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Exploring Students' Perception of Information Service Provision of University Libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Libraries are service-oriented organizations established for the provision of relevant information resources and services needed to meet their users' information needs. Libraries are institutions that select, acquire, process, organize and disseminate information materials such as books, magazines, journals, microfilm, maps, government documents and other resources in support of teaching, learning, recreation and research. However, the extents to which university libraries provide these services in Kwara State, Nigeria remain unknown until now. The study employed a survey research design, where undergraduate students' population stood at 68,298. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to select 382 participants. A self-structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The instrument was faced and constructed validate by 3 research experts while the test-retest reliability finding of the pilot study yields a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.77. Data were analyzed using a descriptive statistic of frequency counts, percentage, mean score and standard deviation. The report of findings revealed that information services provided almost every time to the user in the library was lending and borrowing ($X=4.2$), reference services ($X=4.2$), user's education ($X=4.1$) and shelf management with a mean score of ($X=4.1$). The study concluded that undergraduate students in university libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria perceived the information services provided to be satisfactory. It was recommended that the current level of service provision should be improved upon to enhance more users' patronage.

Keywords: Perception, Information Services, Undergraduates, University Library, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Introduction

University libraries are central to the provision of the right information to students, faculty members, support staff and host communities where they were situated. They serve as the intellectual hub for the educational advancement of students. Their services essentially support the teaching, learning and research mission and vision of their parent institutions. They provide a wide variety of information services that expose users to various information services and sources with their respective values. Users are given the opportunity to learn and continue learning on their own with little or no supervision or guidance. University libraries are eager to

participate in the education process of students; hence, they have been wondering, investigating and research what perception of library services was held by library users. Information services in university libraries are the various ways and means by which information professionals provide, organize, store, retrieve and disseminate information to researchers and or users generally. The variety of information services offered by any library depends to a great extent on the quality and experience of the librarians in charge, since as a matter of necessity the library resources and services must be topnotch, sufficient in quantity and quality, current and relevant, depth and diversifying that support all disciplines curriculum.

Students held varying perspectives as to what library services are to their academic achievement. Some value library as more than just a place to study and to find relevant materials to augment class teaching, it is also conceived as an avenue to develop their knowledge beyond classroom tutor and tutorials (Datig, 2014). Perception of the library services is the opinion held by users that linked what is sensed with past experience to present sensational meaning. Students perception arises from the actual utilization of the library services, with regards to how well its services meet user's expectation of quality, but on the other hand, as well, students developed perception based on what they were told of the library services, this is more reason why user's education and information literacy is so important to guide users against misinformation.

Conventionally, information services revolve around activities in the readers' service section of the library, which include and are not limited to lending services, reference services, shelf management, users' education and many more. The variety of information services offered by a library depends to a great extent on the quality of staff and available information infrastructure. With the aid of information and communication technology (ICT), the above-mentioned information services are made readily available on the library website. The extent of this library services utilization by users is usually captured on the library user's statistics compiled on daily basis. Bitagi and Udoudou (2013) argued that all those library services are imperative if libraries are keen on meeting the information need of users. Gbaje and Ekojie (2010) emphasized the need for academic libraries to provide information services that enable users to locate, evaluate and access information. However, to gauge the extent of services provision of university libraries in Kwara state, this study explores these services from students' perception, since they constitute an important stakeholder in the academic environment.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the frequency of information services provision of selected university libraries in Kwara State;

2. Examine students' perception of the personality trait of library staff in discharging their duties; and
3. Ascertain the barriers militating against information service provision.

Review of Literature

Libraries are service-oriented organizations established for the provision of relevant information resources and services needed to meet their users' information needs. Libraries are institutions that select, acquire, process, organize and disseminate information materials such as books, magazines, journals, microfilm, maps, government documents and other resources in support of teaching, learning, recreation and research. Obama (2005) described a library as the window to a larger world. Jubb and Green (2007) state that academic libraries have for centuries played vital roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host institutions. Among the many functions of the university is the provision of quality education provision of facilities for education and development of knowledge and its application to government, industry, commerce and the community.

