PACIFIC NORTH-WEST LIBRARY ASSOC.
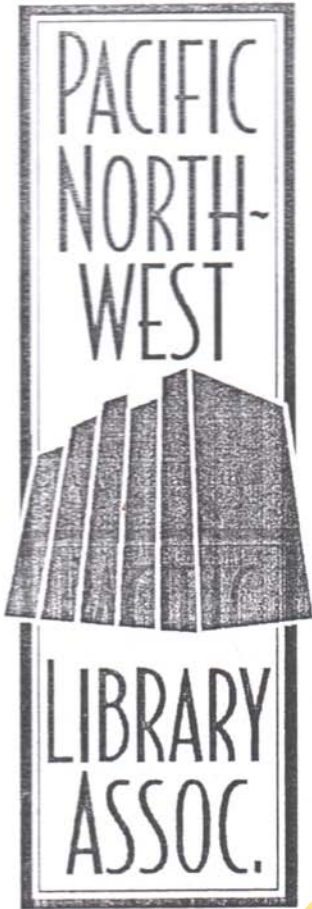
Volume 77, number 3 (Spring 2013)

CURRENT ISSUE   RECENT ISSUES   PNLA HOME   AUTHORS   CONTACT US

Twenty-Four Hour Library Services in Kenneth Dike Library: Challenges and Prospects

Bolarinwa M. Adeyemi

Reuben Abiodun Ojo

Olalekan Abraham Adekunjo

The authors are at the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Bolarinwa M. Adeyemi can be reached at: Bmadeyemi@Yahoo.Com. Reuben Abiodun Ojo can be reached at: reubenojo2012@gmail.com. Olalekan Abraham Adekunjo can be reached at: blessing_adekunjo@yahoo.com

Introduction

By the beginning of the 20th century, there was definitely a paradigm shift from collection and preservation, to utility, and in response to this challenge, academic libraries began granting more access to faculties and students in respect of service delivery. The increase in use meant a need for more services, extended hours and more staff. As Institutions of higher learning took a more active role in funding library collections and creating sustainable and comfortable facilities that will guarantee effective and efficient service delivery in order to bring into realization Teaching, Learning and Research(TLR) initiative , the library became less of a place to store dusty books and more of a place for dynamic learning which is globally accessible to all. In response to growing demand for library, Information Technology (IT) and quiet study spaces, particularly in the run up to exams and during assessment periods; libraries started extending their opening hours beyond the stipulated official hours. By extending the opening hours to cover seven days of the week (night and day inclusive), libraries have continued to develop and provide more flexible working spaces for the students and researchers who depend on the library services for their learning and research activities . The role of academic libraries, as a result of this development, has shifted from providing access the collections, to the library as a destination, that is a place for studying, researching, meeting, and more importantly, a place where students and faculty members consume information. For today's academic libraries to attract value to itself and stay relevant in the current dispensation, it must continue to evolve in order to meet the expectations of the users in terms of comforts and demands because library should be made accessible to students and researchers alike, anytime any day, particularly during the session.

The advancement in technology available to libraries and users of libraries has created a whole new set of issues. Among these is finding the right number of hours during which the library is available to users. We are told that consumers have different values to which we must respond: convenience, timeliness, cost effectiveness, and speed among others. For libraries, customer, values are expressed in demands for hours that meet individual needs for timely, and indeed, nontraditional access to facilities and services. As a result, academic libraries need to study library hours more regularly and closely than they have in the past to determine where changes need to be made to meet demands. Extending hours is now a common practice in international academic libraries, hence academics libraries in the developing countries are also trying to trail the blaze in offering this service to its communities.

The interpretation of extended hours varies from being open until 2 a.m. during exam periods to being open twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, and most days of the year. However defined, it is clear that in the latter part of the last decade, libraries began to respond to new demands/opportunities and established library hours beyond the traditional schedule.

Most of the responding libraries extend hours between Sunday and Thursday nights in the academic year, choosing to provide more traditional hours Fridays, Saturdays, and during break periods. Exam periods are another popular time to extend hours. There is great variation in the combination of hours, days, and times of the year-all pointing to the creative attention being directed to establishing library hours that meet local demands. However, provision of 24/7 access in all or part of the library are still in the minority.

