USERS PERCEPTION AND LIBRARY PATRONAGE AMONG POSTGRATUATE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF LADOKE AKINTOLA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE

OYEWUMI, OLATUNDUN O[1], OLADAPO, YEMISI O. [2] & ADEGUN, ADEWOLE I[3]

[1,3]Olusegun Oke Library Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

[2]Medical Library Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study seeks to examine users perception and postgraduate student's patronage at Olusegun Oke Library, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso. It highlights their sources of information, relevance of library resources/collections, frequency of patronage and the constraints that hinders postgraduate students in low patronage of the library. Data was collected by administering questionnaire on 150 postgraduate students randomly selected from 5 faculties in LAUTECH. Simple percentages and tables were used for the analysis. The findings revealed that most of the postgraduate student's access information from the Internet due to information explosion. It also showed that the provision of computers in the library for postgraduate students in order to meet their information needs is not adequate. However, majority of the respondents claim that information from electronic resources provided in the libraries for learning and research purposes are fairly adequate. Only a few affirmed that the Internet facilities provided were inadequate due to the small bandwidth allocated to the library from the ICT unit of the university.

KEYWORDS: Postgraduates, Library Resources, Patronage, Knowledge, Information Resources

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the pedestal on which a nation's social cohesion and economic development depends. No library achieves greatness if its patrons who are its greatest assets have no access to quality education through the provision of library resources and services (Aina, 2004).

Ogunmodede and Emeahara (2010) are of the opinion that the library patron is very important in the practice of librarianship because the library process revolves around them. Moreover, according to Hameed (2004), the goal of any library (whether public, special, academic or school library), is to enable the user have access to the available resources and maximize its usage. The means of accomplishing high level of patronage of the library by users' is through the provision of efficient and effective library services.

However, the best impact of the library resources and services are felt when the array of expertise could only be of benefit to the patrons through the adequacy and relevance of the librarian to accomplish a mission. Invariably, what is needed to handle the avalanche of information coming into the library as librarians is to maximize resources in order to serve the library patrons effectively (Ibidapo, 2001).

Therefore, in a bid to encourage high patronage of the library among postgraduate students, librarians should not relent in their efforts to promote the library and rebuild its image in the society.

Literature Review

Libraries are at the centre of academic excellence of all educational institutions. They provide relevant information resources necessary for sustaining teaching, learning and research functions of the institution (Okiy, 2005). The academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of these educational institutions in producing high quality graduates into the labour market depend largely on the quality of information resources available in their libraries.

Oketunji (2000) submits that, this is even more real in today's knowledge-driven world, that the best efforts of the library in providing access to quality library resources in education have not been fully realised in our citadel of learning. The library which is known for its serenity and its status as a safe haven for those seeking to add more value to their education and also to channel their energy in pursuit of an academic future seems to have gone into oblivion.

Moreover, with the new information age and its attendant opportunities and challenges, no institution/organisation can still rely on only traditional printed information resources to perform effectively and efficiently in order to meet the needs of its patrons. To the librarians, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a significant development that provides tools for managing the avalanche of information generated by the modern society. Library patrons want access which will no longer be limited by time and space and one such way is the emergence of the virtual library.

Besides, the penetration of Internet technology and computer revolution in the society has changed our way of life and a lot of transactions are now done electronically (Imhonopi and Urim, 2011). Naturally, the goal of introducing new technologies in the library environment is ultimate, to improve the delivery of information to the patron. Lending credence to this, Okiki and Asiru (2011) stated that the Internet is the most prominent electronic resources making it possible to access electronic books and journals and various databases. It is therefore imperative for librarians to generate and organise as much information as possible. In addition, they should make the information accessible for patrons in order for the library to thrive and also enable patrons generate gainful ideas in this digital world.

