

ACCESS TOOLS, STAFF ATTITUDE AND EXTENT OF ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AMONG LIBRARY USERS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated access tools, staff attitude and extent of accessibility and use of information resources among library users in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used with population of 20,826 registered library users in seven federal universities and sample size of 154 registered library users in four Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria was selected using proportional stratified sampling technique. The study formulated three research questions anchored on access tools, staff attitude and extent of access and use of information resources. Four-point rating scale questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) was used to analyze data. The study found that catalogues was the most used access tool to information resources, while attitude of staff negatively affect users' access and use of information resources. The study further revealed that access to information resources was on daily basis to meet reference and research needs of users. Conclusion was that the level and degree of resource accessibility and utilization depends on the types of access tools and attitude of library staff. The study recommended amongst that management of universities in North central Nigeria should motivate library staff for attitudinal change for high job performance.

Keywords: Access tools, Use, Information resources, Attitudes; University libraries.

Introduction

University Libraries are types of academic libraries that are established in universities. The main functions of university libraries are to provide resources and information services to achieve the overall objectives of the parent educational institutions. They are the hearts and nerves of learning which makes them attractive centres which are hub to various educational activities that revolved round the very existence of institution of higher education, such as teaching, learning, research and other requisite human intellectual developments. Libraries are organized places with different type of preserved information resources both prints and electronics, such as books, manuscripts, periodicals, periodicals, reference resources, e-resources such as microforms, films, tapes and slides, Compact Disks(CDs) among others.

These information resources, which are the materials, acquired by the university library to meet the information needs of its users, required for easy access and retrieval at all time by the users. Jonathan and Udo (2013), term information resources as materials that allow libraries to effectively perform the functions of providing resources to users like books and other media. It also contains everything that is used to provide the requested information service from the client. For information resources to be effectively and efficiently utilised by the library users, the university libraries should provide access to their collections through the access tools. "Access tools" provided by libraries has facilitated the link to various information-bearing resources/documents by the users. According to Atanda and Adeyemi (2018), the major access tools are Catalogues, Classification scheme, Indexes, Abstracts and Bibliographic. The accessing tools function as an identifier or finding device that permit for easy document

identification and location of information resources by users in the library. There are various accessing or retrieval tools used in libraries for locating information. For example, the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), which is a modern access tools can give multiple access points to all library collections, including the university libraries collections from a remote location directly without physical presence of the user in the library building. It is the most popular and familiarised among the electronics access tools in the library today citation.

However, the attitude of library staff can positively or negatively influence the access and use of information resources by library users in meeting their information needs. The most effective and essential accessibility efforts is that of the role played by the library staff, they are the invisible tools that develops and maintains the continued usefulness of the various "access tools", they engage in reference as well as varied information services to library users. Libraries must process information resources before users can make sense of the available resources and the extents to which the resources are utilized.

Moreover, the extents and regularity to which, the university library information resources are used, on the other hand, provides the university library managers and administrators with greater insight to evaluate, update and upgrade their resources for better knowledge development. It allows for library staff to be more effective and efficient in their discharge of duties by providing the right information resource to the right user at the right time and at a cost justified by the users.

To overcome the challenges of accessing, locating and utilizing/consulting sources that relate to user's information needs; it is necessary to acquire the relevant skills needed to explore and exploit the library and its information sources. They need to learn to use the library's retrieval tools - the catalogue, indexes, reference works, and other skills/techniques required to use the library and this calls for information literacy of library users more so that Muthee, Thairu and Gitau Njoroje (2018) reported that there was significant influence of information literacy on access to and use of information in special corporate library by staff at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC), Kenya. Without learning the necessary library use skills and techniques, library users will always meet frustration and dissatisfaction in information search. Even though the user may be fully aware that the library houses such information materials or sources, but may be unable to lay hands or have access to the needed information material which is in the library because of ignorance hence, the most available information resources in Nigerian university libraries are mostly print materials, Onye (2016) maintain that the problems of accessibility manifests from indexing, abstracting, cataloguing, and bibliography, the provision of information resources in sufficient balance and the proper organization encourages students to utilize library information resources.

