Academic Staff Awareness and Use of Library Resources and Services in Nigeria: The Case of Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola

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ABSTRACT

This survey is carried out to find out the awareness and use of library resources and services by the academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola. Four objectives and four research questions guided the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered on one hundred and forty academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic drawn from three different colleges. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprising frequency distribution and percentages. The response rate was one hundred and thirty-two representing 92.3%. The results show amongst others that majority of the academic staff do not use the library effectively but only when the need arises. Also, majority are not aware of the available resources and services in the library. Based on the findings, it is recommended that librarians of academic libraries should ensure that there is adequate awareness on the resources available in the libraries to stimulate the interest of the users.
Keywords: Awareness, library resources, library services, Adamawa State Polytechnic, Academic Staff

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important professional responsibilities of librarians in academic institutions is the provision of the most appropriate library information resources in various formats to support learning, teaching and research functions. Basic library services are also designed to ensure meaningful utilization of the resources. Therefore to enable users make better use of the library resources appropriate services must be provided such as lending services, reference services, inter-lending loan services, exhibition of new arrivals, current awareness service (CAS), selection dissemination of information (SDI), photocopying services and library education. With adequate resources and qualified staff to render the services, they might stimulate the use of the library resources effectively.

Academic activities in any institution of learning revolve around the library. The responsibilities of libraries cannot be limited to gathering and organizing books and journals but also include playing an active role in disseminating information. The information resources of good library according to Isah (1997) are expected to be up-to-date in both quality and quantity to meet the needs of its users. In the same vein, Popoola (2008) affirms that the information resources and services available in institutional system must be capable of supporting research activities among students and the faculty members. The Adamawa State Polytechnic Library like any other library in an academic environment is set up to

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meet the academic needs of its community, and it is the responsibilities of the Polytechnic Library to achieve the educational objectives of the Polytechnic. Ifidon (1985) stresses that the libraries should ensure adequate resources availability by acquiring materials relevant to the needs of their community in various formats to cover all categories of users, the quality and outcome of all teaching and learning activities according to Ibenne and Durodolu (2011) are predicted on the quality of information resources available and effectively being utilize by both the teachers and students. It is so unfortunate that from the researcher's personal experience and observation, despite the provisions of various resources in the Adamawa State Polytechnic Library to the entire community for learning, teaching and research functioning of the institution, most academic staff hardly visit the library not to talk of utilizing the resources made available.

Polytechnic libraries have an essential role in acquiring, developing and maintaining library resources for overall teaching and research goals of the institutions. It is therefore necessary that, these resources are effectively utilized to achieve these goals. The library may be well stocked with adequate and up to date information resources but all will be waste if it remains under-utilized by its users. The importance of utilization of library resources in an academic institution for the development of an individual in the various fields of knowledge and for the overall achievement of the objectives of the institution cannot be over emphasized. Okiy (2000) in a study on assessing students faculty members' use of academic libraries in Nigeria discovers that 60 - 63% of students used the libraries on a daily basis while a modest number of the responding faculty members, 42.5% used it twice to three times a week, they complained seriously about the lack of relevant current journals, abstracts indexes in their various discipline. While libraries are suppose to acquire relevant, current materials of all the categories of the resources to encourage utilization. Although ready availability of resources alone cannot guarantee the full utilization of information resources but that the library must provide services as pointed out by Popoola (2001) that the library in addition to the normal service, they render other special services like inter library lending, exhibition of new arrivals, current awareness services, interaction in the use of library resources and photocopying service to enable users make better use of their resources. The polytechnic libraries must provide effective service that can meet the needs of the users, this is the only way to encourage utilization of their resources and hence the achievement of the library objectives.

It is therefore proper for the polytechnic librarians to design an appropriate programme to educate their users so that they will be aware of the resources and services provided to them in the libraries for utilization to take place. Thus an effective programme of user education in whatsoever form is likely to raise user expectation and lead to greater utilization of information resources in the library. This is supported by Adeyemi (2000) who discovers that, user education is central to the whole purpose of the library and effective utilization of information resource. Also, Popoola (2008) emphasizes that university and polytechnic libraries should stimulate primary demand for their products and services through functional library promotion programmes like current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, user education among others for utilization of library resources

and services to be effective. Similarly, Amkpa (2005) in a related study on information service and lecturers utilization of libraries in Federal University of Technology in Nigeria discovers that provision of quality information services like reference, borrowing, interlibrary lending, SDI and photocopying services are fundamental to create lectures awareness to increase their utilization of library information resources. Lack of awareness of what is available can hinder the use of library resources and services, that is why Popoola (2001) suggests that academic librarians should publicize their information products and services among teaching staff to arouse their interest in patronizing the library and the use of the resources. Thus, there is every need for libraries to constantly review and evaluate the library services through user studies not only as a means of correcting perceived faults in the provision of library resources and services but to encourage the utilization.