The implementation of twenty four hours library services commenced in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan in July, 2011 as a means to expand the scope of information service delivery to all the potential library users. This paper is therefore intended to present documented experiences of all the stakeholders (The management, Staff and students) involved in its implementation for the past one year. The following primary influential factors which can either positively or negatively influence the successful implementation of twenty four hours library services in Kenneth Dike Library will be exhaustively dealt with in the write up:

- Security- The protection of people, collections and facilities.
- Staffing- The services provided and staff to support them must be linked together.
- Funding- Long term funding must be determined. A dedicated source of funds must be identified, with a long-range commitment from its source on the part of the management. It is a fiscal responsibility that must not be lost sight of.
- Students' Attitudes- Uncooperative attitudes with respect to engagement in excesses on the part of the students.
- Management's Attitude- Not fulfilling their own portion of the implementation plan. Goal post shifting activities

Also, the challenges so far will be highlighted and solutions on the way forward will be proffered.

Rationale for Expanded Hours

A survey by ARL, reported by Steele and Walters (2001) found that most of the responding libraries established a practice of examining library service hours on a regular basis, using gate counts, circulation data, and other measures to indicate how and when the library is being used. Within available resources, efforts were made to adjust hours as generously as possible.

Overall, students' requests have been the overriding reason to extend hours (49 responses or 94%)—a measure of both student interest and influence. Requests from library administrators (25%) and faculty (19%) have also influenced this decision according to an ARL survey on extended hours in academic libraries (Steele and Walters 2001). To a lesser degree, the decision has been swayed by requests from library staff, affiliated researchers, and campus administration. Opening a new library that has high demand services and equipment provided an impetus—and support—for greatly expanded hours for some libraries. Occasionally, requests were accommodated through the availability of special grant funds or access to new students' fees or tuition. KDL extended hour was at the request of a former Vice Chancellor in 2010 who wanted the opening hours on Saturday to be extended from 1p.m to 6p.m during exam periods. The extended hour thereafter has gone full circle, operating 24/7; seven days a week except on public holiday and semesters break

Libraries and information centers have the obligation to provide information services to support the educational, recreational, economic informational needs of their users. This obligation can be met by acquiring adequate collections and facilities, man power and opening hours in order for the user to have unhindered access to such information and services. This traditional library organization according to Ojedokun (2008) cited in Saka (2010) focuses on simplifying work for the staff and not necessarily for the customer and this is increasingly becoming a barrier to quality services.

Increasingly, the provision of 24 - hour service in libraries is becoming an expected component of the academic library program. Demand and demonstrable need guide most decisions to expand hours while the availability of new money is less a factor (Steele and Walters, 2001). Safety is a clear element in planning and implementing extended hours and most campus partnerships relate to security issues. It is expected that more experimentation with library hours and perhaps the physical reorganization of libraries to accommodate safe use at a minimal cost. As library users come to expect increased hours of access to library study space, it will be interesting to see if their expectations expand to include more access to higher-level services

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of twenty four hour library services started in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan in the year 2011. There has been stories of successes and failures in respect to this laudable initiative by all the stakeholders that are involved directly or indirectly in its implementation which are worthy of documentation. This will enable the management review her strategies for the purpose of making amends where necessary so that its sustainability can be assured. This forms the crux of this research and will be addressed in the course of this research work.

Objectives of the Study

This research work is guided by both the general and specific objectives.

General Objective: To evaluate documented experiences of all the stakeholders (The management, staff and students) involved in the implementation plan of twenty four hours library services initiative in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Specific Objectives:

- To examine the security implications of implementing twenty four hours library services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- To elicit information about staffing implication
- To highlight the responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the successful implementation of twenty four hours library services.
- To investigate the excesses of students in the implementation of twenty four hours library services in Kenneth Dike Library
- To highlight the role of management in the implementation of twenty four hours library services in Kenneth Dike library

Methodology

This survey was designed to provide a description of how Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) is responding to demands for greater hours of access and service. It attempts to answer questions about staffing, security needs, which specific library areas would require when, opened for additional hours as well as special funding to support the extended hours. It also describes how Kenneth Dike Library is evaluating extended library hours which started in the year 2011 and how the services could be improved upon. The study used survey research method that covered all categories of library staff involved in the twenty four hour services as well as users of Kenneth Dike Library. The population for the study consists of selected registered library users in the University of Ibadan on one hand, and selected members of staff of the library on the other. A questionnaire known as Twenty Four Hour Library Services (TFHLS) was developed and used as the primary instrument while data from library log book was also obtained. 100 respondents were purposively selected from the population of library users while 20 members of staff were randomly selected from the library staff. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts.

