

EVALUATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS USAGE AND SERVICES IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

Ogbuiyi, Sussan Udoaku
*BABCOCK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY,
ILISAN-REMO,
OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.*

Okpe, Isaac John
*BABCOCK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY,
ILISAN-REMO,
OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.*

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the use of library materials and services in four private Universities in south west Nigeria: Babcock University, Covenant University, Lead City University, and Redeemer University. The objective is to assess the degree of the usage of university library resources and services, clientele's perception on the adequacy of the available library resources and services, and the level of users' satisfaction. The data for this study was elucidated through the use of questionnaire, the questionnaire was administered to 255 registered users of the four universities' library and 200 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. The respondents were selected through random sampling of those using the library at that particular time. The finding shows inadequate of library holdings of books and audio visual materials. However, the university libraries' users appreciated the reserved resources system. Finally, it is being recommended that a good percentage of fund should be made available regularly to run the university libraries, there should be acquisition policy/guideline documented and strictly followed by University libraries in acquiring information resources into the library, there should be consistent shelf-reading to put the books in their right places on the shelves, and library staff should adopt marketing strategies in order to make the libraries user friendly, thereby encouraging users for more patronage.

KEY WORDS: Library services evaluation, Library patronage, Library collection evaluation, Private University library

INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of setting up any university is to encourage and promote scholarship and conduct of research in all fields of learning and human endeavors. As a result of this, a university designs its program of study and provides the necessary infrastructure as to meet these goals. It is in light of this that each of the infrastructures in the university is an integral part of the university system, the library is undoubtedly the most significant of them all. According to (Ajibero, 1995) as soon as these universities were established their libraries were established and the libraries are seen as the heart of the university and no other single non human factor is as closely related to the quality of infrastructure for university education as the library. The university library is a place where academic information sources are acquired, organized, processed, stored and made available to meet the information needs of the students, teachers and the entire University community. The university library is set up to serve its parent institution and considered as an organ around which all academic activities revolve and therefore the library can aptly be described as the heart of the university. The role of a university library to the parent institutions could be seen as:

- Acquisition of resources to support learning and teaching process in the University.
- Provision of resources necessary for research and to meet the requirement of faculty.
- Cooperation with other university libraries with a view of developing a network of academic library resources which will be at the disposal of all students and teachers.
- Open the door to a wide range of resources that lie beyond the borders of one's own field of specialization.
- To bring information resources to door step of student and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self discovering, personal growth and sharpening of intellectual curiosity.

However for the schools educational objectives to be achieved through the library, the library resources and services must be made available to the students and teachers users readily on request. Furthermore, Ogunshye (1978) re-emphasized that neither a good book nor a good library can make the individual educated. It is the successful use of the books and libraries that makes the well informed, stable and well adjusted learned individual. It has been observed that in most schools where library exists, emphasis is on physical features, collection and budgets and not on the effective utilization of the library materials and services. In order to ascertain the extent to which academic library has helped in academic achievement, it is therefore, imperative to evaluate the use of library materials and services provided.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To determine the degree of the use of library materials in these four university libraries under study.
- ii. To investigate the degree of users' satisfaction in the use of library materials in these university libraries.
- iii. To evaluate the adequacy of material resources available in the academic libraries under study.
- iv. To explore users' perception of the library services provided by the University libraries under study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

All accredited institutions of higher learning have academic libraries that are integral part of such institutions. Their primary responsibility is to satisfy the institutional research needs of the

students and the faculty. The library is the brain center of any academic institution on which all academic activities are leaning to. (Akinlade, 2000). Academic library is defined as the library established, maintained and administered by a university or any higher institution to meet the needs of its students, members of the academic, administrative and executive responsibilities.

According to Aina (2004) who said, that to the undergraduate students, the library is the learning center because it provides materials that are needed for learning for all the courses that may be offered by the institution. To the postgraduate students, it provides all resources needed to "carry out effective learning and research activities. To the teaching staff, the library provides resources to support teaching and research. Above all, he said the library is also expected to provide information sources for extra-curricular activities. The importance of a library to the university could be described in this way as "A university is a group of buildings, gathered around a library. It is said that a good quality education is impossible without a good quality library. The quality of the university library facilities is an important component in the reputation of the university. Also Ogunrombi (2003) in his study, appraising the status of library stock in Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) the superintending agency for the Nigerian university' system. The Professional librarians on NUC's accreditation teams evaluated library stock in subject disciplines using the following criteria: quality (volumes), 'student. Population (users) and the currency of stock. The study details the accreditation status of subject disciplines in the first degree programmes of most universities were denied accreditation especially in the sciences because of poor library stock. Ajibero (2004) argues that if during accreditation exercise most University libraries scored less than 70%, while other components scored 100%, that programme will not get full accreditation. Actually, the quality and effectiveness of academic programme of a university are measured in part by the quality of the library. In countries where the educational quality is fairly high. It has been found indispensable to have a good library to support the parent institutions. For the foregoing dimension, it is time that no serious student will depend on his lecture notes only. Students. Especially undergraduates need the library to support and verify knowledge learnt in the classroom.