An academic library is an essential component of any high profile academic institution to serve the students, lecturers as well as other researchers. Academic libraries act as regular and up-to-date information providers and are not separate units but part of the institution. Academic libraries provide information resources that must meet the objectives of the parent institutions. A university library is an academic library that is attached to a higher education institution which serves two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum and to support the research of the university faculty and students (Curzon & Jennie, 2009). Kotso (2010) reasoned that university libraries support research process by collecting, preserving and making available an array of information resources relevant to their research community. Users form an integral part of the library community and as such their information needs are paramount. Therefore, it is important to provide services that will meet and satisfy their information needs. Information services in university libraries are the various ways and means by which information professionals provide, organize, store, retrieve and disseminate information to researchers and or users generally.

Academic libraries are information support systems attached to post-secondary institutions of learning such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (b federal, state, or private). In addition to the overall goals of their parent institutions, academic libraries also have their internal objectives. For enhanced service provision, Yaya, Achonna, and Osisanwo (2014) were of the opinion that in addition to providing traditional library services, library professionals use non-traditional and innovative methods to meet the highly specialized information needs of their users. According to Aboyade (2013), the attainment of this objective hinges on understanding the organizational culture of the library, ensuring a high level of organizational commitment to library personnel through appropriate and adequate motivation that will result in a good and positive self-view. Users of the academic library include students

(undergraduates, graduate, special, and distance-education students), faculty and the general public (Johnson, 2004). The ultimate aim of any university library is to transmit knowledge to the users. It is said that information is an indispensable tool for survival. This purpose will only be achieved, therefore, when the library resources are maximized, effectively and efficiently utilized. It is also true that only when the library and its resources are effectively, maximally, and efficiently utilized that the objectives of the library can be achieved.

In recent times, there has been an increased usage of ICT in the provision of services in the library. The fast growth and advancement of these ICTs have led to massive and progressive changes in the services offered and delivered to library clients. This is the reason Ekoko, Egunjobi and Awoyemi (2013) opined that the application of ICTs such as computers, the Internet, e-mail as well as other networked technologies, has opened up new and wider possibilities and opportunities to global library and information services and products which the traditional library cannot provide. This is evident by the evolution and emergence of virtual, digital, or libraries without borders. Information Technology allows libraries to expand service points and outreach opportunities. Information service provision in the library involves information retrieval, loaning of books and other materials, posting of new arrivals in the most suitable place for the use of the library users. Information service provision in the academic environment refers to the provision of services to students, researchers and the community.

According to Igwe and Onah (2013), the services of libraries and information centers are broadly categorized into technical services (such as collection development, cataloguing and classification) and readers' services, which are those services that have a direct impact on the users for the satisfaction of their information needs. This means that they are services directed at actively exploiting the collection of information resources in response to users' information requirements. Readers services include lending services, reference services, current awareness services (CAS), selective dissemination of information (SDI), indexing and abstracting services, interlibrary loan and document delivery services, resource sharing, and others. Conversely, if the services do not provide the needed information, the users will be dissatisfied, thereby diminishing their research and productivity output.

Academic libraries face challenges in their efforts to provide access to their services to their diverse clients. One physical barrier to information access is located. However, some set of a community of users face barriers, physical, geographical, technological, cultural or sociopolitical, and economic in accessing information. While a dearth of audiobooks or assistive technologies impacts those with perceptual disabilities and even electronic materials may not be accessible if they are incompatible with adaptive software or if digital rights management protection is in place (Michaud, 2013). Technological advances offer new opportunities for information access, but they also present a challenge to those on the wrong side of the "digital divide" – those who lack either access to information technologies or the skills to make use of such technologies (digital literacy). Given that the internet makes available a diverse range of

uncrated resources, evaluation has become an essential component of literacy for the users. The challenges of budget cuts increased user base, information explosion, rising costs, competition from database producers/vendors and complexity in user information requirements, wants and needs are some of the barriers facing libraries in recent times (Madhusudhan, 2008). Traditionally, libraries have been engaged in the marketing of library and information resources and services through the display of new books, exhibitions, bulletins, user orientation programs, production and issuance of library guides, library week outreaches and other public programs. The demands of modern information handling, coupled with the advent of ICT, which brings various competitors in information service delivery, demand an innovative approach in reaching out to users, for which the above traditional strategies are no longer adequate.