Sample

Table 1 Demographic Information of Respondents

	Staff		Users	
	No Distributed	No Returned	No Distributed	No Returned
Male	13	10	55	43
Female	7	5	45	32
Total	20	15	100	75
Return rate	75%		75%	

Results : These were presented in tables and figures as shown below:

Table 2a: Challenges faced by library staff

S/N	Items	Frequency
1	Inadequate Funding	22(24.4%)
2	Security	5(5.6%)
3	Inadequate staffing	35(38.9)
4	Inadequate provision of electricity	8(8.9%)
5	Delinquency on the part of users	5(5.6%)

Table 2a, revealed that among the challenges faced by library staff who are actively involved in the twenty four hour service in KDL, the most prominent was inadequate staffing with about 38.9% of the respondents while inadequate funding (24.4%) was rated second among the challenges confronting the services in KDL twenty four hour service. Delinquency on the part of users and security are both at the same level (5.6%) according to staff responses contrary to expectation. However, the information recorded in the transitional log book indicated that the most frequently faced challenge during the night hours was "theft cases of laptop computers" as well as "loss of bags and personal effects". The reason for this according to staff response is that there are not enough security personnel on duty during the night hours and this puts a lot of pressure on the library staff who are grossly inadequate for the service. This is further illustrated in the bar chart presented in figure 1 below.
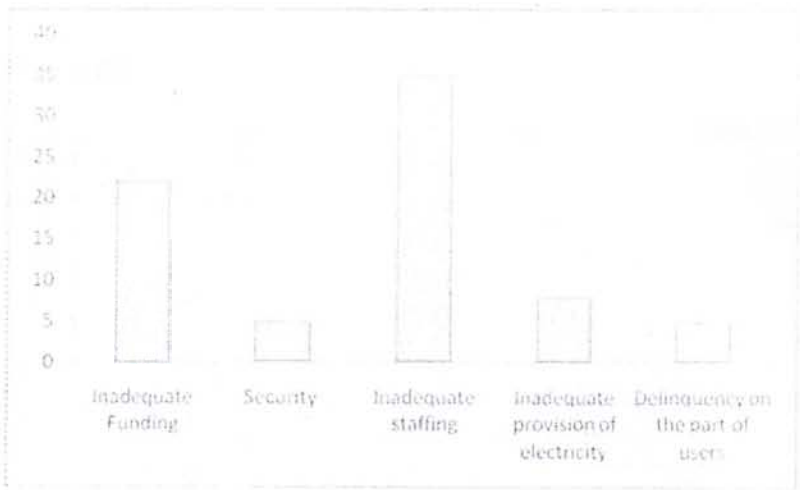
Figure 1: Challenges Faced by the Service

Figure 1 showed that inadequate staffing is the most prominent challenge faced during the twenty four hour library services in KDL. In fact one of the respondents asserted that "other challenges will be adequaltely surmounted and delt with if adequate staff are provided for the services". Other problems encountered as recorded in the log book are 'emergency cases of sickness by readers'; 'over use of the toilet facilities during the night'; poor lighting situation of some reading areas'; etc.

On the other hand, the challenges faced by the user is summarised in table 2b and figure 2 below.

Table 2b: Challenges by users

S/N	Items	Frequency
1	Regular power failure	14(14.7%)
2	Disturbance from fellow readers	19(25.3%)
3	Non cooperation from library staff	10(13.3%)
4	Security	23(30.7%)
5	Lack of access to certain materials and services	21(28.0%)

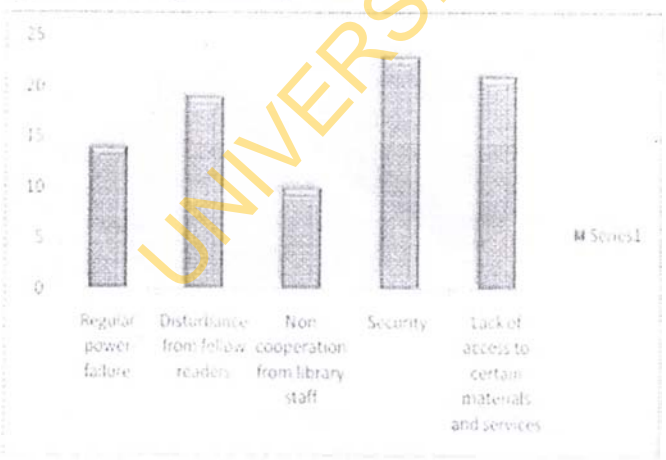Figure 2: challenges faced by users

Figure 2 showed that about 23 respondents (30.7%) of the users were of the opinion that security is the most prominent challenge they faced during the night services. This is closely followed by lack of access to certain materials during night service with 21 respondents (about 28%).