Statement of Research Problem

University libraries are equipped with both information resources and human resources. For information resources to be effective access and use, access tools and committed library staff need to be put in place. Researchers have discovered low patronage on the part of library users. This might be due to inadequate access tools and negative attitude of library staff. This study therefore investigates access tools, staff attitude and use of information resources in federal university libraries in North central Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examined Access Tools, Attitudes and Extent of Accessibility of Information Resources among Library Users in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Determine the types of tools used to access information resources in Federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria?
- ii. Examine perception of library users on the influence of staff attitude towards accessibility and use of information resources in Federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria?
- iii. Determine the extent of users' access and use information resources for leisure, reference and research purposes in the federal university libraries?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What types of tools are used to access information resources in federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria?
- ii. What is the influence of staff attitude on accessibility and use of information resources by users in federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent do users' access and use information resources for leisure, reference and research purposes in the federal university libraries studied?

Literature Review

Eze and Chinwendu (2015) examined the attitude of secondary school teacher-librarians towards information technology for effective information service delivery in Enugu state, Nigeria. The findings reveal that a good number of IT facilities were available in school libraries. Online cataloguing and classification, library automation, organization, preservation and reservation programmes were available in training programme. Results further revealed that IT enhances students training and that computers are an important tool for teacher-librarians. Lack of confidence, erratic power supply and insufficient support are some of the challenges.

Chiwendu, Nwadike and Odidi (2015) investigated the training needs, general attitudes towards digital training as well as inhibiting factors to training of academic librarians in the digital environment. The study was guided by four objectives with identified variables such as: training needs, general attitudes of academic librarians, inhibiting factors to training and strategies to overcome the challenges. Descriptive survey design was used with population of librarians working in three academic libraries in Enugu State Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Response rate showed the return of 61 (73.5%) completed copies of questionnaire. Mean score was used to analyse the collected data.

Results showed that librarians need training in the use of online journal databases, classification and cataloguing, electronic scholarly communication and publication, research data services, e-resources collection development, digitisation, computer basics, multi-media, digital library software and management skills. General attitude of academic librarians towards digital training include readiness/willingness to embrace change as well as changes occurring due to ICT applications, and possibility of modifying card catalogue through ICT than the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Challenges to training include: insufficient qualified resource persons, limited training program, time and funds as well as inadequate electronic resources, and techno-phobia.

Folade and Samuel (2016) conducted a study to determine accessibility, attitudes and competence of students towards the use of Internet in College of Education in Oyo State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study on access to ICT services and the Internet for learning, attitude of students towards the use of the Internet and level of competence of students on the use of ICT and Internet. Descriptive research was used with population

comprises 200 and 300 level students in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and 346 students were randomly selected. Questionnaire was the only data collection instrument. Results showed reasonable number of students have access to ICT and Internet and the respondents imbibed the positive habit towards information searching. Most students do not receive training on the use of ICT devices and Internet for learning.

Ezema and Leonard (2016) conducted a study to determine the access to electronic information resources by students to Federal College of Education in South East Nigeria. Descriptive research design was used, while population of the study consists of 5252 second year students of Federal Colleges of Education Eha-Amufu and (Technical) Umunze. A sample size of 526 students was used for the study. Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Frequency tables and percentages and of-course descriptive statistics was used to analyse data. Results showed that students have access to the electronic information resources while challenges include: erratic power supply interest connectivity, skills to access the resources were challenges to accessing E- Resources.

Obim and Oyebuchi (2019) collaborated to investigate the use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) for research by undergraduate in developing countries and found that OPAC was used to check available books and number of copies in the library. OPAC was used to a low extent.

In a study to determine the accessibility of library resources and facilities by special patrons using university of Port-Harcourt as the case study, Umeozor and Emasealu (2020), reported that a good number of respondents disagreed with accessing all aspect of library, book shelves, OPAC and e-resources.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design in order to gather data for the study. Descriptive survey research design is suitable for this study because it could give a clear understanding of respondents' perception on a given phenomenon. The population of this study is 20,826. This consists of 20,826 registered library users/ clientele in the seven (7) federal university libraries under study namely: Federal University of Technology Minna, University of Agriculture, Markurdi, University of Ilorin, University of Jos, University of Abuja, Federal University Lokoja, and Federal University Lafia. The sample size of the study is 154 registered library users such as students' (undergraduates and postgraduates) and academic staff (lecturers) in four Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria was selected using proportional stratified sampling technique of which according to Otaha (2015). The sample involve the number of respondents in stratum i.e the more the number of respondents in each strata, the more number of sample to be selected. The respondents are arranged in layers or stratum and select the sample from each stratum.

