

**REVITALIZING CIRCULATION POLICIES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE  
LENDING SERVICES TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY, MINNA, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated the revitalization of circulation policies towards effective lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study in line with research objectives. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 21,982 undergraduate students with sample size of 384. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation with criterion mean of 2.50 benchmark. Findings revealed that effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students was high, satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials were low and inadequate computer system used for charging and discharging of library materials and inadequate competent and professional staff to handle charging and discharging of materials were the highest factors that hindered lending services to undergraduate students. The study concluded that the circulation policies need to be review for effective and efficient lending services and by extension better service delivery. The study recommended that the management of Federal University of Technology Library, Minna should review circulation policies especially the policy on the number of books allowed to be borrowed by the library users at a time, the policy on loan duration of the library materials and the policy on low fine charges attached to late returning of library materials and among others as this would help to improve lending services in the library studied.*

**Keywords:** Circulation Policies, Federal University of Technology Library, Lending Services, Revitalizing, Undergraduate Students, Minna, Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

University libraries refer to those libraries established in universities to support and strengthen the academic programmes of such institutions of learning as they contribute to the total development of their users' community by broadening their intellectual horizons and inculcating in them a lasting desire to study and carry out research. Oyenachi *et. al.* (2021) defined university libraries as types of academic libraries established in universities to meet the information and research needs of its students and faculty as well as the entire institution's community. University libraries are to serve the needs of academic institutions, provision of reference resources, study areas, and provision of active information services. Furthermore, lending services of university libraries are rendered through charging and discharging of materials to users in order to cater for their information needs.

Library loan or lending services is carried out in circulation section of a library. Circulation section is one of the major units of any library. It is described as the public service point that is normally at the gate door of libraries. The unit is responsible for providing the facilities to lend, return borrowed books, renewal and payment of fines. In support of this, Aina (2004) asserted that loan service is essentially a social service in which users of a library have the privilege of borrowing library materials either for reading or consultation. Other resources apart from books in the library can be loaned out, this include such materials as films, slides, videotapes, cassette, radio, video – machines and projectors. This service is usually granted for a short term and by proper authentication from the authorising officer or circulation staff. This means that the library ought to have more than one copy of information material in the section before lending, so as not to deny others from having access to such materials. Most of the circulation staff found in libraries are not professionals to provide the required services needed by their users (Hassan and Ekoja, 2011). Effective and efficient services can only be provided through a qualified staff. Many libraries manage their circulation using library assistants and library attendants.

Library policies are written guidelines and procedures for libraries to follow so as to achieve its stated goals and objectives. The circulation policies may cause inaccessibility of library materials to the users. Though, library materials are borrowed and used out of the library by following some certain procedures which are to be returned within a particular period of time. Nina-Okpousung (2011) stated that academics libraries allow extensive borrowing than any other types of library. These indicated that libraries provide certain policies that protect their lending activities or routines; such as library operation,

charging, discharging and renewal of library resources to prevent loss of library information resources to its clientele or users.

User satisfaction is one of the processes for assessing the efficiency of lending services in academic and other libraries. Madhusudhan (2010) opined that libraries are supposed to introduce online and offline feedback systems to track the effectiveness of their resources and services through lending. Consequently, Ijiekhuamhen *et al.* (2015) asserted that library lending services consistently helps to determine or establish the level of user satisfaction and improved services. Madhusudhan (2010) further stated that factors such as prompt access to materials, organisation of materials, size and collection of the library, lending of materials and skills of library staff in providing users with the right resources were identified to determine user satisfaction.

The functions of university libraries are highly appreciated mainly when the lending services are adequate, especially as the majority of the students cannot afford the resources needed in their studies. Okiki (2013) stated that for students to perform in their academic pursuits, there is need for them to visit the libraries to consult materials therein in the repository. With so many factors affecting lending services, the situation is disturbing especially as lending services of the libraries are necessary for the student's education. It is in the light of the above that, the researchers investigated the revitalisation of circulation policies towards effective lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The success of effective lending services does not depend only on the availability of library collection, resources and other facilities therein but also lies on the methods used in charging and discharging of the books to users; and more importantly the extent to which circulation policies are flexible and users' friendly. Library personnel are expected to assist researchers and students to effectively use university library. It has been argued that circulation policies can affect the lending services to users. The researchers observed with concern the lackadaisical attitude of the library staff towards lending services and lack of enthusiasm on the part of undergraduate students of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria that do borrow the library materials. While there are various studies (Bhatt, 2011; Sung and Tolppanen, 2013; and Ajayi and Okunlola, 2014) that showed the effect of library or circulation policies on lending services, no study has been carried out on the effect of circulation policies towards effective lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria. Thus, to address this

research concern, the researchers investigated the revitalization of circulation policies towards effective lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives were to:

1. determine the effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria;
2. ascertain the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria;
3. identify the factors inhibiting lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?
3. What are the factors inhibiting lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?

