

LECTURERS ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The study investigated information resources and services in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research method and interview schedule was used to elicit responses. About 316 respondents, representing 10% of a total of 3160 lecturers in the 6 academic institutions in the state were sampled based on proportionate sampling technique. Consequently, 316 copies of questionnaire were administered and 260 were returned and found usable. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data gathered. The results indicated that more of information resources in print format were provided at the expense of those in non-print. Conventional services such as loan of books and photocopying were adequately provided while selective dissemination of information (SDI), indexing and abstracting and ICT services were inadequately provided. Certain factors such as inadequate funding of the libraries amidst others were found to be militating against the provision and utilization of information resources and services. The study recommended among others that academic libraries should be adequately funded while qualified and experienced staff should be employed to provide required resources and services.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Information Resources, Information Services, Lecturers Assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries are those that are established in tertiary institutions such as Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. 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. Okiy (2011) supported this view when the author argued that the roles of academic libraries in Nigeria are to effectively support the institutions to attain the key functions of teaching, research and community service. It could therefore, be argued further that the position of academic libraries in institutions of higher learning cannot be overemphasized. This is because Bitagi and Garba (2008) observed that academic institutions and libraries are like identical twins who share everything together possibly on equal basis. The term information has recently witnessed a variety of definitions. For example, Bitagi (2013) defined it as news that comes to the receiver for the first time which enables the receiver to take action according to expectations. On the other hand, Mohammed (2011) elaborately argued that information can be conceived as anything that adds to knowledge, ideas, skills and experiences positively or negatively that enables the receiver to take decisions or react to situations immediately or later. It could therefore, be deduced that at whatever time decision is taken, after receiving information, depends to a large extent on the body content of information. Thus, while information is expected to be self-explanatory, it should equally serve as a guide to the receiver as regards when to take decision and also determines the goals to be achieved and the right

time to achieve it. Information is therefore, necessary for the well-being and development of individuals and society at large in the attempt to achieve political, socio-economic, religious, industrial, scientific and technological advancement.

Information resources constitute a range of materials and equipment gathered by the library in order to meet the information needs of both intended and anticipated users. Aliyu (2006) corroborated this view when he argued that information resources are made up of a variety of materials which information could be stored, retrieved and disseminated for use. Specifically, information resources include such things as books, journals, theses; dissertations, technical report and all related materials in print format and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and related electronic gadgets which store or provide information worldwide without any serious geographical barrier capable of satisfying the diverse information needs of library clientele. Information services in academic libraries are the various ways and means by which information professionals provide, organize, store, retrieve and disseminate information to researchers and or users generally. The varieties of information services offered by any library depend to a great extent on the quality and experience of the librarians. The library is concerned with the acquisitions, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, study and consultation. Conventionally, information services include bibliography compilation, indexing, abstracting, selective dissemination of information, current awareness service etc which makes it possible for researchers to access required information without delay. With the availability of ICT in libraries, the above mentioned services are provided with relative ease through the internet facilities. That is why it becomes mandatory for all academic libraries to combine the provision of both conventional and modern information resources so as to meet today's information demand of the researchers.

Utilization of information resources and services is the extent to which the resources and services of the library actually meet the purpose for teaching, learning and research. The extent to which information resources and services are utilized in academic libraries is usually captured by the library statistics which is compiled on daily basis by the library staff. It therefore, becomes pertinent that in order to gauge the extent to which library resources and services are utilized, the library staff must be proactive in providing statistics of usage on daily basis. This will serve as encouragement or other wise to the sponsors of the library.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that there is a dare need for the provision of library and information resources and services and the need to evaluate same for the actualization of goals of higher institutions on one hand and advancement of lecturer's career on the other hand.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Aguolu in Okiy (2011) argued that academic library is the heart of the institution. This according to Okiy is because the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any institution depend largely on the state of health and excellence of its library which is its life wire. To buttress this point, Okiy cited the British University Grants Committee as having noted that an adequate library is not only the basis of all teaching and study; it is the essential condition of research without which additions cannot be made to the sum of human knowledge. Bitagi and Udoudou (2013) argued that the availability of all forms and types of information resources in academic libraries is highly imperative if these libraries are to meet the information needs of lecturers in their parent institutions. The authors however, observed that due to high cost of information resources and related problems, information resources in most academic libraries are inadequate and outdated to meet the demand of current users.

