Full Length Research Paper

Library resources and service utilization by postgraduate students in a Nigerian private university

Fehintola Nike Onifade*, Susan Udoaku Ogbuiyi and Saturday U. Omeluzor

Babcock University Library, Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria.

The study examined the use of library resources and services among postgraduate students in Babcock University Library. Questionnaire was used as the main research instrument. 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students; the return rate was 76%. The major findings were; majority of the postgraduate students do not use the library regularly. Their main purpose of visiting the library is to consult research materials. They used more internet sources and their major challenge was lack of time. They were also averagely satisfied with the library services. Suggestions were offered to improve the library services.

Key words: Library resources, service utilization, postgraduate students, private university, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The major aim of any university library is to support teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. University libraries must therefore, make sure that their resources are well utilized as this is essential for the educational development of the students. In agreement with this, Rathinasabapathy (2005) posited that library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfil the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research. The library, however, includes the totality of human and organized materials resources available in both book and non-book format for providing and obtaining needed information (Ahuauzu, 2002).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Babcock University is one of the Seventh Day Adventist institutions of higher learning in the world. The institution was transfigured from its roots on September 17, 1959 by the first Adventists missionary in Nigeria with an initial intake of seven ministerial students. As an Adventist College of West Africa, the first Bachelor of Arts degree in theology was awarded in 1966. In 1975 it signed an agreement with the Andrews University, Berrien Spring Michigan United States of America which enabled it to train students and award them bachelor's degree from Andrews University, primarily in Biology, History, Business Administration, Religion and Secretarial Studies. Later in 1975, it became known as Adventist Seminary of West Africa (ASWA). The four Bachelor of Arts programs were run until 1983 when restricting local factors necessitated the phasing out of the programs in Biology and Business Administration.

The university was registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to operate as a private university in 1999. The premier intake of students was 753 on September 13, 1999 with the maiden matriculation ceremony on January 28, 2000; and now the university has over 8000 students with six schools which

*Corresponding author. E-mail: fnonifade@yahoo.com.

are: Science and Technology (SAT), Babcock Business School (BBS), Education and Humanities (EAH), Law and Security Studies (LSS), Postgraduate School (PGS) and Ben Carson Snr. School of Medical Science (BCSMS). The university's library took off simultaneously with the university to serve the institution in carrying out its objectives.

Statement of the problem

There are different categories of users that make use of university libraries, among these are the postgraduate students. However, it is observed that this category of students rarely visit the library and therefore it is often difficult to assess if the library is meeting their needs as the aim of any good library is to satisfy all its users and thereby justify its existence. The aim of the study therefore, is to find out whether the library resources and services are adequately utilized by postgraduate students in Babcock University Library and if not find a way of improving the situation.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine whether the postgraduate students utilized the resources and services provided by the library and the extent to which the library was used. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine how often the postgraduate students use the library
2. To determine the purposes for which the postgraduate students use the library
3. To find out the types of information resources used most by the postgraduate students
4. To identify the services used most by the postgraduate students in the library
5. To examine the search strategy adopted by the postgraduate students in locating library materials
6. To identify the problems encountered by the postgraduate students in using the library
7. To find out if the postgraduate students are satisfied with the information resources in the library

LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of studies have been carried out on library use. This is so because it is the users that make the library and its services come alive. A library that is not used is as good as dead as it cannot justify its existence. It is therefore the use to which the library is put that infuses life into its resources and services; hence, use and user studies cannot outlive their usefulness. Akinade (2000) observed that the expectations of people are high when sourcing and retrieving information and when such information needs are not met, frustration usually set in and this may

drive the users away from the library. Akande (2003) therefore noted that the use of library resources is uppermost in the minds of the university libraries as this will enable the management know how best they can serve their users. Users' study is thus regarded as a veritable tool for the assessment of libraries and their services (Tsafe, 2004).

However, literature has revealed that information availability does not mean accessibility and utilization; therefore, university libraries have to market their resources and services to attract users. Osinulu (1998) also confirmed in her study that low use of the library is due to lack of awareness on the part of users. Ozoemelem (2009), on the other hand, stated that informed library users know that libraries have resources that are more comprehensive and scholarly than most web sites provide but the problem is that these resources they are not straightforward like that on the webs. Though users use the library for different purposes, Oyesiku and Oduwole (2004) study on the use of academic library revealed that students use the library mostly during examinations period. In a study conducted by Igun and Adogbeji (2007) among the postgraduate students, majority of the students claimed that their main purpose of using the library is to update their knowledge and skills. It is therefore, essential to know the needs and opinions of the users in order to satisfy them. In buttressing this Bassey (2006) posited that satisfying the request of users implies providing the actual information or services that will meet their needs.