### **Review of Related Literature**

Libraries create policies to ensure that library resources are used effectively. Policies are mechanisms for ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and equitably and that individuals' interests are managed for the greater good. Policies are guides to decision making that ensure organizational decisions are in line with organizational philosophy (Bryson,2011). Likewise, Nwalo (2013) asserted that policies are common in all industrial and service organizations. For consistency of service, high productivity, and efficiency, organizations provide guidelines to be followed by those involved in the service or production process. Readers' service, which includes lending materials, is a major service that attracts many people to the library. Users of university libraries are free to borrow materials for home use, the level, extent, and number of materials to borrow depends on

the library's policies. Loan periods are also a matter of policy. Some users do not return materials when they are due (Akinbode, 2012).

Library loan or library lending involved the process of lending library books and other materials to undergraduate students and other users alike. Aina (2004) asserted that loan service is essentially a social service in which users of a library have the privilege of borrowing library materials either for reading or consultation. Kang *et al.* (2017) postulated that library lending services improves the activities around the lending of library books and others library materials to users. Consequently, circulation polices are necessary, including rules for the length of checkout, loan quotas, overdue fines, renewals, recalls, and loss or damage of library materials, based on user group and material type (Reed *et al.*, 2014; Sung and Tolppanen, 2013; Rupp *et al.*, 2010; Wilson, 2014; Wilson *et al.*, 2015; Zweibel and Lane, 2012).

Wilson *et al.* (2015) conducted a study to investigate circulation policies in major academic libraries, the Harold B. Lee Library Circulation Committee chose to survey libraries from academic institutions with enrollment similar to Brigham Young University, United State. The committee eliminated the 16 Canadian and 9 non-university libraries from the list of 125 ARL libraries, selecting the 100 academic libraries in the United States. The committee also used the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) “Compare Academic Libraries” tool to find other academic institutions with large enrollments. Using the tool, the committee selected libraries that offer at least a bachelor’s degree with enrollments of 16,809-57,271. The intent was to find large institutions with student populations that were within about 15,000 students of Bigham Young University’s enrollment. This method provided 65 additional institutions that were not on the ARL list, for a total of 165 unique institutions. The committee created a survey with questions that asked about specific circulation policies at the libraries surveyed. This survey was emailed to identifiable heads of circulation or access services in the libraries of selected institutions. Seventy-six institutions completed the survey for a response rate of 46%. No demographic data was collected as part of this survey. Findings revealed that majority of policies at major academic libraries in the United States (as evidenced by this survey) are more restrictive and traditional. The more non-traditional set of policies, while in the minority, are less restrictive, with more generous circulation periods and low or no fines. It seems that these policies better reflect patrons’ needs and desires. The study concluded that as circulation continues to decrease in academic libraries, updating circulation policies will provide a stronger patron focus that can build good will and encourage patrons to use

library materials. The study recommended that libraries should be more serious in examining their circulation policies and determine if they can better meet the needs of their patrons through more generous policies.

Nina-okpousung (2011) conducted a study to investigate library policies and overdue materials in polytechnics libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study in line with research objectives. The study population comprised three hundred (300) registered library users. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and observation checklist. The data were analysed using simple percentages. Findings revealed that factors such as low fines, insufficient copies of relevant materials, and insufficient library opening hours among others were responsible for user's negative attitude towards overdue policies. The study concluded that library personnel should enforce library policies without fear or favour. The study recommended that library orientation should be made compulsory for users to registered.

Emojorho (2012) conducted a study to investigate loss of library materials in Delta state University Library, Abraka, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study in line with research objectives. The study population comprised ninety (90) students and sixty (60) staff, totaling of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents. Descriptive survey research design was used to collect data. Data were analysed using frequency counts and percentage. One hundred and fifty (150) copies of questionnaire were distributed randomly to selected students and staff of the institution. Findings revealed that loss of materials had negative effect on library book loan services which causes damages to library collection and among others. The study concluded that there should be provision of library materials. The study recommended that there should be stiff penalties for dishonest users, illegal removal of library materials and dismissal of library staff that collaborates with user to steal information resources from library.