The effective and efficiency of library services would to a large extent represent what the patrons perceive of the whole library service. The processed information is usually distributed to end-users (patron) in different ways. Sometimes the information gets to the patron directly, but in most cases a number of intermediaries such as the librarian have to be involved before it gets to the patron. The user is therefore very critical to the services of a library. Hence, the user of a library must be constantly asked to access the services and resources provided as this will help to improve upon its services (Ogunmodede and Emeahara, 2010). This would also increase the frequency of library patronage by users, while the information professionals on the other hand have to provide added value to the information created to make it accessible to its numerous patrons. Bearing in mind that the environment in which libraries operate is open to rapid changes which could affect almost every facet of modern life.

Background Information on Olusegun Oke Library

Olusegun Oke library, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology was established in July 1990. The library performs its academic responsibilities which are to support teaching, learning and research. The library had five (5) professional staffs at inception, while both junior and senior non-teaching staffs were fifteen (15) in number. The seating capacity in 1992 was eight-two (82).

From July 1990 till January 1999, Olusegun Oke library occupied a small space in the building presently occupied

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by the Department of Statistics. However, in February 1999, the library moved to its permanent site on the campus. In 2003, the first floor was completed and furnished through the intervention of the Education Tax Fund (ETF). The library also operates a 100 KVA capacity generating set whenever the power supply becomes erratic. Presently, the library conveniently seats three thousand, two hundred users. The library has witnessed a lot of growth in terms of size of building, library collections, seating capacity, library equipment and staff strength. At present, the library has fifty-one (51) staff including fourteen (14) professional librarians.

The library's opening hours are as follows:

- Monday to Friday - 8am – 6pm

- Saturday - 9am – 2pm

The opening hour is applicable to library operations during the semester and vacation periods. During examination periods, the library operates 24 hours library services to its patrons.

Statement of the Problem

Several factors tend to limit the services which are rendered by university libraries in Nigeria. The low library patronage by postgraduate students could be attributed to lack of adequate, reliable, current, relevant and related information resources to form the basis of research coupled with the possibility of under utilisation of available resources. Therefore, the questions that arise are: were the postgraduate students provided with the information resources they need to function effectively and did they utilise these resources to the extent of achieving their goals or the objectives of their academic career?

The study would therefore focus only on LAUTECH postgraduate students' library patronage and provide suggestions on how to insulate effective library patronage. In addition, it would also try to identify the preparedness of Olusegun Oke Library, LAUTECH, Ogbomoso to cope with electronic education programme recently introduced into the university system and its effect on post graduate students' library patronage.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:-

- Examine the relevance of library resources and services;

- Appraise the postgraduate students' utilisation of available library materials and services;

- Assess the level of patronage;

- Identify barriers/hindrances to effective library patronage and

- Assess the success of library resources and services in the actual accomplishment of its educational purposes.

Methodology

Data were obtained by administering questionnaire to 200 students from five faculties in the university. There are six faculties/colleges, but five were selected from LAUTECH main campus in Ogbomoso. College of medicine was exempted because they are located partly in Ogbomoso, Oyo state and Osogbo, Osun state. Personal observations were

used to verify the information provided by the respondents. A total of 175 questionnaires were returned out of 200 distributed in the study, but only 150 were found useable and analysed. The remaining 25 questionnaires were not fully completed therefore they were not analysed.

Variables such as age, gender, distribution of ICT facilities, types of resources and services provided by the library were among questions answered by the respondents. The results of the study were analysed using simple percentage and tables.

Data Analysis

A total of 150 (75%) out of 200 questionnaires distributed were returned and found usable by the respondents for this study. The high rate of response was achieved as a result of the follow up done in other to retrieve questionnaires from the respondents. The demographic distribution of the returned questionnaire is shown in Table I.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents
A: Faculties

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Engineering	39	26
Agriculture	25	17
Environmental	19	13
Science	25	17
Management	42	28
Total	**150**	**100**

B: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	87	58
Female	63	42
Total	**150**	**100**

C: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	135	90
Single	15	10
Total	**150**	**100**

D: Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25 -35	91	60
36 – 45	49	33
46 and above	10	7
Total	**150**	**100**

The findings in Table 1A-D indicate that all the five (5) faculties in the institution apart from the college of medicine which was exempted from the study were represented. In addition, both genders were fairly represented in the study except that a high proportion that is 87 (58%) were male users, while 63 (42%) were female users. This could be attributed to the fact that 135 representing 90% of the respondents are married while just 15 (10%) are single. Thus, the married women among them may not find it convenient to combine the home and child rearing with a full-time

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postgraduate programme. Moreover, the distribution of respondents by age reveals that majority of them are matured adults therefore, they should know the relevance of the library to their academic career.