On-Orisan (1971) asserts that the library will provide materials to support and enrich the curriculum, enlarge the horizon of the students and stimulate their critical and imaginative faculties. Pearce (1976) Opines that, deficiencies in library stock have far - reaching implication for the quality of academic programme. There is correlation between the quality and quantity of intellectual materials available and the quantity of scholarship and research output in Universities, this is why the quality of the Nigerian university education is on the decline because the employer rating of Nigeria graduate is low (world bank 2001). It is a truism that no educational system is greater than the quality of its teachers. However important the availability of library materials and services in the achievement of the school's educational objectives, there will be no achievement of such objectives, if the library materials are not utilized by the library users to meet their information needs. Popoola (2001) argued that information availability does not mean accessibility and utilization. He suggested, among others, that academic libraries should stimulate primary demands for their products (Materials) and services. Drucker (1977) tied library performance to users satisfaction.

Akinlade (2000) observes that the expectations of people are high when sourcing and retrieving information, hence frustration too is high when expectations are not met. She suggested that for a library to satisfy the needs of users, both human and material resources must be available. In an effort to provide reference services to patrons, the American library, Brown (1994) reported that quality improvement techniques used by business organizations were adopted to improve the quality of their reference services. According to Brown, the techniques include: identifying the characteristics of customers and their needs; periodically evaluating service and identifying their limitations; promoting teamwork through employee's involvement. Reference services should be more of customer driven. In

order to ascertain whether or not the academic library materials and services have met the information needs of the clientele, there is need for evaluation of the use of library resources and services. That is, it entails quantification and comparison with laid-down standards of library provisions and services. When we evaluate we quantify performance practice and sometimes compare with output of another library considered as ideal. Libraries are concerned with the evaluation of the effectiveness of library services and the library as an institution. King and Bryant (1991) drew a distinction between macro-evaluation and 'micro-evaluation' Macro evaluation tries to answer the question, "How well is the system performing? And how to improve it in future. On the other hand, micro-evaluation is analytical and diagnostic. It tries to determine why the system performs at the present level and what may be done to increase the performance level in future. An evaluation of effectiveness is an evaluation of user satisfaction. Such evaluation should determine how well an information service satisfies the need of its users. This type of evaluation is, however, often restricted to a consideration of how well the service meets the demand (i.e. expressed needs) of users. The latent or unexpected needs are often completely ignored. Evaluation is meant to determine whether or not the objectives of the library are being achieved, whether or not the needs of library clientele are met. Librarians are constantly under pressure to evaluate their collections and services. According to Ifidon (1999), the following are some of the methods for evaluating library collections and services:

- i. By taking statistics of library usage
- ii. Check list of Acquisition of materials
- iii. By direct observation of the physical use of materials
- iv. Comparing records with world standard practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the use of library materials and services provided at four of the private universities in Nigeria. The selected private universities are located in Oyo and Ogun States of Nigeria. The population for the study consists of the library registered students, Lecturers, staff and community users of each University under study. Two hundred and fifty-five (255) questionnaires were distributed to the registered library users of the Universities Under study and two hundred (200) copies were properly filled and returned. The returned questionnaires were therefore analyzed using simple percentage.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. RESPONSE RATE.

Institutions under study.	Respondents	
	No	%
Babcock University	55	27.5%
Covenant University	52	26%
Lead City University	45	22.5%
Redeemer University	48	24%
Total	200	100%

Table 2. ASSESSMENT OF THE LIBRARY COLLECTIONS BY CLIENTELE

Materials	Adequate	Inadequate
Textbooks	81(40.5%)	119(59.5%)
Newspapers	144(72%)	56(28%)
Magazines	51(25.5%)	149(74.5%)
Journals	15(7.5%)	185(92.5%)
Reference materials	118(59.5%)	82(40.5%)
Audio visual	80(40%)	120(60%)
Thesis and projects	97(48.5%)	103(51.5%)