Perception of Staff

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to their perceptions of the extended library service. The result is as summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3: perception of the services

S/N	Question	Frequency			
		Staff		User	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Library services have improved due to long hours of opening	15(75%)	5(25%)	52 (69%)	23 (31%)
2	Adequate security provisions are made at night	14(70%)	6(30%)	32 (43%)	43 (57%)
3	I feel safe when working in the library at night	11(55%)	9(45%)	58 (77%)	27 (23%)
4	Adequate facilities have been put in place for smooth operation during extended hours	8(40%)	55(60%)	16 (21%)	59 (79%)
5	KDL is not matured enough to run 24 hour services	13(65%)	7(35%)	21 (28%)	54 (72%)

The responses showed that most of the respondents both staff and users believed that library services have improved as a result of longer hours of services but they both believe that adequate facilities have not been provided to cope with the challenges associated with such services by the management concerned. This is indicated by 60% of staff and 79% of library users. Some in their suggesstions believed that " the university should come to the aid of the library by fundig the 24 hour services to enhance smooth operations". This is why 72% of users opined that KDL is 'not matured enough' to run 24 hour service. This is contray to the opinion of staff in this regard as 65% of the staff surveyed believe that KDL is matured to run the services.

Expected Services During Extended Hours

In the course of the study, the reserachers sought to know the services expected during extended services and the results is as presented in figure 3.
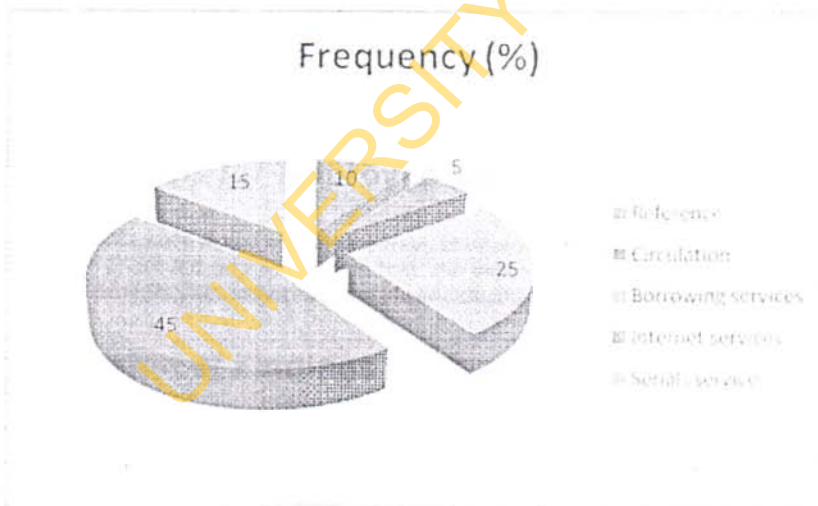

Figure 3: Chart showing services expected by users

From figure 3, it is clearly shown that the service required by most respondents is internet service 45% closely followed by borrowing service 25%. The least favoured service in this category is serial service and this could be due to the fact that if internet service is available, then users can access online journal services available in KDL.

User's excesses during the extended hours

The staff were asked to identify the common excesses of students during the extended services and the result is summarized in

table 4 and illustrated in figure 4 respectively.