Arthurs (2014) conducted a study to investigate user's attitude to imposition of overdue fines by the library of Catholic University College of Ghana, Fiapre. Four research questions guided the study in line with research objectives. A sample size of 300 library users representing 13.8% of the 2,180 users on the library's register of borrowers as of April 2012 was chosen through simple random sampling technique for the study. The instruments for data collection were questionnaire, observation and interviews. Data were analysed using frequency tables, percentages and figures were also used in the data as the main factor in the incidence of overdue fines payment. Findings revealed that majority of library users were also asked to pay a fine for overdue items. The study recommended that there should be institutionalization of grace period for defaulters, reminder messages to borrowers and establishment for overdue fines.

Edewor (2010) conducted a study to investigate attitudes of staff users towards the payment of overdue fines in Nigeria polytechnic libraries. A survey research was applied to staff users of the libraries of the Delta State polytechnic Otefe-Oghara and Delta State polytechnic, Ozoro both in Nigeria. A total of 89 staff participated in the study. A questionnaire and oral interview were used in data collection. Findings revealed that staff users rarely pay overdue fines and would like the system discontinued. The study concluded that fine is a means of generating funds for the library and a measure to compel users to return books on time and unwillingness of staff to pay fines and circulation staff to collect from staff users is challenges in enforcing payment of fines. The study recommended that libraries should help to collect fines from staff users.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey research design was used because it is a survey type of research that is characterized by population and sample as well as the use of data collection instrument. The study population comprised twenty-one thousand, nine-hundred and eighty-two (21,982) undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria as at 2022/2023 session. The sample size for this study is 384, obtained using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table for determining sample size of a research population. The study adopted proportionate stratified random sampling to sample the number of undergraduate students across the nine (9) schools/faculties in Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria in order to give equal chance to each of the respondents for the purpose of generalisation. A close ended structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation with criterion mean of 2.50 benchmark. The draft copies of questionnaire were validated by four lecturers in the Department of Library Information Science and a Statiscian from Department of Statistics all from Federal University of Technology, Minna for correctness and appropriateness of the language used whether it is suitable and appropriate to answer the research questions of the study. The researchers administered 20 copies of the questionnaire to undergraduate students of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai for pilot testing using test re-test method. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.89 indicating that the instrument is reliable and excellent. The selection of this university was due to the fact that the university was neither part of population nor part of sample. A total of 384 copies of questionnaire were administered to undergraduate students of Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. A response rate showed the returned of 380 copies of the questionnaire representing 99%.

### **Results and Discussions**

**Research Question One:** What is the effect of circulation policies towards lending

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services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Responses on the effect of circulation policies towards lending services**

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1.	The policy of a library that a user must show his/her ID card before borrowing library materials affects lending services.	2.18	0.16	Low
2.	The policy on the number of books allowed to be borrowed by the library users at a time affects lending services.	2.77	0.28	High
3.	The policy on the loan duration of the library materials affects lending services.	2.73	0.22	High
4.	Penalty attached to loss of library materials affects lending services.	2.31	0.19	Low
5.	The low fine charges attached to late returning of library materials affects lending services.	2.88	0.34	High
<b>Aggregate Mean Score</b>		<b>2.57</b>		<b>High</b>

**Key:**  $\bar{x}$  = Mean and STD = Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 1 were analysed for the effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria. The results revealed that the mean scores were high and above the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard for three items in response to question on the effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students. On the other hand, the mean scores were low for the other two items as the mean scores were below the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard. Specifically, the Table above revealed that the low fine charges attached to late returning of library materials was considered as the highest factor that affect lending services to undergraduate students with a mean score of 2.88 which was the highest rated item. This could easily be related to selfish attitude of the library users considering the fine charges is nothing to them. While policy of a library that a user must show his/her ID card before borrowing library materials was considered as the least factor that affect lending services to undergraduate students with a mean score of 2.18 which was the lowest rated item.

The study further revealed that the effect of circulation policies towards lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria is high as the aggregate mean score was above the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard. This implies that circulation policies in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria highly affect lending services to undergraduate students and as



such need to be review for better lending services. Nina-okpousung (2011) asserted that time allowed for library operation determines the degree by which library materials are accessed. This means that library users might not have enough time to search and locate materials needed to borrow for their studies; as well as not having enough time to return these materials as when due because of inadequate and insufficient time. Therefore, a typical policy on library opening hours should be sufficient and satisfactory to meet up with user information needs. Library policies should also make provisions for libraries to operate at evenings and weekends which could be achieved through shifting by library staff.

