ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABILITY, UTILISATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES BY THE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN TWO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper, investigated the assessment *of availability, utilization of library and information resources and services in two university libraries in Niger State. Survey research method was used for the study and the sample size selected from 1,510 population of the postgraduate students was 306 used for the study. The instrument used for the data collection was the questionnaire. Out of the 306 copies of the questionnaire administered, 245 copies were returned and used for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage tabulation were used in analyzing the data. The study revealed that the information services offered to postgraduate students is fairly high and adequate. The study also revealed that majority of academic libraries in Niger State are not adequately funded in order to achieve effective provision of library services for postgraduate students. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that academic libraries in Niger State should be adequately funded in order to achieve effective provision of library services, academic libraries should provide current and adequate information resources and services for postgraduate students, functional computers and Internet facilities should be provided to enable users to have access to millions of electronic information resources on the Internet and there should be provision of constant electricity supply.*

Keywords: Accessibility, Information Resources, Information Services, Postgraduate Students, University Library, Utilization

Introduction

Academic libraries are those that are established in tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and also research institutes. Academic libraries are libraries that are attached to any higher institutions of learning. These mandates are teaching, learning, research and community services geared towards social, political and economic development of the country. Academic libraries provide bibliographic, and user services to the staff, students and immediate communities of their respective institutions. Their major function is to provide information resources and services that support the attainment of the broad objectives of teaching, learning and research activities of the parent institution. Olofinsawe and Oyeniyi (2010) stated 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 post-graduate students into consideration in policy planning in any university library.

University libraries have gone beyond a place where printed and non-printed resources are kept for reading. They have become resource centres where information is packaged and repackaged in various formats to suit the information needs of users. Oyewusi and Oyeboade, (2009) defined university library as the academic heart of the university system and its basic purpose is to provide students and faculty members with material assistance and enabling environment that facilitate teaching, learning and research activities in the universities.

Information is an important and key resources for every organisation and is an essential input for all types of organisations. Information is essential for the survival of any society. It remains the major ingredient in taking decision and assist in taking the degree of uncertainty. Indeed, without information there can't be communication. Information is knowledge gained or given; facts; news or the communicating or receiving of knowledge. Information is a means of communicating knowledge, helping us to find out what we need to know. The information source we choose will always depend on the quantity and quality of information required. The emergence of technology has led to the proliferation of electronically available information resources (Gilbert, 2015).

An information resource is anything from which information is derived or extracted. Information resources are defined as information carriers or information sources. It could also be seen as means of information supply. Therefore, information resources according to Popoola and Haliso (2009) are those information-bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet, e-mail, video tapes/cassettes, diskettes and so on. Thus, information resources according to Chima and Nwokocha (2013) include all forms of information carriers that can be used to promote and encourage effective research activities and developmental projects. These information resources are required to meet the information and academic needs of researchers and students.

Availability of library resources however, does not mean that the resources are accessible, it is therefore, essential for libraries to make their impact felt by making their resources accessible to its users. Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) argued that university libraries must ensure that their resources are used to the fullest, for the benefit of students and faculty members. Some users seem not to be exposed to resources available in the library and this could be attributed to lack of creating awareness on the part of libraries.

Utilization of library and its resources are usually important factors in determining the effectiveness of services provided by libraries. A better understanding of library use and its resources would make libraries improve in acquiring of resources and service delivery to its users. Therefore, it is necessary for university libraries to have adequate and available resources for its users. It is a well-known fact that availability of information resources can improve use of library and its resources.