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for the study, which was considered appropriate because it helps to collect primary data from a large audience using the questionnaire as an instrument. It is the most convenient method of reaching a large audience such as the students' population. The target population consists of all undergraduate students of four universities in Kwara State, University of Ilorin, Ilorin (54,348); Kwara State University, Malete (7,500); Landmark University, Omu-Aran (4,000) and Al-hikmah University, Adewole (2,450). The records of the academic planning division of the four universities revealed that there is a 68,298 undergraduate students population in the 2019/2020 academic session. A sample size of 382 students was used as a sample size, where stratified random sampling of proportionate type was used for the selection of participants from each stratum. The instrument for data collection was a standardized questionnaire adapted from what is obtained from previous studies. The reliability testing for test-retest resulted in a Cronbach alpha value of 0.75. Collected data were analysed using SPSS version 21:0. Simple percentage, frequency count, mean score and standard deviation were used to present the result of findings. From the 382 administered questionnaires, 358 were returned and found useable, representing a 93.72% returned rate.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Undergraduate Students' Demographic Characteristics

Parameters	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
University libraries	University of Ilorin	98	27.4
	Land Mark university	94	26.3
	Kwara State university	86	24.0
	Alhikmal university	80	22.3
	Total	358	100.0
Age	<20	250	69.8
	21-25	72	20.1

	>25	36	10.1
	Total	358	100.0
Gender	Male	219	61.2
	Female	139	38.8
	Total	358	100
Level of study	Single	342	95.5
	Married	16	4.5
	Total	358	100.0
Department /Course of study	Management and social sciences	100	27.93
	Clinical and medical sciences	82	22.91
	Art and humanity	73	20.39
	Education	65	18.16
	Engineering	38	10.61
	Total	358	100.0

Table 1 reveals that the University of Ilorin has 27.4% of the respondents, followed by Land Mark university (26.3%), while Kwara State University and Alhikmal university accounted for 24% and 22.3% The results shows that about two-thirds (69.8%) of the respondents were below the age of 20 years, followed by those in the ages of 21-25 years, (20.1%) while those older than 25 years accounted for 10.1%. Furthermore, 61.2% of the respondents are male while females accounted for 38.8%. The Table shows that more than two-thirds (95.5%) of the students were single while those married accounted for 4.5%. as regards the department /course of study, the Table shows that the highest percentage (27.93%) were students of management and social sciences, followed by clinical and medical sciences which accounted for 22.91%. Besides, students from art and humanity accounted for 20.39% while education and engineering accounted for 18.16% and 10.61% respectively. This result implies that the study cut across students in various disciplines of studies in the universities in Kwara State.

Table 2: Frequency of information service provision in university libraries in Kwara State

S/N	Survey items	Every time N (%)	Almost every time N (%)	Occasionally N (%)	Almost never N (%)	Never provided N (%)	Mean	SD
1	Lending and/or library loan of books and non-books	138 (38.5)	167 (41.0)	64 (17.9)	11 (2.6)	0	4.2	0.8

2	Reference services	133(37.2)	170(47.4)	46 (12.8)	9 (2.6)	0	4.2	0.8
3	User education	138(38.5)	119(33.3)	101(28.2)	0	0	4.1	0.8
4	Shelf management/arrangement	133(37.2)	142(39.7)	83(23.1)	0	0	4.1	0.8
5	Internet service	138(38.5)	138(38.5)	64(17.9)	18(5.1)	0	4.1	0.9
6	Online search	119(33.3)	174(48.7)	51(14.1)	14 (3.8)	0	4.1	0.8
7	Photocopying	129(35.9)	115(32.1)	92(25.6)	23(6.4)	0	4.0	0.9
8	Referral services	110(30.8)	106(29.5)	133(37.2)	9(2.6)	0	3.9	0.9
9	Locating books and journals for users	115(32.1)	119(33.3)	110(30.8)	14(3.8)	0	3.9	0.9
10	Creating/updating new arrivals	74(20.5)	165(46.2)	101(28.2)	9(2.6)	9(2.6)	3.8	0.9
11	Newspapers clippings	115(32.1)	96(26.9)	96(26.9)	46(12.8)	5(1.3)	3.8	1.1
12	Bibliographical services	73(20.5)	115(32.1)	161(44.9)	0	9(2.6)	3.7	0.9
13	Selective dissemination of information	83(23.1)	106(29.5)	165(46.2)	0	4(1.3)	3.7	0.8
14	Indexing	69(19.2)	78(21.8)	170(47.4)	37(10.3)	4(1.3)	3.5	1.0
15	Posting list of the new arrival on library notice board	83(23.1)	106(29.5)	92(25.6)	50(14.1)	27(7.7)	3.5	1.2
16	Abstracting	69(19.2)	73(20.5)	170(47.4)	41(11.5)	5(1.3)	3.4	1.0
17	CD ROM search	46(12.8)	92(25.6)	179(50.0)	32(9.0)	9(2.6)	3.4	0.9
18	Bindery services	73(20.5)	41(11.5)	179(50.0)	55(15.4)	10(2.6)	3.3	1.1
19	Book bank	37(10.3)	23(6.4)	138(38.5)	142(39.7)	18(5.1)	2.8	1.0
20	Translation services	32(9.0)	14(3.8)	124(34.6)	142(39.7)	46(12.8)	2.6	1.1