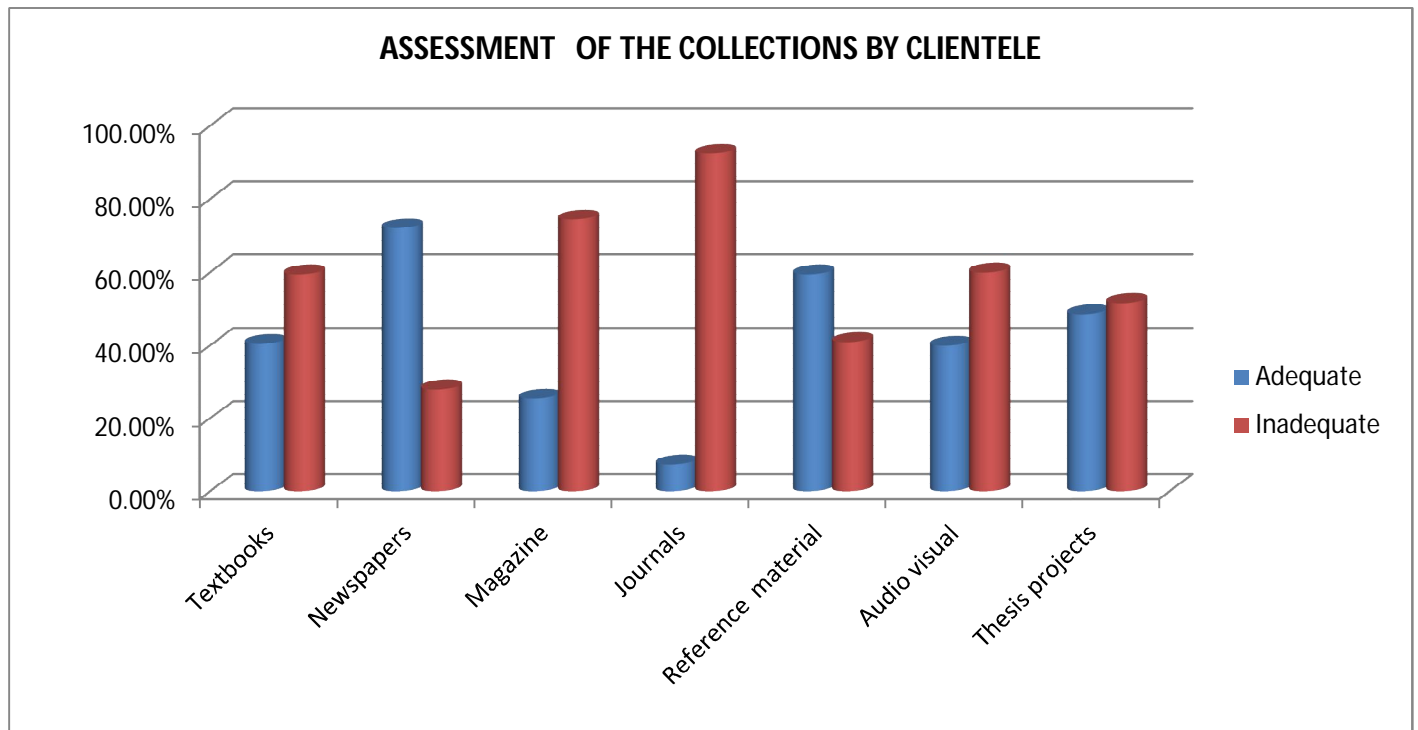


Figure 1

Figure 2 shows the level of adequacy library materials by clientele. 60% of the respondents believed that textbooks in the libraries were inadequate, while 40% indicated that textbooks were adequate, for newspapers, 72% agreed that they were adequate and 28% of the respondents indicated inadequacy respectively. 25.5% respondents indicated that the number of magazines provided by the University libraries were adequate while 74.5% shown inadequate, 7.5% and 92.5% of the respondents indicated adequacy and inadequacy for journal collections respectively. Reference services: 59.5% of the clientele agreed that the services provided was adequate and 40.5% indicated inadequate. For audio-

visual services, 40% and 60% indicated adequacy and inadequacy respectively. Thesis and project: respondents indicated 48.5% and 51.5% adequacy and inadequacy respectively.

