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USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES BY SCIENCE FACULTY MEMBERS, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of library resources by the lecturers in the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan. Six research questions were formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The study population comprised the teaching staff in all the 11 departments in the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that only 15.5% of the respondents visit the library frequently to use library resources. Expectedly the basic reasons for library use by the respondents were for research (70.6%) and teaching (36.6%). The extent of awareness of e-resources that are being provided by the library among the respondents was high (72.8%); however, only JSTOR was the most frequently used e-resources by the respondents (35.9%). It is recommended that the library should organize relevant sensitization programmes to increase the use of library and its resources by the respondents.

Keywords: academic staff, e-resources, *library r*esources, science, University of Ibadan.

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Introduction

Library forms an integral part of any institution of higher learning as it supports the academic community with its vast collection of information resources such as electronic and print resources. Libraries in educational institutions provide relevant information resources for teaching, learning, and research. The academic health of any academic programme depends on the quality of its library system. The library in an institution of higher learning can be regarded as the heartbeat of that institution, because of its main function of providing information resources to support the parent institution's mission and vision. According to Patra, Sahu, and Mahapatra (2013), library is very important in higher education because of the services rendered to the academic community which include provision of books, periodical and other knowledge resources. Due to the global digital revolution, users can access the libraries' resources without stepping into the library building. They can also easily access other library resources such as online catalogues and unrestricted databases. Popoola and Haliso (2009) defined library information resources as those information bearing materials, that are in both print and electronic formats, such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet/e-mail, video tapes/cassettes, diskettes magnetic disk, computers, microforms etc. Suresh (2006) affirmed the need for libraries to acquire both print and non-print resources to form their collections and make them available and accessible to their users. Sharma (2008) argued that the library should provide quality library and information services to satisfy the information needs and seeking behaviours of their users especially in the digital environment. It is generally acknowledged that the standard of service provided and the patrons' satisfaction determine retention of the existing patrons as well as attracting potential ones. The goal of the university library is to provide library resources and services to faculty members, students, researchers and staff of the parent's institution in order to support the teaching, research and learning. Library is regarded as the store house of knowledge in the university which academic staff and students must use in their teaching, learning and research.

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The university community is a dynamic environment, thus making the user information needs to be dynamic. For library to remain relevant in a dynamic community, library resources and services should regularly be examined and updated. According to Haro (1971), it is the responsibility of the library to investigate the problems of low patronage of the library and proffer solutions to these problems. Chandrasekar and Murugathas (2012) observed that academic library users have varying information needs and expectations. It is the responsibility of the librarians to provide information that satisfy the information needs and expectations of the users. User satisfaction generally evaluates the sources and services of the library as a whole. Millson-Martula and Menon (1995) opined that the quality of library service is determined in its ability to meet the information needs and expectations of their patrons. The internet has opened the resources of libraries to students and faculty worldwide and Nigerian libraries are adopting the internet as a tool to satisfy the information needs of their users in line with global trend.

According to Whitmire (2002), resources in academic libraries are good measurement of the institution's excellence and quality. Popoola (2008) opined that information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty members. While Harinarayan, Vasantharaju and Swamy (2008) investigated the effectiveness of library services from user's perspective and concluded that college libraries are lagging behind particularly in providing user specific information.

Although, there are many researches that focus on users' studies in the literature, yet there appears to be paucity of literature on the use of library resources by scientists in Nigerian universities. Cullen (2001) cited in Nimsomboon and Nagata (2003), stated that academic libraries are being faced with two main dangers: a universal digital environment and increasing competition. The result obtained from this study will help the library management in understanding the extent to which the users benefit from the services provided and this will engender appropriate intervention programmes to satisfy the information needs of the faculty members in the University of Ibadan.

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Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. In addition, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's curriculum. As a matter of urgency, libraries need to improve the quality of their services and resources, both print and non-print in order to still be relevant.