Adewumi (2003) found out that despite the problems of inadequate and obsolete information resources, library users, researchers still rely heavily on their use. The consequent result of this action is the production of sub-standard product and research output which will contribute minimally to Nigeria's development in every sector of national economy. Gbaje and Okojie (2010) identifies that university libraries in Nigeria, like all other university libraries provide information services that enable users to locate, evaluate and access information in a variety of formats. In that respect therefore, academic libraries in Imo state are expected to provide all necessary information services that best meet the information needs of their numerous users. Unfortunately however, Odusanya and Osinulu in Gbaje and Okojie(2010) lamented the gross under funding of state universities which has adverse effect on the academic library collections and subsequently, the services they could offer. Cox and Janti (2013) identified use as an activity which measures the worth of an item to a library or information system. Use is therefore, the single criterion which could be used to determine the reason for retaining a document within the collection of a library, and use is essential in guiding the collection development effort of

the library. Use also justifies the need for institutions to adequately finance their libraries or not. Consequently, the need to use the types of information resources provided by the academic libraries in Imo state.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the types of services offered by academic libraries in Imo state.
- Ascertain the level of use of information resources and services by lecturers in academic institutions in Imo state
- Ascertain the suitability of information resources provided by academic libraries in Imo state
- Determine the factors militating against provision of information resources and services in academic libraries in Imo state.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

Descriptive survey research was used for the study. The population of the study was put at 3160 lecturers from the six academic institutions in Imo state. The sample size of the study is 316 based on proportionate sampling technique where 10% of lecturers in each institution and invariably 10% of the total population were selected. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used as methods of data collection. Data collected were computed and analyzed using descriptive statistics, percentages and frequency tables.

5. RESULTS

Table 1: Response Rate

S/N	Institutions	Population	Percentage	Response
1.	Federal University of Technology Owerri	800	80	70
2.	Imo State University, Owerri	700	70	55
3.	Federal Polytechnic, Nekede	500	50	45
4.	Alvan Ikwu College of Education Owerri	740	74	61
5.	Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo	300	30	19
6.	Federal College of Land Resources and Technology, Owerri	120	12	10
7.	Total	3160	316	260

No. Administered= 316; No. Returned=260; % of return rate=82.2

Table 1 shows that 316 questionnaire were administered while 260 representing 88.2% were returned and found usable.

Table 2: Types of Information Resources Provided

S/N	Information Resources	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Textbooks in all subjects	250	96.1
2.	Technical journals	102	39.2
3.	Technical reports	102	39.2
4.	Thesis/Dissertations	150	57.6
5.	Reference books of all types	180	69.2
6.	Newspapers/magazines	200	76.9
7.	Standalone computers	100	38.4
8.	Networked computers	96	36.9

Table 2 shows that majority, 250 (96.1%) of the respondents agreed that they were provided with textbooks. This was followed by 200 (76.9%); 180(69.2%) and 150(57.6%) of the respondents who agreed that they were provided with newspapers/magazines; reference books of all types and theses/dissertations, respectively. On the other hand, the Table further reveals that minority of the respondents, 102 (39.2%); 100 (38.4%) and 96(36.9%) indicated that they were provided with technical journals, technical reports, standalone computers and networked computers respectively. A follow

up interview with heads of the institutions libraries indicated that most of the information resources provided were inadequate while those in print format though many but were equally obsolete.

Table 3: Types of Services Offered

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	30	11.5
2.	Bibliography compilation	40	15.3
3.	Indexing and abstracting	40	15.3
4.	Current awareness	109	41.9
5.	Photocopying	250	96.1
6.	Bindery	180	69.2
7.	Loan of books	250	96.1
8.	Internet facilities	111	42.6

Table 3 reveals that majority, 250 (96.1%) of the respondents agreed to have been offered with loan of books and photocopying services respectively. These were followed by 180 (69.2%); 111 (42.6%) and 109(41.9%) who indicated that they were offered with bindery, Internet facilities and current awareness services in that order. Unfortunately however, only 30 (15.3%) of the lecturers respectively agreed that bibliography compilation and indexing and abstracting services were offered them by academic libraries in Imo state.

Table 4: Extent of use of Information Resources and Services provided.

S/N	Extent of Use	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very high extent	50	19.2
2.	High extent	61	23.4
3.	Low extent	77	29.6
4.	Very low extent	72	27.6
5.	Total	260	100

Table 4 reveals the extent of use of information resources and services provided by academic libraries. 50(19.2%) of the lecturers use the resources and services to a very high extent. This was followed by 61(23.4%) who use it to a high extent. However, 77(29.6%) and 72(27.6%) use the information resources and services provided to a low and very low extent.