Among many users of the university library are the postgraduate students. This class of students are regarded as 'matured students' because they have pass through the undergraduate stage and are now facing a higher level of academic studies. Rasul and Singh (2010) observed that there are scanty literatures on the needs of the postgraduate students, yet they form a significant group of researchers in a university. Furthermore, they noted that how the postgraduate students perceive the role of their university library matters a lot. This is very important because the nature of postgraduate study demands that students must do a lot of independent studies on their own. The use of library resources and services is thus indispensable to the postgraduate students in order to achieve their academic objective. As a result, Olofinsawe and Oyeniyi (2010) affirmed that academic libraries have to build strong collection of information resources in physical and digital format to cater for knowledge requirements of their users. It is therefore necessary to take the needs of the postgraduate students into consideration in policy planning in any university library. This study therefore aims to provide an insight in this area.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection.

Table 1. Frequency of library use.

Use	Frequency	%
Daily	8	10.5
Weekly	20	26.3
Monthly	7	9.2
Occasionally	36	47.4
Not at all	5	6.6
Total	76	100

100 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed by the researchers to postgraduate students at the postgraduate school in the second week of June 2012. 76 copies of the questionnaire were returned, representing 76% response rate. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages and the result is presented in tables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Information

The result of the study indicated that male postgraduate students were in the majority. 44(58%) were males and 32(42%) were females. This may be connected with the fact that the general opinion in Africa is that the female' place is at home. Despite this, the gap between the two genders is not too wide which shows that the female counterparts are also enrolling for postgraduate studies in spite of the general opinion. 30(39%) of the respondents were within the age brackets of 20-29 years, while 46(61%) respondents were 30 years and above. 40(52.6%) were still single while 35(46.1%) were married and 1(1.3%) was divorced; hence the ratio of single students to married students is 8:7 in the university. Furthermore, 50(65.7%) were gainfully engaged while 26(34.2%) were full-time students.

Use of the library

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they use the library. The answer to this question is presented in Table 1.

The analysis of the result presented in Table I revealed that majority 36(47.4%) of the respondents used the library occasionally while only 8(10.5%) of the respondents used the library daily and 20(26.3%) respondents used the library weekly followed by 7(9.2%) who used the library on a monthly basis. The implication here is that majority of the postgraduate students do not used the library on a regular basis. This may be due to the fact that majority of the postgraduate students are gainfully employed and therefore, they have to combine their job with their study. Hence, the time available for their study might not be sufficient as it is competing with their other activities. This will in effect, reduce their utilisation of library resources. However, if the resources are under-utilized, the postgraduate students may be missing out a lot of information that would have made them better students.

Purpose of visiting the library

The respondents were asked to state their reasons for visiting the library; the analysis of their responses is presented in Table 2.

In Table 2 the result revealed that majority of the respondents 15(20%) visited the library mainly to consult materials for research, 12(16%) of the respondents used the library to prepare their seminar presentation, and only 7(9%) respondents visited the library to read newspapers. This result agrees with Fasae (2011)'s study that majority of the postgraduate students in Federal University of Technology Akure used the library to consult research materials. This implies that since the university library is to assist the university achieves its aim; its acquisition development policy must be able to support the research programme of the university and it should be adequately funded so that it would be able to build strong collections needed for research. The university library should therefore, make sure that they stock adequate materials that would help the postgraduate students in conducting and facilitating their researches.

Types of information materials used by postgraduate students

The essence of a university library is to satisfy the needs of its users. The respondents were asked to indicate the information resources they used in the library. In this case, they were allowed to tick as many options as possible; therefore the total number of responses was 328. The analysis of the result is shown in Table 3.