It is one thing to make information resources and services available for users in the library and quite another thing for it to be utilized. The problem of under utilization of library resources made available in Adamawa State Polytechnic Library necessitated the need for this study. Based on the researchers' experience, either the academic staff are unaware of the available resource or they might have their reasons for not utilizing the resources provided. There is need therefore to ascertain the variables responsible for the academic staff lack of use of the library resources and the service made available for their use. Despite the various attempts by Adamawa State Polytechnic Library in providing library resources in various fields of knowledge to its community towards achieving the objective of the institution, most of the academic staff do not visit the library and so do not make adequate use of the available resources. To achieve the objective of the study, the following question were raised.

i. Are the academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic aware of the range of library resources and services provided in the library?
ii. How frequent do academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic use the library resource available in the library?
iii. What are the problems inhibiting the academic staff in the use of library resources?
iv. What should be done to assist them?

METHOD

Survey design was used for this study. The target population of the study was made up of 143 academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola. A 20 item questionnaire was developed and used for the collection of data for this study. A total of 143 copies of questionnaire were distributed to all the academic staff, out of which 132 representing 92.3% were considered usable for the analyses. Descriptive statistics comprising frequency distribution and simple percentage were used to analyze the data collected

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The biographical data deals with gender, rank and college of lecturing. The biographical data is important to this study because it enables the researcher relate resources

requirements and the use of the library resources and services, the results are presented on table 1. Results on table 1 indicate that majority of the academic staff were male while 21.2% were female. Furthermore the results reveals that 21.2% of the academic staff are from College of Science and Technology (CST), 29.5% of them are from College of Continuing Education (CCE), while 32.6% of the academic staff are from College of Administration and Business Studies (CABS). While 16.7% are from College of Engineering and Environmental Studies (CEES). This result shows that the study cuts across all the Colleges in the Polytechnic. Making library information resources and services available in an academic institution like Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola cannot guarantee utilization; the users must be informed of their availability and how to use them. So it is important to create awareness on the available resources and services provided in a library for utilization to be possible. It is in line with this that the academic staffs were asked whether they were aware of all the resources and services provided in their library as depicted on the table 2.

From the table 2, the analysis shows that the academic staff were asked whether they were educated on what information resources were available and on how to used them. This is because library education improves user's ability to utilize the library resources and services more effectively. In the analysis, a total score of 93.2% respondents agreed that the rate is low. While only 6.8% respondents said the rate is high. This finding corroborates with Zaki (1998) who says that users must be educated on how to use the library resources because it provides solution for easy, effective and efficient use of library resources. It is also consistence with the finding of Unomah (1988) at the University of Benin and Bendel State University where he discovered that 91% of the faculty members did not have any training in library use. This problem could be due to the fact that academic staff of any institution are assumed to have had a contact with university library in the process of their studies so do not have the problem of using the library resources but that could be a wrong assumption and that's why many do not know how to use the library resources and services effectively on their own.

The finding on the awareness of library resources through news bulletins reveals that 88.4% agreed that they had no knowledge of the resources through such medium. Also, 60.6% of the respondents agreed that they do not have the knowledge of the resources through display list of new arrivals. This finding is unhealthy to utilization of library resources. The fact that academic staff are always engaged in research activities, the library should aim at keeping researchers informed on new developments in their various fields of knowledge to encourage utilization of the resources. Adeyoyin (2005) as quoted by Adeyoyin, Omotoso and Bello (2011) observes that lack of marketing strategies affects library users' skills and utilization of library services. As a result, users do not know the resources and services available and do not ask for assistance in the use the library. The findings on current awareness service and selection dissemination of information reveal that 64.4% respondents were not aware of the resources provided in their field through these mediums. It is therefore clear that the research question one on awareness of the resources and services shows that the rate of awareness is low as agreed by the majority academic staff. Looking at table 3, the analysis on frequency of use of resources and

services shows that, on daily use 93.9% respondent rated it low. Also on weekly basis use, the rate is also low as agreed by the majority of 84.8% respondents. It is also the same with monthly and forthnightly use which rated 87.1% respondent and 71.2% respondent respectively. It is only when the need arises that the academic staff rated it high as indicated by the majority 55.3% of the respondents. This findings compare very well with Nwila (1993) as quoted by Fasae (2011) where he discovers that out of the 102 respondents surveyed, over 60% of the members of staff from the science stream were visiting the library either rarely or only once a month. It is contrary to Olanlukun (1983) who discovers that majority of the faculty members had tendency to utilize the library once a week. Adeyemi (2000) advises that it is the responsibility of the libraries to influence the teaching faculty who will in turn influence the students to utilize the resources.