Table 5: Level of Satisfaction Derived

S/N	Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Highly satisfied	45	17.3
2.	Very satisfied	66	25.4
3.	Moderately satisfied	120	46.2
4.	Low satisfaction	29	11.1
5.	Total	260	100

Table 5 reveals that 120 (46.2%) of the respondents were moderately satisfied with the use of information resources and services provided by academic libraries in Imo state. However, the Table further shows that only 45 (17.3%) of the users were highly satisfied with the resources and services provided.

Table 6: Factors Militating against the Provision and Utilization of Information Resources and Services

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Inadequate funding of the library	240	92.3
2.	Lack of qualified and experienced staff	120	46.1
3.	Lack of current and adequate resources	180	69.2
4.	Non orientation/training of users	66	25.3
5.	Inadequate library services	90	34.6
6.	Inadequate library space for lecturers	123	47.3

7.	The period and number of loan is inadequate	45	17.3
8.	Frequent power outage	260	100
9.	High cost of information resources	250	96.1

Table 6 shows that majority, 260 (100%); 250(96.1%); 240(92.3%) of the respondents agreed that frequent power outage, high cost of information resources; inadequate funding of the library, constitute highest militating factors against provision and utilization of information resources and services. These were followed by 180 (69.2%), 123(47.3%), and 120(46.1%) of those who indicated lack of current and adequate resources, inadequate library space for lecturers, and scarcity of qualified and experienced staff, respectively. Inadequate library services 90(34.6%), non orientation/training on library resource use by lecturers, short and restricted number of loans 45(17.3%) were also constraints to utilization of information resources and services, among others.

6. DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 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 despite the fact that efforts has been made to meet the need for which the libraries were established as pointed out by Okiy (2011), that is provision of information resources, a lot more need to be done to updating the quality and currency of information resources in print format while greater efforts should be made to acquire those in non-print format. Table 3 shows that provision of conventional services such as selective dissemination of information, bibliography compilation; indexing and abstracting services were at its lowest ebb. The provision of internet services (111(42.6%)) was also inadequate. This finding is contrary to the view of Bitagi and Udoudoh (2013) who argued that availability of all forms and types of information resources and services in academic libraries is highly imperative if such libraries are to meet the information needs of their researchers. Table 4 shows that a greater number of lecturers, 77+72(149/57.3%) use the information resources and services to a marginally low and very low extent respectively. This action does not justify the resources devoted for library development in academic institutions. In another sense, it will discourage the management of the institutions from improving the budget of libraries because lack of use of library resources and services. This trend if not reversed may slow down research which is one of the major functions of academic institutions.

Table 5 however revealed that majority of lecturers, for one reason or the other were not satisfied with the use of resources and service put in place for them. That is to suggest that there is something wrong with both the resources and services. To improve the utilization of the libraries and satisfactory level of users, the libraries need to be equipped with quality resources and services especially current materials including modern ICT gadgets. Table 6 revealed that funding, in particular was a major factor militating against the provision/ availability of information resources. Odusanya and Osinulu in Gbaje and Okojie (2010) corroborated this finding when they discovered that gross underfunding of state universities has adverse effect on the academic library collections and subsequently the services they could offer. The lecturers were of the view that funding is principal among all factors militating against library development, for if funding level is improved, all other factors will be improved upon.

7. CONCLUSION

The study discovered that provision of information resources in print format are prioritized in academic institutions in Imo state at the expense of those of non-print format. Equally, traditional library services have been abandoned while utilization of resources and services are at its low ebb. However, lecturers were not wholly satisfied with the use of available information resources and services due to certain factors arising from inadequate funding, obsolete information materials, insufficient number of experienced and competent librarians, among others.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in view of the findings of the study:

- Academic libraries should be adequately funded to provide needed information resources and services.
- Qualified and experienced staff should be employed to provide required library information resources and services.
- Current and adequate information resources should be provided in all academic libraries.

- All the lecturers should be trained on how to use the library effectively.
- Lecturers should cultivate the habit of using the library regularly.
- Alternative source of power should be provided for all academic libraries.
- All lecturers should be encouraged to publish books in their areas of specialization to reduce cost and reliance on foreign publications.

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