The respondents used more of internet facilities than any other library resources. This represented 65(20%) of the total responses, followed by textbooks and mono-graph resources which accounted for 60(18%) of the total responses; while e-journals and e-books were the next most used resources representing 56(17.1%) of the total responses. The result confirmed Chiemeke et al. (2007), Ozoemelem (2009) and Komolafe-Opadeji (2011)'s studies that postgraduate students used more of the internet sources. This shows that if the library wants to retain the postgraduate students as part of their users there must be adequate provision for internet services in the library. More internet service points should be specially designated for postgraduate students. In addition they should also be given wireless access so that they use the library resources even without getting to the library. This will endear the postgraduate students to use the library services.

Table 2. Purpose of visiting the library.

Purpose	Frequency	(%)
Consult materials for research	15	20
To prepare seminar presentation	12	16
Charge out books	12	16
To study for examination	11	14
To consult librarians for guidance on literature search	10	13
For lecture follow up	9	12
To read Newspapers/news magazines	7	9
Total	76	100

Table 3. Types of information materials used in the library (N = 328).

Types of information materials	Frequency of use	(%)
Internet Facilities	65	20
Textbook/Monograph	60	18
E-Journals/e-books	56	17.1
Reference Materials	38	11.6
Theses/Dissertations	32	10
Government Publications	24	7.3
Conferences/Seminar Papers	23	7
Oral Information/reference queries	20	6
Periodicals	10	3
Total	328	100

Table 4. Library services.

Type of services used	Frequency	%
Bibliography and document delivery	12	15.8
Loan Service	37	48.7
Reference Services	7	9.2
SDI	11	14.5
Consultancy Services	9	11.8
Total	76	100

Library services

There are different types of services being provided by the library in other to meet the needs of the users. These include those listed in Table 4. Respondents were asked to indicate the one they use most. The most used service of the library is the loan service. This was used by 37(48.7%) of the respondents, followed by the biblio-graphy and document delivery service used by 37(48.7%); while the least used service is the consultancy service which is used by 9(11.8%) of the total respondents. The fact that majority of the respondents are gainfully employed somewhere else may be responsible for this as they just visit the library to loan materials for home use. In addition, the library needs to create more awareness to some of its services so that the postgraduate students will be aware of them and this will improve their use of library resources and services.

Search strategies used by postgraduate students

Locating material in the library is as important as the material itself because if the right strategy is not employed it may lead to users' frustration; hence, one of the aim of this study is to examine how the postgraduate students locate materials in the library (Table 5).

Out of the total responses (as the respondents were asked to indicate as many options as possible) 42(23%) claimed to have search for materials through browsing method while 25(13.7%) claimed they used OPAC to locate materials. Library staff and manual card

Table 5. Search strategies used by postgraduate students (N = 182).

Search strategies	Frequency	%
Browse through Shelves	42	23
Consult Bibliographies	16	9
Utilization of Index and abstract	21	11.5
Information from Friends	17	9.3
Library staff	22	12.1
Manual card catalogues	22	12.1
OPAC	25	13.7
Websites	17	9.3
Total	182	100

Table 6. Problems encountered.

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient Internet Access points	13	17
Opening Hours	10	13
Space not enough	5	7
Lack of time	18	24
Short duration of book loan	8	11
Power outrage	1	1
Lack of library orientation	12	16
Manner less Staff	3	4
Obsolete books	5	7
Total	76	100

Table 7. Users' satisfaction.

Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very highly satisfied	9	12
Highly satisfied	28	37
Averagely satisfied	35	46
Not satisfied	4	5
Total	76	100

the use of library was the cause of their own problem; while 10(13%) respondents saw the opening hours as their own problem. However, further data revealed that by the time they are ready to use the library the library would have been closed for the day. One can then deduce that the major problem encountered by the postgraduate students in using the library is their lack of time. As earlier observed, the majority of these students are on full time employment, and at the same time some have families to cater for; they are therefore combining these with study. Therefore, it is necessary for the university library to consider the best way of reaching out to these sets of students in their strategic planning.

Users' satisfaction

One of the aims of the study is to find out whether the postgraduate students are satisfied with library services. The answer to this question is shown in Table 7.

The result from the data analysis indicated that majority of the respondents 35(46%) were averagely satisfied with the services of the library while only 4(5%) were not satisfied with the library services. It can however, be infer from the study that the library still needs to improve upon its services in order to fully satisfy its users.