**Research Question Two:** What is the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Responses on the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students**

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1.	I derive satisfaction with the availability and accessibility of both electronic and printed library materials in the library.	2.63	0.22	High
2.	I derive satisfaction with the lending ability and skills showcase by the library staff.	2.39	0.19	Low
3.	I derive satisfaction with the provision of the right information resources for my need.	2.74	0.26	High
4.	I derive satisfaction with the availability of reading space and furniture configurations in the library.	2.52	0.20	High
5.	I derive satisfaction with the electronic method used in charging and discharging of materials in the library.	2.34	0.17	Low
6.	I derive satisfaction with the enthusiasm attitude of the library staff towards lending services.	2.24	0.14	Low
<b>Aggregate Mean Score</b>		<b>2.47</b>		<b>Low</b>

**Key:**  $\bar{x}$  = Mean and STD = Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 2 were analysed for the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria. The results revealed that the mean scores were high and above the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard for three items in response to question on the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students. On the other

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hand, the mean scores were low for the other three items as the mean scores were below the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard. Specifically, the Table above revealed that I derive satisfaction with the provision of the right information resources for my need was considered as the highest factor for determining undergraduate students' satisfaction in borrowing library materials with a mean score of 2.74 which was the highest rated item. While I derive satisfaction with the enthusiasm attitude of the library staff towards lending services was considered as the least factor for determining undergraduate students' satisfaction in borrowing library materials with a mean score of 2.24 which was the least rated item. This could be related to lackadaisical attitude of the library staff towards lending services to the users.

The study further revealed that the extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library materials by undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria is low as the aggregate mean score was below the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard. This implies that undergraduate students of Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria derived low satisfaction in borrowing library materials. This is in line with the findings of Madhusudhan (2010) that factors such as prompt access to materials, organisation of materials, size and collection of the library, lending of materials and skills of the library staff in providing users with the right resources were identified to determine user satisfaction.

**Research Question Three:** What are the factors inhibiting lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Responses on the factors inhibiting lending services to undergraduate students**

S/N	Statements	$\bar{x}$	STD	Decision
1.	Lackadaisical attitude of the library staff towards the work inhibit lending services.	2.58	0.18	Agreed
2.	Inadequate copies of books available for borrowing inhibit lending services in the library.	2.47	0.17	Disagreed
3.	Inadequate computer system used for charging and discharging of materials in the library inhibit lending services.	2.86	0.36	Agreed
4.	Lack of staff/student's cordial relationship inhibit lending services in the library.	2.46	0.13	Disagreed
5.	Selfish attitude of the library users towards lending inhibits lending services.	2.82	0.32	Agreed
6.	Inadequate competent/professional staff to handle charging and discharging of materials inhibit lending services in the library.	2.86	0.36	Agreed
7.	Epileptic power electricity supply in the library inhibits lending services.	2.51	0.09	Agreed
8.	Lack of constant evaluation of the charging and discharging system inhibit lending services in the library.	2.61	0.20	Agreed

**Key:**  $\bar{x}$  = Mean and STD = Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 3 were analysed for the factors inhibiting lending services to undergraduate students in Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, Nigeria. The results revealed that respondents agreed to six (6) items as the mean scores were above the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard. On the other hand, respondents disagreed to the other two (2) items as the mean scores were below the benchmark of 2.50 criteria standard.

The study further revealed that inadequate computer system used for charging and discharging of library materials and inadequate competent/professional staff to handle charging and discharging of materials inhibit lending services in the library were indicated as the highest factors that hindered lending services to undergraduate students with mean score of 2.86. This finding corroborates the findings of Hassan and Ekoja (2011) that most of the circulation staff found in libraries are not professionals to provide the required services needed by the users. On the other hand, lack of staff/student's cordial relationship was indicated as the lowest factor that hindered lending services to undergraduate students with a mean score of 2.46. This is a clear indication that staff/student's relationship is cordial.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the effect of circulation policies towards lending services such as policy on the number of books allowed to be borrowed by the library users at a time, policy on the loan duration of the library materials and low fine charges attached to late returning of library materials were the most factors that affect lending services to undergraduate students. The extent of satisfaction derived in borrowing library material were low on I derive satisfaction with the lending ability and skills showcase by the library staff, I derive satisfaction with the electronic method of in charging and discharging of materials in the library and I derive satisfaction with the enthusiasm attitude of the library staff towards lending services resulting to low satisfaction in borrowing library materials. Thus, the study concluded that the circulation policies need to be review for effective and efficient lending services and by extension better service delivery.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of Federal University of Technology Library, Minna should review circulation policies from time to time especially the policies that affect lending services most as this would help to improve lending services.
2. Management of Federal University of Technology Library, Minna should train library staff on the skills and abilities needed to provide efficient and effective lending services and as well motivate the staff to have enthusiasm attitude towards lending services.
3. Management of Federal University of Technology, Minna should provide more computer systems for charging and discharging of materials, alternative power supply for effective operation of the computer systems and employ more competent and professional staff to handle charging and discharging of materials in the library.

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