It has been observed that various institutions' managements are not providing adequate library resources for their institutions, and also in some places where these resources are available; they are not put into maximum use. This view is supported by Chandrasekar and Murugathas (2012) who found that reading materials were insufficient in their survey. University education in Nigeria is facing a critical challenge in meeting new demands of the 21st century, with its ever increasing population growth, inadequate library facilities, resources and insufficient funding. Adequate library resources and services should be made available to support the faculty members' academic activities. In the light of this, this study investigated the use of library resources among Faculty of Science members of the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate how the library supports the mission of teaching and research among academic staff in the Faculty of Science in the University of Ibadan. Specifically, the study would explore the following objectives:

To examine the frequency of library use by academic staff in the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan;

To investigate the reasons for using the library;

To find out the level of awareness of the resources in the library;

To investigate the electronic resources that are used by academic staff in the Faculty of Science;

To examine the perception of academic staff in the Faculty of Science on the library resources; and

To seek for suggestions from academic staff in faculty of Science on

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how to improve the quality of library resources and service.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population consisted of the study of 252 academic staff in the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan, out of which 120 were randomly selected for the study. A designed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection in the study. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents face-to-face by the researchers in their offices. The respondents were persuaded to voluntarily participate in the survey by filling of the questionnaires. A total of one hundred and three (103) completed copies of the questionnaires were returned out of one hundred and twenty copies which were administered. This represents 85.83% response rate. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentages and bar charts were used for the analysis of data.

Results and discussion

Demographics of respondents

The gender composition of the respondents in this study revealed that out of 103 respondents 69(67.0%) were males, while 34(33.0%) were females. The implication of this is that, majority of the respondents were males. The distribution of the respondents according to academic status/rank showed that Senior Lecturer had the highest number of respondents 31(30.1%), closely followed by Lecturer 1 with 22(21.4%), and Lecturer II with 21 (20.4 %), Assistant Lecturer had 11(10.7%) while Reader/Associate Professor and Professor had 6 (5.8%) and 9 (8.7%) respectively. Graduate Assistant had 3 2.9(%).This implies that majority of the respondents are in the middle level cadre (Senior lecturer). In terms of academic qualifications of the respondents, it was found that most of the respondents had a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 81 (78.6%), followed by Master degree holders 19 (18.4%), while those respondents with Master of Philosophy were 3(2.9%).

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Frequency of library use by respondents

Table 1: Frequency of Library Use by Respondents

Items	Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
How often do you use the Library	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
	16	15.5	49	47.6	34	33.0	4	3.9

Table 1 shows that 16 (15.5%) respondents frequently visit the library, 49 (47.6%) respondents sometimes visit the library, while 34 (33.0%) respondents rarely visit the library and 4 (3.9%) respondents never visit the library. These results indicate that a low level of use of library by the respondents. These findings are in consonance with that of Bouazza and Mufaraji (2005) that found that 36 percent of their respondents use the library once a week, while 32 percent rarely use the library. However, the results are in contrast with the findings of Shokeen and Kaushik (2002), who found that vast majority of the social scientists in their survey visited the library daily, and a significant number twice a week.

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Reasons for library use by respondents

Table 2: Reasons for library use by respondents

S/No	Items	Yes		No	
	Reasons for patronizing th e library	freq	%	Freq	%
1	Reading for research	73	70.9	30	29.1
2	Reading for teaching	38	36.9	65	63.1
3	Borrow books	27	26.2	76	73.8
4	Consult reference materials	35	34.0	68	66.0
5	Reading journals	23	22.3	80	77.7
6	Others	8	7.8	95	92.2

The results in Table 2 show that majority of respondents visit the library materials to support their research 73 (70.9%); 38(36.9%) of the respondents visit the library to prepare for teaching. The findings of the study are contrary to that of Lohar and Kumbar (2002) who found that majority of their respondents visit the library to consult textbooks or reference books and to read newspapers and popular magazines; but corroborates the study of Singh (2002), who He found that 36% of their respondents at the University of Delhi visit the library to prepare notes for teaching.