SD = Standard Deviation; Mean of (1 = Never Provided, 2 = Almost Never, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Almost Every Time, 5 = Every Time.)

Table 2 reveals that 15 out of 20 items have mean scores of 3.5 - 4.2 indicating almost every time of information service provision. Also, 3 out of the 20 items have mean scores ranging from 3.3 -3.4 indicating occasional information service provision. The remaining 2 items have mean scores ranging from 2.6-2.8 indicating rarely provided. This suggests that all-inclusive information service provision would require the librarians to extend their services from seldom to every time provision of information services to library patrons in university libraries in Kwara State to make effective use of the library by providing other services with low percentage response.

Table 3: Students' perception of the personality trait of librarians in discharging their duties.

S/N	Survey Items	Strongly Agree (N%)	Agree (N%)	Disagree (N%)	Strongly Disagree (N%)	Not sure (N%)	Mean	SD
1	The Librarians are generally organized	89(24.9)	111(31.0)	118(33.0)	29(8.1)	11(3.1)	3.66	1.03
2	Librarians attend promptly to students information needs	74(20.7)	161(45.0)	60(16.8)	45(12.6)	18(5.0)	3.64	1.10
3	Librarians are friendly with the students	90(25.1)	134(37.4)	57(15.9)	59(16.5)	18(5.0)	3.61	1.17

4	Lack of adequate appreciation for library staff	73(20.4)	90(25.1)	76(21.2)	67(18.7)	52(14.5)	3.18	1.34
5	Only a few librarians demonstrate professionalism	72(20.1)	91(25.4)	81(22.6)	50(14.0)	64(17.9)	3.16	1.38
6	Most of the library staff are usually casual	39(10.9)	137(38.3)	74(20.7)	46(12.8)	62(17.3)	3.13	1.28
7	We usually notice inadequate attention of the library staff to students	43(12.0)	98(27.4)	97(27.1)	80(22.3)	40(11.2)	3.07	1.19
8	Some of the Librarians cannot communicate well with the students	52(14.5)	80(22.3)	95(26.5)	98(27.4)	33(9.2)	3.06	1.20
9	The Librarians are not welcoming in nature	69(19.3)	61(17.0)	93(26.0)	79(22.1)	56(15.6)	3.02	1.34
10	Library staff hardly attend professional training	60(16.8)	84(23.5)	78(21.8)	53(14.8)	83(23.2)	2.96	1.41
11	Librarians are usually casual	23(6.4)	114(31.8)	95(26.5)	77(21.5)	49(13.7)	2.96	1.16
12	The Librarians lack initiative and hence discourage patronage	59(16.5)	65(18.2)	97(27.1)	72(20.1)	65(18.2)	2.95	1.33
13	Librarians are not always timely	11(3.1)	95(26.5)	108(30.2)	78(21.8)	66(18.4)	2.74	1.13
14	Librarians are lazy	14(3.9)	85(23.7)	85(23.7)	122(34.1)	52(14.5)	2.68	1.10
Grand mean = 3.16								

SD = Standard Deviation; Mean of (1 = Not Sure, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

Table 3 shows that three out of 14 items have mean scores ranged between 3.61-3.66 indicating agreed that students perceived the information service provision by librarians in university libraries in Kwara State to be above average. On the other hand, 11 out of 14 items have mean scores ranged from 2.68 to 3.18 indicates moderate perception among undergraduates. Thus, it implies that the students disagreed that the information service provision by librarians is not satisfactory to a large extent.