Table 2: Types of Information Resources Provided

Types of Resources	No of Respondents	%
Text and reference books	55	36
Journals and related periodicals	60	40
Newspapers and magazines	22	15
E- resource and related electronic gadgets	13	9
Total	**150**	**100**

The respondents were asked the type of information resources provided for their use. The findings in Table 2 revealed that journals and related periodicals constitute 40% of the information resources provided. This is followed by text and reference books which had 36%. Newspapers and magazines ranked third with 15%, while computers and related gadgets had 9%. The findings are in agreement with the observation of the researchers. They observed that as at the time this research was conducted, e-resources and related electronic gadgets provided for postgraduate use in the library were inadequate.

Table 3: Distribution of ICT Facilities

ICT Facilities	Respondents	%
Computers	68	45
CD–ROM/Flash drive	30	20
Internet services	40	26
E-mail services	12	8
Total	**150**	**100**

As shown in Table 3, 68 (45%) of the respondents' use computers, 30 (20%) use the CD-ROM/flash drive only, 40 (26%) use the Internet facility, while 12 (8%) of the respondents use E-mails services provided. The researchers observed that the other facilities provided for postgraduate students by the library such as photocopier machines, computer workstations, are not adequate for use.

As a follow up to the question on the distribution of ICT facilities in the library, respondents were asked if information resources provided were adequate. 89 (59%) of the respondents disagreed, while 61 (41%) agreed. Respondents were asked if the information resources provided by the library were current. 82 (55%) answered that the information resources were fairly current, 45 (30%) said they were not current, 15 (10%) stated that they are moderately current while 8 (5%) agreed that they are current.

Table 4: Factors that Lead to Information Demand and Use

Factors	Respondents	%
Research	100	67
Problem solving	21	14
Job performance	10	7
Examination	11	7
Leisure/Recreation	5	3

Table 4: Contd.,

Awareness	3	2
Others	0	0
Total	**150**	**100**

The findings in Table 4 showed that 67% of the respondents agreed that their demands and usage of information resources are for research. 14% use information resources in the library for problem solving, 7% for job performance, 7% for examination purpose, 3% for leisure/recreation, while 2% use the library for awareness.

Table 5: Services Provided by the Library

Types of Services	Respondents	%
Selective dissemination of information	23	15
Current awareness service	25	17
Compilation of bibliographies, Index and abstract	04	3
Reference services	72	48
Reprographic services	26	17
Current content analysis	0	0
Subscription to online database	0	0
Translation services	0	0
Others (specify)	0	0
Total	**150**	**100**

As revealed in Table 5, reference services had 48%, reprographic services 17%, current awareness services 17%, selective dissemination of information 15%, compilation of bibliographies, indexes and abstract had 3% while there were no response for other services such as current content analysis, subscription to online database and translation services.

Table 6: Utilisation of Information Resources

Frequency	Respondents	%
As the need arise	108	72
Daily	16	11
Weekly	14	9
Others (specify)	12	8
Total	**150**	**100**

Respondents were asked how often they visited the library to utilize the facilities. As revealed in Table 6, majority of them 108 (72%) stated that they use the library only as their need arise, 16 (11%) and 14 (9%) responded that they visit the library to utilize the resources daily and weekly respectively, while 12 (8%) stated that they have never visited the library to utilise its information resources because they have other options they make use of such as their personal Internet connectivity and their workplace libraries. The findings in Table 6 is related to the findings of Mohammed (2008) were majority were said to have agreed that what determines their search for information is their research work. Since majority of the users only use the library to search for information only when the need arises, a situation might arise whereby the library will witness very low patronage due to the advent of Information Communication Technology.