The instrument for data collection was researcher designed questionnaires. The question was a 4-point rating scale; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the rating score of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument is made up of four sections; section A is made up of respondents' demographic information, section B solicits information on tools users used to access information resources in Federal university libraries. Section C; perception of library users on the influence of staff attitude towards accessibility and use of information resources in libraries and section D; extent of users' access and use of information resources for leisure, reference and research purposes.

The face and content validity of the research instruments was done with the help of two lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Technology, Minna and a Lecturer in Statistics and Measurement Department. A suggestion made by the experts was used to modify and refine the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested, using Cronbach alpha, the reliability of the three constructs was 0.71, 0.74 and 0.72, indicating that the instrument is reliable.

The researchers distributed the copies of questionnaire with the help of seven trained research assistants who are staff of the university libraries in the population. Distribution and collection of the copies of questionnaire lasted for four (4) weeks. The researchers collected the returned copies of the questionnaire from the respondents for analysis.

The data from this study was organised and analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The decision rule for agreeing and disagreeing with an item was 2.50 and above and less than 2.50 respectively. This was determined using the average mean of a 4-point ratingscale (2.50). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was used to test the null hypotheses.

Results

The results of the study were presented based on the stated research questions;

Research Question One: What types of tools are used to access information resources in federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria? To answer this research question, mean and standard deviation was used and the result presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents Perceive types of Tools for Accessing Information Resources in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Catalogues are available and used to access printed information resources	154	3.727	.4468	Agree
Indexes are always used to access information resources in library	154	2.727	.9652	Agree
Bibliography are available for both printed and online information resources	154	3.182	.7182	Agree
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) are provided for both printed and online information resources	154	3.000	.9566	Agree
Abstracts on all information resources are provided	154	2.909	1.0868	Agree
Online Data bases can be used for accessing information resources	154	3.636	.6449	Agree
Search/meta- search engines are not access for information resources in the library	154	2.455	1.2372	Agree
Grand Mean		2.98	0.86	

Table 1 shows the findings of users' perception of tools used to access information resources in Federal University Libraries in North-Central Nigeria. From the table items 1-6 shows the mean of 2.72 – 3.73, and the grand mean 3.16, indicating that users' perceive all the tools are used to access information resources in federal university libraries. The finding of item 7, which shows that the respondents disagree that Search/meta- search engines are not access for information resources in the library. The grand mean of 3.98 implies that the respondents

agreed that all the highlighted tools are used to access information resources in the population with catalogues being the popular tool. The standard deviation mean was between 0.44 -1.24, indicating that there is no substantial deviation in the respondents' perception from each other and the standard deviation mean of the group.

Research question two: What are the perception of users on influence of staff attitude on accessibility and use of information resources federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria? To answer this research question, mean and standard deviation was used and the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Perception of Library Users on the Influence of Staff Attitude towards Accessibility and Use of Information Resources in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Library staffs are Agree friendly to users in accessing information for their needs.	154	1.907	.9294	Disagree
Library staff are not excited to attend to users in locating information resources for their needs	154	1.853	.9368	Disagree
Library staff are not always punctual in the library to assist library users with their information needs	154	1.787	.8868	Disagree
Library staff/user's relationship is not cordial	154	1.920	.9234	Disagree
Library staff lacks passion in their profession in assisting users locate information resources for their needs	154	1.827	.9606	Disagree
Library staffs lack proficient communication skills to link library users to information resources	154	1.960	.9475	Disagree
Grand Mean		1.88	0.93	

Table 2 shows the findings on the perception of library users on the influence of staff attitude towards accessibility and use of information resources in federal university libraries in North-Central Nigeria. From the table items 1-6 shows the mean of 1.78 – 1.96, and the grand mean was 1.88, indicating that users perceive that librarian attitude negatively influence users' accessibility and use of information resources in the population. The standard deviation mean was between 0.88 - 0.96, indicating that there is no substantial deviation in the respondents' perception from each other