Table 4: Barriers militating against information service provision in Kwara State university libraries

S/N	Barriers	Strongly Agree (N%)	Agree (N%)	Disagree (N%)	Strongly Disagree (N%)	Not Sure (N%)	Mean	SD
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1	Low team morale	69(19.2)	156(43.6)	87(24.4)	46(12.8)	0	3.69	0.93
2	Strike action	69(19.2)	138(38.5)	96(26.9)	50(14.1)	5(1.3)	3.60	1.00
3	Lockout of library staff during strike	83(23.1)	151(42.3)	37(10.3)	69(19.2)	18(5.1)	3.59	1.19
4	Promptness in information service provision	83(23.1)	106(29.5)	110(30.8)	50(14.1)	9(2.6)	3.56	1.08
5	Timeliness in service provision	96(26.9)	92(25.6)	73(20.5)	97(26.9)	0	3.53	1.16
6	Lack of adequate appreciation for library staff	69(19.2)	119(33.3)	92(25.6)	78(21.8)	0	3.50	1.04
7	Staff recurrent mistakes on the job	46(12.8)	110(30.8)	133(37.2)	69(19.2)	0	3.37	0.94
8	Inadequate attention to library staff	78(21.8)	87(24.4)	64(17.9)	96(26.9)	33(9.0)	3.23	1.31
9	Laziness of library staff	46(12.8)	92(25.6)	115(32.1)	105(29.5)	0	3.22	1.01
10	Students boycotts	41(11.5)	115(32.1)	78(21.8)	119(33.3)	5(1.3)	3.19	1.07
11	Staff restraining from participation in professional training	41(11.5)	87(24.4)	142(39.7)	69(19.2)	19(5.1)	3.18	1.04
12	Intimidation by a superior officer	46(12.8)	124(34.6)	37(10.3)	138(38.5)	13(3.8)	3.14	1.18
13	Lack of initiative among library staff	37(10.3)	92(25.6)	124(34.6)	96(26.9)	9(2.6)	3.14	1.02
14	The casualty of library staff	23(6.4)	96(26.9)	129(35.9)	106(29.5)	4(1.3)	3.08	0.94
15	High staff turnover	46(12.8)	92(25.6)	50(14.1)	133(37.2)	37(10.3)	2.94	1.25

SD = Standard Deviation; Mean of (1 = Not Sure, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

Table 4 reveals that six out of 15 items have mean scores ranged between 3.5-3.69 indicating agreed while nine items have mean scores ranged from 2.94 to 3.37 indicates high barriers. This implies that the majority of the respondents disagree that the identified barrier militated against information service provision in Kwara State university libraries.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study indicate that lending services, reference services, user education and shelf management/arrangement were among the commonly provided services almost every

time to library users. As shown in this study, university libraries in Kwara State also provide online search, locating books and journals for users, newspaper clippings and bibliographical services. With regards to students' perception of information service provision in the library, the findings revealed that the students disagreed that the information service provision in the library is not satisfactory to a large extent. Therefore, the librarians must provide services that will meet and satisfy student's information needs if they want to encourage increase patronage. On users' perception of personality trait of librarians working in the university libraries in Kwara State, the verdict has it that the current information service provision by librarians in the university libraries in Kwara State needs improvement to encourage more patronage into the libraries. The result of findings also indicated the top among the barriers militating against information service provision in Kwara State university libraries, which includes but is not limited to low team morale, strike actions, the lockout of library staff during a strike (and lack of promptness in information service provision).

Conclusion

This study had shown that even though libraries provide different services such as loaning of library materials, indexing, shelving and online services to myriads of library users almost every time, they particularly need to work on their personality traits so that they can better be able to help any library user(s). The outcome of the study from the perspectives of undergraduate students indicates that the current level of service provision should be improved in all the university libraries examined in this research.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were suggested for policy intervention:

1. The study revealed that information services were provided almost every time to library users, hence, the level of information service provision currently in practice should be maintained and improved upon in the four university libraries.
2. The students perceived that the information service provided by librarians were not that satisfactory, hence, the authorities of the library should put strategies in place that will encourage effective information service provision to all categories of library users.

3. Identified barriers militating against effective service provisions such as low team morale, strike action and lack of staff appreciation, all bordered on librarians' motivation, hence, librarians should be provided with incentives that will motivate them to perform their duty diligently.

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