Table 4: students' excesses

S/N	Items	Frequency %
1	Noise	6
2	Smoking	9
3	Theft and stealing	37
4	Mutilation of materials	15
5	Fighting	5
6	Promiscuity	18

Figure 4: Users' Excesses
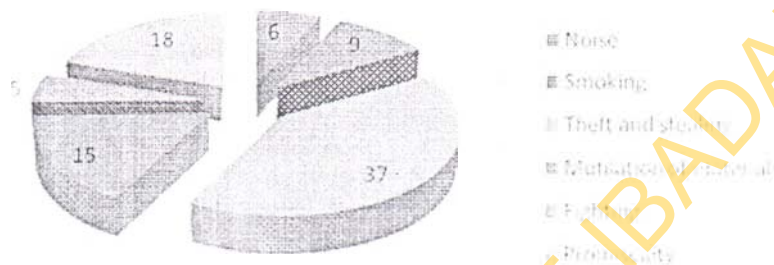
The illustration in the figure 4 clearly showed that theft and stealing ranked highest (37%) among the excesses of students during the night hours of service. Mutilation of material as well as promiscuity followed in that order. Fighting and noise making was 5% and 6% respectively.

Suggestions for Improved Services

Respondents were asked to suggest ways of imroving the services in the 24 hours services project of KDL. The suggestions made for improved services include that 'the library should extend regular library services such circulation and reference services to night duty services'; 'the library should boost staff strenght to complement the present one'

Discussion of Findings

There is no doubt that a lot has happened since inception of twenty four hour services in KDL since 2011 when the service commenced. The result of the findings showed that there is acute shortage of staff needed to effectively manage the teaming library users who turn up in the night to make use of the library. The finding is in line with McCarthy (2001) but is contrary to what is generally required that staff should be transformed in line with shaping of libraries in order to meet with challenges of information services anytime, anywhere.

Furthermore, it was also found that library users expected some services to be included in the twenty four hour service scheme. Prominent among this is the internet and e-library services. This is in line with the assertion of Kumar (2009) who noted that academic libraries are changing dramatically by adopting new means of technology in all activities of print to e-environment where a variety of manual method, are replaced by computerized system which provides opportunity for online accessibility. Increasingly, the provision of 24 - hour service in libraries is becoming an expected component of the academic library program. Demand and demonstrable need guide most decisions to expand hours as found in this study and supported by Curry (2003) and

Okiy, (2005). Safety is a clear element in planning and implementing extended hours and most campus partnerships relate to security issues. It is expected that more experimentation with library hours and perhaps the physical reorganization of libraries to accommodate safe use at a minimal cost will be a good omen for the smooth operation of the services.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has revealed some grey areas which are needed to be looked into by any academic library willing to embark on twenty four hour service by evaluating the staff implication vis a viz the other requirements and types of the services to be rendered as well as putting necessary security measures in place. However, it is high time academic libraries in Nigeria adopted 24/7 library services in order to meet the demands of the present day paradigm shift in library services the world over.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made based on the findings of this study.

- In order to enhance effective service delivery in the implementation of twenty four hour services, the library should increase the staff strength to meet the demands of the users on one hand and to protect library materials on the other hand.
- Internet facilities as well as e-library services should be made available 24/7 in order to promote access to online databases available in KDL in particular and other academic libraries in general.
- There should be security surveillance as well as the use of closed circuit television monitoring system to curb the excesses of users in terms of book mutilation, material theft and stealing as well as other anti library acts which are common in the night.
- Dedicated funds with long term commitment should be made available by the university management to boost the services and cater for logistics involved for the smooth running of the extended services as this will require additional cost from the conventional opening hours.
- Remunerations for staff participating in twenty four hours library services should be made attractive in order to encourage them.

References

Curry, A. (2003). Opening hours: The contest between diminishing resources and a 24/7 world. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship 29* (6): 375-385.

Darch, G. (1995). Overnight study facilities. *Cape Librarian* 39(4): 42

Kumar, M. (2009). Academic Libraries in electronic environment: Paradigm shift. A paper presented at the International Conference on Academic Libraries (ICAL) held at the University of Delhi, India. P. 105

McCarthy, J.J. (2001). Integrating Library services into the e-learning environment at Queensland University of Technology. *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 32(3): 222-238

Okiy, R.B. (2005). Funding Nigerian libraries in the 21st century: will funding from alternative sources suffice? *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances, 18*(2), 71-77.

Saka, H. T. (2010). Extended hours in academic libraries: A case study of the University of Ilorin. *PNLA Quarterly* 75(2). Available: http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/PNLA%20Quarterly/saka75-2.pdf.

Singh, J., & Kaur, T. (2009). Future of academic libraries in India: Challenges and opportunities. A paper presented at the International Conference on Academic Libraries (ICAL) held at the University of Delhi, India. P. 52

Steele, P.A., & Walters, C. (2001). *Extended library hours*. SPEC Kit #264 Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 2001.