Conclusion

The university library plays a vital role in assisting the university to fulfil its goal. The effectiveness of the university library to a large extent depends on the utilisation of its resources and services. This study has therefore ascertained that postgraduate students do not maximise the use of library resources provided for them because majority of them do not use the library on a regular basis. They also prefer internet sources to print resource. Their main purpose of visiting the library is to consult research materials and borrow some materials for home use, while their major problem is lack of time. Campbell (2006) observed that as result of digitization "numerous creative and useful services have evolved within academic libraries. In other words if the library is to satisfy the needs of the postgraduate students most of its services will have to be internet based. However, the following recommendations are suggested in order to

catalogues came third respectively. The study therefore revealed that most postgraduate students browse through the shelves to locate library materials. This corroborates Fasae (2011)'s finding that postgraduate students use wrong search strategies in locating materials in the library. It is thus necessary for the library to always conduct users' education for the postgraduate students because most of the time it is assumed that since they are 'matured students,' they are familiar with the resources of the library and know the best method of retrieving them without wasting their time.

Problems encountered in using the library by postgraduate students

It is also necessary to know the problems facing the postgraduate students in using the library so that the library can take steps to solve these problems. Analysis of the result for this aspect is presented in Table 6.

18(24%) of respondents claimed that they are hindered from using the library due to lack of time. This was followed by 13(17%) respondents who stated that insufficient Internet access points was their own problem 12(16%) respondents declared that lack of library orientation which did not enable them to have knowledge, of

improve the library services;

Recommendation

1. The library should open on 24hours basis and the university management should budget for this so that staff will be remunerated adequately in order to offer quality services.
2. More internet points should be given to the library so that enough points will be dedicated to postgraduate students. 3. In addition to this, wireless access should be provided to the postgraduate students so that they can access the library from anywhere and not necessarily have to come to the library.
4. Library should package a special users education for the postgraduate students so that they will be aware of various services that are available for them in the library.
5. Moreover the library should establish helpdesk at the Postgraduate School and a very dynamic and competent librarian should man this, to collate the needs of the students and proffer solution to them; by so doing the postgraduate students will see the library as a hub for their research activities.

REFERENCES

Ahuauzu B (2002). Use of library: a practical approach, Owerri Spring, Field Publishers.

Akande SO (2003). Patterns of first year students' use of a university library: a survey at University of Ibadan. Lagos J. Lib. Inform. Sci. 1:22-26.

Bassey BA (2006). User-satisfaction with services in three academic libraries in cross River State: a comparative study". Gateway Lib. J. 9:21-29.

Chiemeke S, Longe OB, Umar SS, Shaib IO (2007). Users' perception of the use of academic libraries and online facilities for research purpose in Nigeria. Library Philosophy and Practice Retrieved from http://www.wedpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/chiemeke-longe.htms.

Fasae JK (2011). Use of library resources and services of Federal University of Technology, Akure by postgraduate students Gateway Lib. J. 14:66-75.

Igun SE, Adogbeji OB (2007). "Study habits of postgraduate students in selected Nigerian Universities, Library Philosophy and Practice. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.uni.edu/libphi/prac/153.

Komolafe-Opadeji H (2011). Use of Internet and electronic resources among postgraduate students of a Nigerian private university, Int. J. Inform. Commun. Technol. 8:29-34

Olofinsawe AA, Oyeniyi DA (2010). Students use of the school libraries: a case study of Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Owena J. Lib. Inform. Sci. 3:65-72.

Osinulu LF (1998). Library use in Ogun State University, Gateway Library Journal 1:81-87.

Oyesiku FA, Oduwole AA (2004). Use of an academic library: a survey on the Olabisi Onabanjo University Libraries. Lagos J. Inform. Sci. 2:96-101.

Ozoemelem OA (2009). Use of electronic resources by post graduate students of the department of Library and Information Science of Delta state university, Abraka, Nigeria, Retrieved from http://www.wepages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/obuh-alex.htm.

Rasul A, Singh D (2010). The role of academic libraries in facilitating postgraduate students' research. Malaysian J. Lib. Inform. Sci. 15:75-84.

Rathinasabapathy G (2005). Application of radio frequency identification technology (RFID) in libraries: Proceeding of the VII Tamilnadu Library conference Chennai: TLA.

Tsafe AG (2004). Students' utilization of Usaman Danfodio university medical library, Sokoto Gateway Lib. J. 7:10-20.