Table 3. FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY USEAGE BY CLIENTELE

Institutions	The rate frequency				
	Every day %	Once a week %	Twice a week %	Thrice a week %	Occasionally %
Babcock University	35%	12.5%	20%	15%	17.5%
Covenant University	25%	7.5%	10%	25%	32.5%
Redeemer University	62.5%	15%	12.5%	10%	15%
Lead City University	27.5%	5%	10%	17.5	40%

Shows that 35% of the respondents at Babcock visit the library every day, 12.5% visit library once a week, 15% visit library thrice a week while 17.5% did so occasionally. It was also indicated that 20% of the Clientele at Babcock University visit library twice a week. At covenant University, 25% of Users visit the library every day, 7.5% visit once a week, 25% thrice a week while 32.5% did so occasionally and 10% of the respondents used the library twice a week. The table indicates that 62.5% of Redeemer respondents visited the library everyday, 15% once a week while 12.5% of the respondents used the library twice a week, 10% of the respondents visited the library thrice weekly and 15% use the library occasionally while at Lead City University 27.5% of the clientele used the library everyday 5% make use of it once a week, 10% twice a week, 17.5% thrice a week and 40% make use of the library occasionally.

Table 4. RATING OF LIBRARY PROVISIONS AND SERVICES BY CLIENTELE

Provisions and services	USERS' LEVEL OF SATISFACTION		
	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory
Number of opening hours.	46(23%)	91(45.5%)	63(31.5%)
Books loaning duration.	33(16.5%)	92(46%)	75(37.5%)

Reserve books services.	-	200(100%)	
General Library collections.	10(5%)	90(45%)	100(50%)
Meeting users' need.	-	80(40%)	120(60%)
Orderliness of library materials on the shelves.	-	100(50%)	100(50%)