From the above statement there is no doubt that postgraduate students in every university should be expected to make use of library and information resources and services to satisfy their information needs in Niger State in particular and Nigeria as a whole so as to achieve scientific, socio-economic and technological development.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that no academic system can achieve its educational goals without sound library and information resources and services. These resources and services in the present era should extend beyond print and physically available resources to non-print, electronic and virtually available resources and services. However, most of the Nigerian university libraries are working hard to acquire and provide adequate and current library and information resources and services to their postgraduate students. Furthermore, in this era of information explosion, certain factors hinders the effort played by

these libraries in a bid to provide information services. This study, therefore, is set to determine the various library and information resources their utilization and services in the university libraries are supposed to provide for their postgraduate students, the challenges hindering these and the strategies to overcome the challenges.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

i.   Identify the types of resources available in two university libraries in Niger State
ii.   Find out the utilization of information resources in two university libraries in Niger State
iii.   Identify the types of library services rendered in two university libraries in Niger State
iv.   Determine the factors that inhibit effective library services provision in two university libraries in Niger State

Literature Review

Webb (2007) posited that effective academic libraries are gateways to academic knowledge through their own collections and through facilitating access to materials. In line with its core purpose, providing effective library services could support the research activities of researchers. Ogunniyi, Akerele and Afolabi (2011) stated that academic libraries should provide the latest journal titles in all the subjects/courses covered by their parent institutions and also staff and students of the institutions are expected to make use of the library especially the serial sections of the libraries to access current information in their field of study. Academic libraries are essential contributors to knowledge generation and serve a wide spectrum of knowledge seekers (Adeniran, 2010). Also, Obajemu, Ojo & Dekpen (2012) observed that services provided by an academic library in a university reflect the quality of teaching and research in such a university.

Information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty members (Popoola, 2008). Popoola and Haliso (2009) posited that information resources are the 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, computers, micro forms etc. These holdings of the university library are important when discussing about academic performance of postgraduate students. Similarly, library resources are those materials which enable libraries to carry out their functions effectively (Ogunmodede, Adio & Odunola, 2011). Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) further explained that, library resources are made up of books and other information bearing media. Electronic resources are bibliographic of full text database that allow one to search for relevant articles in his subject area. E-resources include electronic journals, online databases such as Agora, Ebscohost, Science direct, Hinari, electronic books, website, CD-ROM , electronic text, e-abstracting and indexing databases such as MEDLINE, E-news, E-music,E-image etc. These electronic resources are used mainly for reading and research purposes (Ajayi, Shorunke & Aboyade, 2014).Bassey and Ogom (2015) argued that there are certain factors that inhibit effective utilisation of the e-library as; irregular power supply, poor attitude of library staff, limited access to available resources, slow speed of internet access, lack of user education and inadequate number of computers. Alison (2007) suggests continued information literacy programmes, because he found out that library users are not aware of the information resources available in libraries or they do not know how to access them.

Information services in academic libraries are the various ways by which information are professionally provide, organise, store, retrieve and disseminate information to researchers. The variety of information services offered by any library depends to a great extent on the quality and experience of the librarians. Information services include bibliography compilation, indexing, abstracting, selective dissemination of information, current awareness service etc. which assist users to access vital printed information resources without delay(Bitagi&Garba, 2014). Aju& Ape (2011) and Bitagi&Garba (2014) stated that a library is concerned with the acquisitions, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of

information that is recorded for the purpose of consultation, reading, study and research. The major role of library, is not only providing books and reading space for students, but also provide services to facilitate research activities, such as bibliographies, reference services and information literacy services (Campbell, 2006).Bitagi and Udo Udoh (2013) revealed that despite the fact that availability of all kinds and types of information resources and services in academic libraries is highly essential if such libraries are to meet with the information needs of their users.

Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) revealed that university libraries must make sure that the resources within their libraries are well utilized as this is essential for better performance of undergraduate students. Similarly, Olorunfemi, Mostert and Ocholla, (2012) posited that for law students to accomplish their educational objectives there is need for them to make effective use of the library resources relevant to their study. Effective utilisation of library resources is very important to undergraduate students especially the law students who need a lot of literature to satisfy their information needs.

Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) shows that 47 respondents affirmed to the fact that they visit library daily in Nigeria and they represent 19.3% of the sampled population, 63 respondents which represent25.9% go to the library once a week, 12respondents represented 1.6% of the sampled population visit the library once in a semester, while 2 respondents representing 0.8% enter the library once in a session. They further stated that those who visit library on a rare occasion are 58 respondents, representing 23.9% of the sampled population and 57 respondents that represent 23.5% usually visit the library during their examination period.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used while two universities Head of Collection Development Unit and postgraduate students were used for the study. Federal University of Technology, (FUT) Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, (IBBU.) Lapai were selected out of all the tertiary institutions in Niger State. One of this university is specialised while the other one a conventional university. One of the university is owned by federal government, while the other one is owned by state government. This is because the researchers considered the population of the postgraduate students of the two universities adequate for the study.The population of Collection Development staff was two (2) heads of units in the studied universities while postgraduate students in FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai comprised 1,510 (PG Schools, 2015/2016 session). The sample size of three hundred and six (306) postgraduate students from FUT Minna and IBBU Lapai sample size was randomly selected and used for the study. The sample size of the postgraduate students for the study was determined by using the sample size formula given by Partem (1950). Random sampling technique was used to select postgraduate students across the two universities. Questionnaire was the main instrument use for data collection were distributed to the CD staff and postgraduate students across the two universities. Two separate copies of the questionnaire were distributed to CD staff and postgraduate students in their respective universities. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage tabulation were used in analysing the data.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Information Resources available in your institutions` library

S/n	Availability	FUT MINNA	IBBU LAPAI
1	Textbooks		√
2	Reference Sources	√	√
3	Serials Publication	√	√
4	Government Publication	√	√
5	E-Resources	√	√

The researcher was able to find out that some information resources that are available in the two university libraries under study are outdated. The FUT library Minna and IBBU library Lapai had the following information resources - textbooks, reference sources, serials publications, electronic resources are available.

Table 2: Utilization of Information Resources

S/n	Use	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Textbooks	245	100
2	Journals	245	100
3	Reference Sources	201	82
4	Newspapers and Magazines	225	91.8
5	Thesis/Dissertations	217	88.6
6	Audio-Visual Materials	0	0
7	Electronic Information Resources	200	81.6
8	Bibliographies, Indexes and Abstracts	0	0

Table 2 shows that majority, 245(100%), 245(100%) and 225(91.8%) of the respondents effectively utilized information resources such as textbooks, journals and newspapers and magazines respectively. These were followed by 217(88.6%), 201(82%) and 200(81.6%) who revealed that they adequately utilised information resources like thesis/dissertations, reference sources and electronic resources in that order. However, none, 0(0%) of the postgraduate students agreed that they have not utilised audio-visual materials and bibliographies, indexes and abstracts

Table 3: Frequency of Information Resources Utilization

S/n	Use	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Daily	25	10.2
2	Weekly	64	26.1
3	Twice a week	15	6.1
4	Monthly	23	9.4
5	Occasionally	118	48.2

The analysis of the result presented in Table 3 revealed that majority, 118(48.2%) of the respondents use the information resources occasionally, 25(10.2%) of the respondents use the information resources daily and 64(26.1%) of them use the information resources weekly followed by 23(9.4%) who use the information resources on a monthly basis and 15(6.1%) of the respondents use the information resources twice a week.

Table 4: Types of Information Services Offered

S/n	Services	Frequency	Percentage
1	Book loans	245	100
2	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	0	0
3	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	90	36.7
4	Serials Services	241	98.4
5	Reprographic Services (e.g. printing and photocopy)	180	73.5
6	User Education Programs	0	0
7	Internet/Electronic Information Services	245	100
8	Bibliographic Services	0	0
9	Indexing and Abstracting Services	0	0

Table 4 shows that majority, 245(100%), 245(100%) and 241(98.4%) of the respondents agreed to have been offered book loans; internet/electronic information services and serial services respectively. These were followed by 180(73.5%) and 90(36.7%) who indicated that they were offered with reprographic services and current awareness services in that order. However, none, 0(0%) of the postgraduate students agreed that selective dissemination of information; education programs; bibliographic services and indexing and abstracting services were offered by two university libraries in Niger State.