The findings from table 4 give us an insight into some problems that militate against effective utilization of library resources and services by the academic staff. The result shows that awareness about the resources available was a problem as identified by 61.4% respondents. Awareness on available resources is very important before utilization can take place. It is on the basis of this that Popoola (2001) asks the question, "how can the university library achieve its goals of information provision for teaching and research without raising awareness of the faculty staff about the product and services"? Lack of awareness can hinder utilization of library resources and services. Furthermore, the findings reveal that 74.2% respondents blame the lack of use with physical facilities of the library. It is in the light of this kind of problem that Udoumah and Okoro (2007) stress that there should be adequate accommodation and spaces in the library for all anticipated activities. Another problem identified is the opening hours where 59.8% respondent agreed that it is a problem to the use of the resources. This supports Edoka's (2000) opinion that, convenient hours are crucial factor in making library service available. Also, Udoumah and Okoro (2007) observe that the length of time that libraries are opened determined the degree of physical accessibility to materials available. The Adamawa State Polytechnic library opens from 8:00am to 9:00pm Monday through Friday while 9:00am to 1:00pm on Saturdays. The academic staff might not have the time during the day because of their tight scheduled. However, whoever knows the need and usefulness of the library amidst tight schedule should be able make out time to tap from the abundant resources of the library.

Table 1: Respondents according to Gender and College

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Male	104	78.8
Female	28	21.2
Total	**132**	**100**
College of Science & Technology (CST)	28	21.8
College of Continuing Education (CCE)	39	29.8
College of Administration and Business studies (CABS)	43	32.6
College of Engineering & Environmental studies (CEES)	22	16.7
Total	**132**	**100**

Source: Survey, 2015

Table 2: Academic staff awareness of the resources and services provided in Adamawa State Polytechnic Library

Lecturers knowledge on the resources and services available	Low			High		
	SA Frq %	A Frq %	SA+A Frq %	D Frq %	SD Frq %	D+SD Frq %
Instructional programmes on use of the libraries	92 69.7	26 19.7	118 89.4	10 7.6	4 3.0	14 10.6
News bulleting on new publication	101 76.5	22 16.7	123 93.2	6 4.5	3 2.3	9 6.8
Display list of new arrivals	42 31.8	38 28.8	80 60.6	41 31.1	6 4.5	47 35.6
Current awareness and selection dissemination of information services	46 34.9	39 29.5	85 64.4	41 31.1	6 4.5	47 35.6
Through friends and colleagues	36 27.3	31 23.3	67 50.8	42 31.8	23 17.4	65 49.2

Key: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree
Source: Survey, 2015

Table 3: Frequency of academic staff use of resources and Services

Frequency of utilization of library resources and services	Low			High		
	SA Frq %	A Frq %	SA+A Frq %	D Frq %	SD Frq %	D+SD Frq %
Utilization of library resources and services on daily basis	66 50	58 43.9	124 93.9	6 4.5	2 1.5	8 6.1
Utilization of library resources and services on weekly basis	51 38.6	61 46.2	112 84.8	12 9.1	8 6.1	20 15.2
Utilization of library resources and services on monthly basis	83 62.9	32 24.2	115 87.1	10 7.6	7 5.3	17 12.9
Utilization of library resources and services on forthnight basis	58 43.9	36 27.3	94 71.2	20 15.2	18 13.6	38 28.8
Utilization of library resources and services when the need arises	33 25	36 27.3	69 52.3	35 26.5	38 28.8	73 55.3

Key: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree
Source: Survey, 2015

Table 4: Problems militating against academic staff utilization of library resources and services

Problems affecting the use of library resources and services	Low			High		
	SA Frq %	A Frq %	SA+A Frq %	D Frq %	SD Frq %	D+SD Frq %
No relevant and current of resources and services	52 39.4	41 31.1	93 70.5	14 10.6	25 18.9	39 29.5
No publicity of the importance of the library resources and services	43 32.6	38 28.8	81 61.4	23 17.4	28 21.2	51 38.6
Bad physical facilities	62 46.9	36 27.3	98 74.2	12 9	22 16.7	34 25.8
Wrong opening hours of the library	56 42.4	23 17.4	79 59.8	21 15.9	32 24.2	53 40.2
Bad attitude of the library staff	26 19.	18 13.6	44 33.3	5 43.2	31 23.5	88 66.7

Key: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree
Source: Survey, 2015

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It could therefore be concluded that the academic staff of Adamawa State Polytechnic Yola, would have utilize the library resources and services frequently and effectively if they were made aware of the availability of relevant resources and if not for their lukewarm attitude towards the library use since "only when need arises" that they use the library resources. This, therefore, led to under utilization of the library resources which is not good enough to the attainment of academic excellence in an institution like Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola. The library management should liaise with the academic staff in acquiring relevant and current information resources in their various field to attract the academic staff into the library and thereby enhance utilization. In order to successfully promote the true value of library resources and services the library management must move outside the library and become personal advocate for the library. The should advertise the content of the library to the polytechnic community regularly, this can be done through issuance of news bulletins, seminar, workshop, display of new arrivals, Current Awareness Service (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) etc. All these measures can stimulate the interest of Academic Staff to use the library effectively. The libraries should be trained and retrain to achieve the objective of the library. Often times librarians do not promote the library services well due to lack of training and knowledge on how to go about it. It is one thing to make information resources available in the library and it is quite another thing for users to utilize them. Awareness can stimulate utilization of library resources effectively.

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