected to provide conducive reading chairs and tables as well as bright lighting system in order to encourage and enhance learning and research.

Reading, studying and research requires a beautiful space that arouses awesome feelings in library users. An aesthetically designed library induces the feeling of comfort in users. Students or the faculty will prefer frequently using a physical space that is comfortable, exotic, scintillating and beautiful. An aesthetic designed library will inspire reading, studying and learning. Hence, increase users library patronage.

Users' perception of library aesthetics' influence on their patronage

Table 3: Users' Perceptionon the available of library aesthetics

s/n	Items	UNN	NAU	MOU AU	Σx	SD	Rank	Decision
1	I feel rejuvenated to read more because of the conduciveness of the library.	3.41	3.30	3.44	3.38	.76	1st	Agree
2	The aesthetics of the library makes me comfortable and relaxed when using the library.	3.28	3.28	3.38	3.28	.69	2nd	Agree
3	I feel excited viewing and admiring the aesthetical beauty of the library.	3.32	3.20	3.10	3.20	.80	3rd	Agree
4	My interest is on the functionality of the library building.	3.20	3.00	3.15	3.11	.90	4th	Agree
5	I enjoy using the library because the library is beautiful.	2.78	2.63	2.79	2.73	.90	5th	Agree
6	I don't mind using a library with or without aesthetic features.	2.78	2.58	2.57	2.64	.97	6th	Agree
7	I am always attracted to visit the library because of its beautiful exterior and interior design features.	2.46	2.50	2.46	2.47	.90	7th	Disagree
8	I have much interest in the look and design of the library.	2.43	2.37	2.40	2.40	.88	8th	Disagree
9	I frequently spend my relaxation hours in the library because it is attractive.	2.05	2.11	2.40	2.18	.87	9th	Disagree
	Grand Mean	**2.85**	**2.77**	**2.85**	**2.82**	**0.85**		**Agree**

The result shows that users feel rejuvenated to read because of the conduciveness of the library (3.38), users feel comfortable and relaxed to use the library because of the aesthetics (3.28), users feel excited viewing and admiring the beauty of the library (3.20). The

grand computational mean is 2.82 fall within the range of 2.50 to 3.49 real limits. The standard deviation scores range from .90 to .69, which shows a low variation in respondents' responses. Clee and Maguire (1993) agree with this finding that the aesthetics of the library and its surrounding have impact on users' perceptions. More so, it is clear that the library ecology, design, and layout affect students' perceptions of the manner in which they believe that they can utilize the library. In a similar view, Fawley (2012) clearly posit that creating a brand is a powerful and effective way to establish a predefined image of your library in the minds of its users.

Users spend considerable amount of time of being in the library viewing the library design features and facilities. Kurraz (2016) declarethat beauty revives conscience and transcends the human to the highest ranks. Most times, this could be to get study inspiration; it could be for sensory assimilation of what they have read; it could also be to ease boredom resulting from lengthy or stressful reading. An aesthetically designed library will rejuvenate users' reading and studying interest.

Conclusion

Library users expect the library to have similar attractive look like the shopping malls, banks, and other service institutions. The beauty of the library is a mechanism the university can utilise to compete favourably with other information providers. For university libraries to maintain their status as the heart of the university and best space for reading and learning its aesthetic qualities must be maintained for enhanced users' patronage. The paramount essence of university library usage is for educational purposes. It is worthy to note that in the university environment, there are lot of spaces where the members of the university could use for study, learning, group discussion and research. However, the library is established to be the main space for studying, reading, learning and research in the university. For this reason, library aesthetics should be implemented in the design or renovation of the library to make the library attractive, appealing and tasteful to the users. Library aesthetics is a tool to enhance users' educational purpose of library patronage; therefore, should be considered and implemented in the design, renovation or refurbishment of the university library.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study recommend that:

1. Library aesthetics should be considered in the design, renovation, refurbishment and redesign of university libraries to appeal to the taste of users.
2. High quality and standardized library aesthetics facilities should be used in building university libraries for sustainability and long lifespan.

3. Proper maintenance measures should be created in order to preserve the library aesthetics facilities.

4. The beauty of the library should be used to attract customers and for library marketing programmes.

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