Extent of awareness of the resources in the library by respondents

Table 3: Level of awareness of e-resources in the library by respondents

S/No	Items	Yes		No	
	Awareness of e - resources in the library	Freq	%	Freq	%
	Are you aware of the e-resources that are provided in main library?	75	72.8	28	27.2

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The library has provided a number of e-resources including online databases to support the teaching and information needs of academic staff in the university. Hence, the respondents were asked if they are aware of e-resources that are provided in the library. The results of the study in Table 3 indicate that majority of the respondents 75 (72.8%) are aware of electronic resources that are provided in the library, while, 28 (27.2%) are not aware. This result reveals that the library creates awareness on the available library e-resources.

E-resources in the library that are used by respondents

Table 4: E-resources that are used by respondents

S/No	Items	Yes		No	
	E-resources in the library that are used by respondents	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	OARE	22	21.4	81	78.6
2	BIOONT	1	1.0	102	99.0
3	EBSCOHOST	4	3.9	99	96.1
4	JSTOR	37	35.9	66	64.1
5	Math Sci Net	10	9.7	93	90.3
6	E-Library	4	3.9	99	96.1
7	Zentral Blatt-Math	3	2.9	100	97.1
8	DOAJ	10	9.7	93	90.3
9	Proquest	2	1.9	101	98.1
10	Others	52	50.5	51	49.5

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Analysis of the results of the survey in Table 4 shows that most respondents 37 (35.9%) are using JSTOR and OARE 22 (21.4%) respectively. It was curious to find out that majority of respondents 52(50.5%) use "other" e-resources that are not directly provided by the library. This implies that the library should intensify efforts to acquire

additional e-resources to satisfy the information needs of the respondents.

Perception of library resources by respondents

The respondents were requested to give their perception on library resources as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Perception of library resources by respondents

S/No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Perception of library resources by respondents	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	Library resources are current, relevant and adequate	-	-	26	25.2	55	53.4	22	21.4
2	I always find the needed materials in the library	1	1.0	19	18.4	59	57.3	24	23.3
3	Materials are adequate to support my teaching and research	2	1.9	36	35.0	45	43.7	20	19.4
4	I often have access to the electronic resources needed for my work	2	1.9	31	30.1	61	59.2	9	8.7
5	Faculty is involved in the selection of library information resources	2	1.9	35	34.0	42	40.8	24	23.3

Analysis of the results indicate that most respondents 55 (53.4%) disagreed that library resources are current, relevant and adequate, while only 26 (25.2%) respondents agreed that library resources are current, relevant and adequate. Similarly, on the issue of always finding the needed materials in the library, 59 (57.3%) respondents disagreed and only 19 (18.4%) of respondents agreed with the statement. Concerning having access to electronic resources needed for their work, majority of respondents 61(59. 2%) disagreed with the statement. The opinion of the respondents was also sought on

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whether they are involved in the selection of library information resources, most respondents 42 (40.8%) disagreed that they are not involved in the selection of library information resources. The results of the survey indicate that respondents have very low perceptions about the resources and services provided by the library. The findings of the study are line with the view expressed by Harinarayan et al. (2008) who asserted that college libraries are lagging behind especially in the area of providing user specific information.

How to improve use of the resources by respondents

The respondents were asked to make suggestions on areas that they want the library to improve on. The following suggestions made by the respondents on how the library should improve their resources and services:

Provision of multiple copies of materials.

Deployment of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities at the central and faculty/departmental libraries.

Acquisition of relevant and current publications.

Organising training workshops on the use of electronic resources for faculty members.

Creation of an enabling environment that supports teaching, learning and research

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the use of library resources by academic staff in the Faculty of Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. The findings of the survey revealed that majority of respondents are not using the library to support their teaching and research. In view of the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

The findings of this study have a lot of implications for policy and practice, both the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting teaching, research and learning activities among the students and academic staff. In the light of this, the university libraries in Nigeria should improve the quality of their services in order to remain

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relevant. The librarians must identify the changing information needs and seeking behaviors of academic staff and consequently, provide relevant information resources both in print and non-print to satisfy the users.

More funds should be made available to the library by the university in order to procure current information resources, particularly journals and textbooks. The library should acquire multiple copies of textbooks. The library should organize a sensitization programme to create awareness on the available library resources, especially on electronic resources for academic staff. Furthermore, the university library should improve the integration of information and communication technology in the provision of library task/services in line with global best practice.

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