Table 7: Level of Satisfaction Derived from Resources and Services

Level of Satisfaction	Respondents	%
Highly satisfactory	11	7
Moderately satisfactory	49	33
Fairly satisfactory	70	47
Not satisfactory	20	13
Others (specify)	0	0
Total	**150**	**100**

As shown in Table 7, majority of the respondents 70 (47%) were of the opinion that the level of satisfaction derived from library resources and services provided were fairly satisfactory, 49 (33%) stated that they are moderately satisfactory, 20 (13%) of the respondents indicated that they were not satisfactory while 11 (7%) stated that they were highly satisfied.

Table 8: Hindrances to Information Resources and Services

Hindrances	Respondents	%
Lack of adequate Internet facility and connectivity	80	53
Lack of provision of enough computers	29	19
Lack of time to consult information resources needed	23	17
Lack of adequate and relevant library materials	8	5
Lack of provision of adequate e-resources	5	3
Lack of adequate guide to the use of the Library	5	3
Lack of staff to provide information resources and services as at when needed.	0	0
Erratic power supply	0	0
Others (Specify)	0	0
Total	**150**	**100**

The findings in Table 8 revealed that postgraduate students ranked the factors hindering effective utilization of library resources in the following order. 80 representing 53% indicated that there is lack of adequate Internet facility and connectivity to enable them access information quickly. This is because the bandwidth allocated to the library from the ICT unit of the university is 2 megabit per second (MBPS) *w*hich is very small. 29 (19%) stated that there is lack of provision of adequate computers, 23 (17%) indicated that there was lack of time to consult information resources needed, 8 (5%) responded that there were lack of adequate and relevant library materials, 5 or 3% responded to lack of provision of adequate e-resources, 5 (3%) said it was due to lack of adequate guide to the use of the library. There was no response to lack of qualified staff to provide information resource services and erratic supply of electricity because the library has two standby power plant it operates immediately electricity goes off while the library also have qualified librarians as members of staff.

This findings more than any other revealed that postgraduate students attach great importance to the role of ICT in enhancing their research productivity if they are to go by the current trends of development elsewhere in their academic and professional endeavours.

CONCLUSIONS

Library patrons' needs are diverse, and satisfying them a daunting task. But the dream of every librarian is to satisfy his patrons. Library services should be planned to cater for the present, future needs, demands and expectations of

the patrons. The researchers observed that the patrons' awareness keeps increasing and his needs have become more pressing, while his supplies are declining. Satisfying him is the only reason why the libraries exist, therefore, no sacrifice can be too much for librarians to achieve this.

The provision of ICT alone cannot help the increase of library patronage. Librarians also need to gather adequate ICT knowledge to handle technical procedures and to assist patrons to find information they want quickly and easily. They should provide information to support all key operations such as acquisition, circulation control reference, serials and e-resources management in the library.

Moreover, the bandwidth allocated to the library by the ICT unit of the university should be increased considerably. This would encourage postgraduate students' patronage of the library.

In conclusion, postgraduate students' who have benefited and those who are still benefitting from the university library resources and services should make use of the knowledge gained and not end up to be champions of class agenda in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To gain access to library resources and information the following steps must be put in place for positive impact on library patronage among postgraduate students. The library should not derail from its set goals, objectives and policies that have helped to move academics in the university forward.

Librarians should have a collective vision to build a world class postgraduate students with the provision of adequate and relevant information to support teaching and learning which is globally competitive and reputed for academic excellence.

In addition, all the library units should maintain cordial relationship with other organs of information provider in order to promote academic excellence, repositioning the university library for the attainment of its vision, quality assurance, providing more ICT equipment, constructing a new library complex to accommodate more postgraduate students so that they can make meaningful impact and positive influence in the society.

To lead the library to a higher height of global recognition for excellence and also to restore the lost glory of information provider with a view to achieving qualitative delivery of sound education, which is germane to educational growth in Nigeria and at large.

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