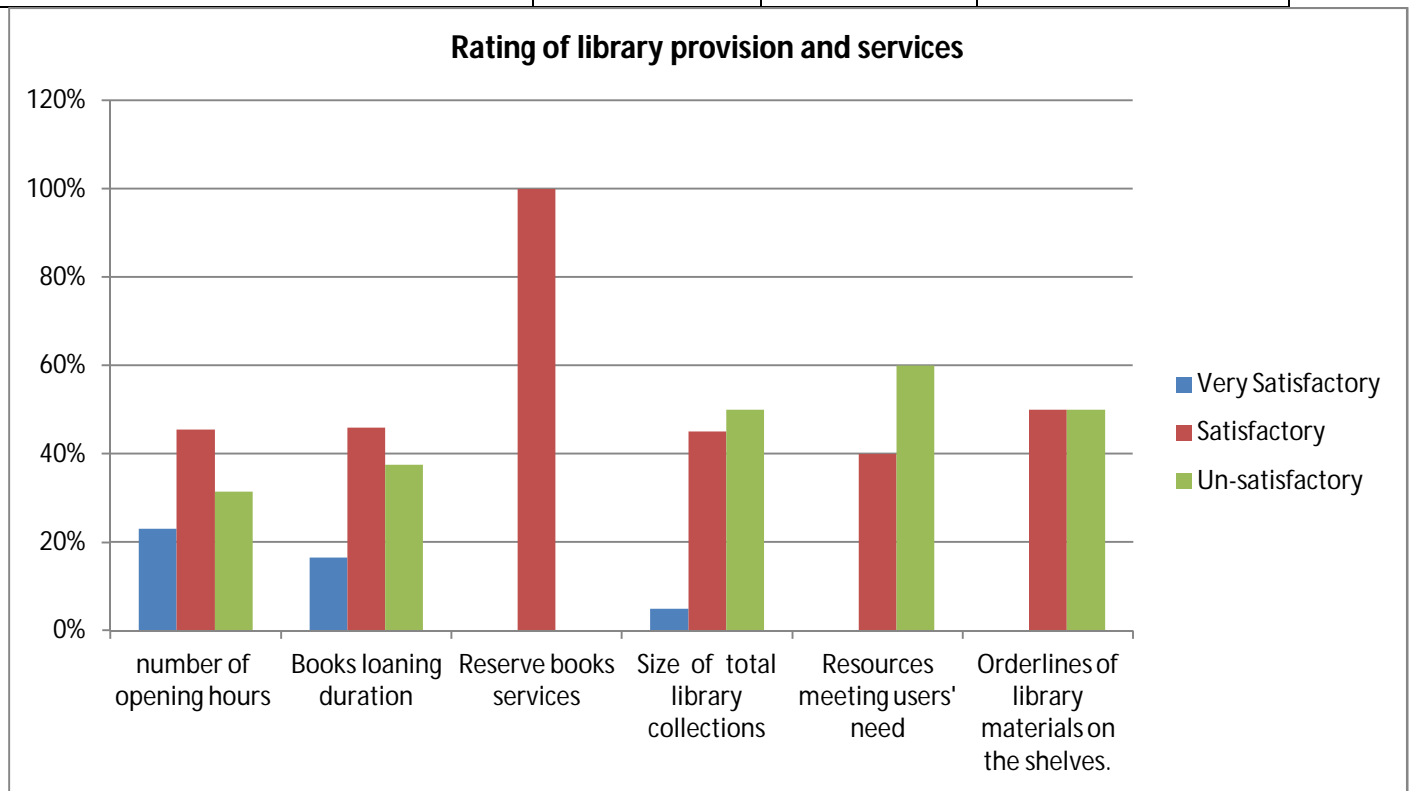


Figure 2

The response on the rating of library provisions and services reveals that 23% of the respondents were very satisfied, 45.5% satisfied and 31.5% unsatisfied with the hours of opening respectively. On book loaning duration, 16.5% indicated very satisfactory, 46% satisfactory and 37.5% shown unsatisfactory. For reserve services, 100% the respondents agreed that they were satisfied. 5%, 45% and 50% indicated very satisfactory, satisfactory and unsatisfactory respectively for general library collections. The question whether library provisions and services meet respondents' needs, 40% and 60% agreed satisfactory and unsatisfactory respectively while on the orderliness of library books on the shelves, 50% indicated satisfactory and 50% shown unsatisfactory.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be deduced that the degree of use of library materials and services at the four university libraries were below average. Also the available library resources and services are grossly inadequate to achieve the educational objectives of the schools. Furthermore, the library collection level needed to be improved upon in order to enhance teaching and research by students, teachers and community member as well as promoting the institutions' missions and achieving the set of educational objectives of the University programmes and meeting world set standard for qualitative education.

RECOMMENDATION

The importance of the library materials and services cannot be overemphasized in this 21ST century educational platform; from the study on the evaluation of the use of library resources and services provided by these University libraries, the following recommendations are made for effectiveness and maximization of library materials and services:

A good percentage of the University fund should be made available regularly for the university libraries' effective running without constrain.

The library staff should adapt sales man ship working ethics with the principle of customer first and that customers all always right thereby establishing a more cordial relationship with the clientele for comprehensive use of library information resources and services as this will encourage the University community to visit library constantly.

The University Librarian should drew up an acquisition policy document that spelt out clearly collection development guideline that covers printed information resources, audio-visual materials, digitized information resources as well as digitization of holdings and e-resources to enable the library acquire adequate library materials in relation to the size of the clientele population.

There should be constantly shelving reading in order to dictate the misplaced materials on the shelves and correct such miss helved or deliberately hidden books on the shelves and shelving them appropriately to avoid getting lost among other books and thereby maintaining orderly shelves.

REFERENCES

- Aina L. O. (2004) Ed., Library and Information Science Text for Africa, Third World Information Services Limited, Ibadan.
- Ajibero M. I. (1995) Users Expectations from Nigerian Universities Library Services in the 21st Century, Public Access Services Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 1
- Ajibero M. I. (2004) Proceedings of Scaulwa 2003 Conference: Do not support and Sustainability: The Experience of University Libraries in Nigeria.
- Akinlade O. J. (2000) Nigerian Media Libraries Challenges for the 21st Century. Nigerian Libraries 24. 1.
- Brown J. (1994). Using Quality Concepts to Improve Reference Services, College and Research Libraries 55. 3
- Drucker Peterson, (1977) Management Case, Bombag John Wiley, 356
- Ifidon, (1999) Essential of African University Library Management, Lagos: Nigeria: National Press.
- King and Bryant, (1991) The Evaluation of Information Services and Products, Washington, D. C., Information Resources Press
- Ogunrombi, S. A. & Adio G (1993) The Nigerian Book Shortage: Its Implication to Eduation and National Development, Library Review, 42 .6 38-46.

- Ogunsheye, F. A. ed. (1978) Manual for Nigerian School Libraries, Ibadan, Abadina Media Resource Centre.
- Oni-Orisan, (1972) "Education, School Libraries and Nigerian Development Plan" Nigerian Libraries Vol. 18 .19.
- Pearce, B. L. (1976) "Tuition in Library Use as a Part of Open University Preparation Course", Library Review.
- Popoola (2001) Faculty Awareness about Library Information Products and Services in Nigeria, University. Gateway Journal, 4 .1/4.
- World Bank (2001) The Quality of Nigerian University Degree, Washington, D. C. World Bank.