Research Question 3: To what extent do users' access and use information resources for leisure, reference and research purposes in the federal university libraries? To answer this research question, mean and standard deviation was employed and the analysis presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The Extent of Users' Access and Use of Information Resources for Leisure, Reference and Research Purposes in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
I access information resources on daily basis for reference and research purposes	154	3.187	.8305	High
I access information resources on weekly basis for reference and my research purposes	154	3.107	.7610	High

I access information resources on monthly basis for reference and research purposes	154	2.800	.9831	High
I access information resources on daily basis for personal development	154	3.133	.9601	High
I access information resources on quarterly for reference and my research purposes	154	2.787	1.0781	High
I access information resources on weekly basis for personal purposes	154	3.107	.8910	High
I access information resources on annual basis for reference and research purposes	154	2.667	1.1273	High
Grand Mean	154	2.97	0.95	

Table 3 shows the findings of the extent users' access and use of information resources for leisure, reference, and research purposes in federal university's libraries in North-Central Nigeria. From the table items 1-7 shows the mean of 2.67 – 3.19, and the grand mean 2.97, indicating high extent of users' access and use of information resources for leisure, reference and research purposes in the population (Federal University Libraries in North central state Nigeria). The standard deviation mean was between 0.76 - 1.13, indicating that there is no substantial deviation in the respondents' perception from each other on. It is important to highlight that more respondents in this population access information resources on daily basis for reference and my research purposes with the highest mean (3.18). Similarly, more respondents reported that they access information resources on daily basis for personal development (mean=3.13). On the contrary, the mean of the respondents' access information resources on annual basis for reference and research purposes has the lowest mean of 2.66. However, the respondents have high extent of access to information for research purposes.

Discussion

The findings revealed that respondents agree that all the highlighted access tools are used to access information resources with catalogue being the popular access tool. No wonder that most users access information resources through catalogue as it is the commonest access tool in most libraries. This finding corroborates the findings of Obim and Oyebuchi (2019) but contradicts the findings of Falade and Samuel (2016) respectively. Obim and Oyebuchi (2019) reported that Online Public Catalogues (OPAC) was used to check available books and copies in libraries, while Falade and Samuel (2016) reported that reasonable number of students have access to ICT and Internet with positive attitude to learning respectively.

Research question two, sought to find out the perception of users on the influence of staff attitudes on accessibility and use of information resources. The result showed that users perceived attitude of staff to negatively influence users' access and use of information resources in university libraries. This negative attitude on the part of library staff is likely to emanate from the previous training programmes they have had. The findings disagreed with the findings of Eze and Chinwendu (2015) and Chinwendu, Nwadike and Odidi (2015) respectively. Eze and Chiwendu (2015) reported that information technology enhances students' training and that computers serve as important tool for teacher-librarians, while Chinwendu, Nwadike and Odidi (2015) reported the general attitude of academic librarians towards digital training to include: readiness/willingness to embrace change as well as modification of card catalogue through ICT than the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) respectively.

The study revealed that respondents access information resources on daily basis for reference and research purposes. No wonder that individual in the entire world are involved in searching, receiving and sending information in whatever form/format. This findings is contrary to the

findings of Umeozor and Emasealu (2020) who reported that majority of respondents disagree with the opinion of accessing all aspects of library, book shelves, OPAC and e- resources.

Conclusion

The study investigated the types of access tools, attitude of staff, and extent of access and use of information resources. Information retrieval is made possible through the use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and that use of information resources is affected by negative attitude of library staff. This will twin effect the degree, level and extent of information of resources accessibility and use. The findings of the study showed that access tools are used to access information resources with catalogue being the popular access tools; attitude of library staff has negative influence on users' access and used of information resources in university libraries. The study found access to information resources by users was on daily bases for reference and research purposes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion reached, management of Universities in North Central Nigeria should:

- i. Device various means and tools to access and use library collection.
- ii. Motivates library staff so that there should be a change in attitude.
- iii. User should be provided with information literacy and library use orientation.

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