Table 5: Factors InhibitingEffective provision of Library and Information Services

S/n	Factors	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Inadequate finding	245	100
2	Paucity of Information resources	245	100
3	Deterioration of Information resources	210	85.7
4	Poor attitude of library staff	215	87.8
5	Unconducive library environment	241	98.4
6	Erratic Power Supply	245	100
7	Failure of Computer Network	235	95.9
8	Inadequate library services	226	92.2

Table 5 revealed that majority, 245(100%) of the respondents agreed that inadequate funding, Paucity of Information resources and erratic power supply were majorinhibiting factors against the availability and utilization of information resources and services. These were followed by 241(98.4%), 235(95.9%), and 226(92.2%) 215(87.8%) and 210(85.7%) of these who indicated that Unconducive library environment, Failure of computer network, Inadequate library services, Poor attitude of library staff and Deterioration of information resources were also constraints in the availability and utilization of information resources and services.

Discussion
Table 1 reveals that to some extent, information resources provided in print format were above average while those in non-print format were below average. This means that in spite of the fact that tremendous efforts have been made to meet the needs for which the libraries were established.
Table 2 showed that a greater number of postgraduate students, 245(100%) use the information resources effectively. This action justifies the resources kept aside for library development in university libraries. Otherwise, it will encourage the management of the university to improve the budget to libraries.

Table 3 revealed that majority of the postgraduate students use the library weekly and occasionally. This may be due to the fact that majority of the postgraduate students are employed, therefore, have a busy schedules and they have to combine their job with their study. The time available for their study might not be enough as it is competing with their other activities. This will affect and reduce their utilisation of information/libraryresources. 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. This finding agreed with the findings of Ogunmodede, Adio and Odunola (2011) who argued that majority of students visited the library in Nigeria once a week and on a rare occasion for research work.

Table 4 showed that the routine services offered by academic library such as selective dissemination of information, user education programmes, bibliographic services, indexing and abstracting services were completely not provided by academic libraries as found by all postgraduate students, 245(100%). This finding disagrees with the findings of Bitagi & Garba (2014) and Bitagi & Udoudoh (2013) who revealed that the availability of all kinds and types of information resources and services in academic libraries is highly essential in order for such libraries to meet with the information needs of their users.

Similarly, the findings from Table 5 disclosed that the available information resources in the libraries are not current or up-to-date and they are not also adequate enough to meet users` expectations. This may be as a result of lack of poor funding of the university libraries by the government or parent institutions concerned. The findings also showed that there are certain factors militating against effective utilisation of information resources and users` satisfaction in the academic libraries in Niger State. Such inhibiting factors include lack of current information resources in the library, inaccessibility of the information resources which may be due to improper arrangement or improper cataloguing and classification of the resources in the libraries. It also include unconducive nature of the library environment, unfriendliness of the library staff, quality of library personnel, irregular power supply, failure of computer/ Internet facilities.This finding corroborated Bassey and Ogom (2006), which indicated that there are certain factors that inhibit effective utilization of the e-library as; irregular power supply, poor attitude of library staff, limited access to available resources, slow speed of internet access, lack of user education and inadequate number of computers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study one would, therefore, conclude that adequate information resources and services are significant for effective use of academic libraries by the postgraduate students in Niger State. Therefore, there is need for improved level of information literacy among the postgraduate students, provision of electricity supply, provision of ICT facilities/infrastructures, current, relevant and adequate library resources and conducive environment for reading, learning and research in academic libraries in Niger State. Once these factors are carefully taken care of in Niger State university libraries the level of use of library and information resources by the postgraduate students is expected to increase. On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i. Academic libraries in Niger State should be adequately funded in order to achieve effective provision of library services.

ii. Constant provision of current and adequate information resources and motivation of postgraduate students would improve utilization of information resources by the postgraduate students of the universities studied.

iii. Academic libraries in Niger State should ensure that users` satisfaction with the resources and services is their primary goals. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to ensure that postgraduate students get the required/right information at the right time and in the place. With this, high level of users` satisfaction is attained.

iv. Functional computers and internet facilities should be provided by academic libraries in Niger State to enable users to have access to millions of electronic information resources on the internet.

v. Provision of constant electricity, library equipment and facilities such as bindery machines, air conditioners, fans, reprographic machines, printers, scanners and other ICT gadgets in the library by academic libraries would enhance postgraduate students use of the libraries.

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