

A Survey of Students' Satisfaction with Selected Academic Libraries in Kwara State

Oludipe J. T.

University of Ilorin Library, University of Ilorin, Ilorin

Abstract

The study investigated students' satisfaction with selected Nigerian academic libraries. It specifically examined the inter-library loan services in academic libraries and the extent to which users made use of computer in their search for information in academic libraries. Survey method was used to collect data. Data were analyzed by means of frequency counts and simple percentage. The study among others revealed that library guides and catalogues played significant roles in the proper use of library materials.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that academic libraries should embark on inter-library co-operation. Similarly, there should be more emphasis on library instruction and orientation programmes in order to encourage better library use. Finally academic libraries should improve their automation system and make more computers available for students' use.

Introduction

According to Ifidon (1999), academic libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions like the Colleges of Education, Colleges of Technology, Polytechnics and Universities. He stressed further that the major functions of academic libraries are to enable inquirers identify, locate and supply them with copies of these materials for their use. It is interesting to note that in any higher institution, the library is the nerve centre of its main activities. Without libraries, the paramount objectives of the educational institutions cannot be achieved satisfactorily. An ideal library should contain materials that are systematically organized to meet the information needs of both the present and prospective users.

Chweh (1981) is of the view that users are in the best position to determine how the library is successfully meeting their information needs. It is on this basis that the investigation was carried out to ascertain the factors affecting students' satisfaction with three academic libraries in Kwara State.

Specifically, the investigation was designed to ascertain the following:

- i. To examine students' satisfaction with accessibility to library materials.
- ii. To examine students' satisfaction with inter-library loan services.
- iii. To examine students' assessment of the library infrastructural facilities.

- iv. To examine students' assessment of orientation programmes on the use of library.

Literature Review

Ifidon (1999) highlighted the great significance of the university library with the following objectives: provision of materials for undergraduate instruction, term paper, and projects as well as supplementary readings; provision of materials in support of post-graduate research; provision of materials in support of faculty, external and collaborative researches; provision of materials for personal self-development and external relationships and interlibrary co-operation. He further affirmed that the academic library is the best university agency which strives to collect, preserve and organize its materials for effective and easy retrieval of information as well as trying to meet the aims of the institution. Similarly, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) pointed out that the basic tripartite function of any university is to conserve the existing knowledge, to transmit knowledge through teaching, and to create new knowledge through research. They further explained that university library is university's principal instrument in the conservation and comprehensive acquisition of all types of human communications records, published and unpublished.

Staplers' (2001) study on "why are readers giving up their library membership?" stressed that in libraries, users' interest is determined by pleasure derived from reading, which in turn depends on staff commitment and the quality of library collections. He stressed further in the study that low interest on the part of library users was a major factor in readers' failing to renew their library membership.

Erens (1996) investigated over 2000 U.K. academics and discovered that libraries are perceived by their users to be deteriorating because gaining access to important/relevant journals is becoming increasingly difficult and as result, satisfaction with libraries is declining.

Reddy and Talpasai (1993) on their own surveyed the important role periodicals play in the dissemination of information and in research and submitted that libraries all over the world, and particularly in developing countries, are facing numerous problems with regard to their periodicals collection. The authors advocated an increase in the budget of periodicals subscriptions.

Library instruction, also referred to as user education is design by librarians to educate users on how to use the library resources effectively and efficiently. Tiefel (1995) affirmed that user education teaches how to make the most effective use of the library and other information systems encompassing all activities undertaken to help students become efficient users of information. This shows that user education helps students handle other information systems well. Lwehabura (1999) further stressed the implication of information explosion. Being in the information age, there is lot of information that learners and information users need to select carefully. This is necessary because not every

piece of information is useful at all times. Hence, user education will aid students in searching and mastering every information source that suits their needs and meets their academic needs.

Cullen (2001) observed that the traditional academic libraries are facing two major threats namely; a global digital environment and an increasing competition. He submitted that they must improve the quality of their services in order to survive. Peters (1996) also examined the major influences behind the creation of information technology literate library users and agreed that information technology literate users will be a powerful influence on the future of libraries and education generally. Wolpert (1998) examined the prospects, challenges, and newly created services at libraries providing on-line support to remote users. He submitted that distance learning is an emerging educational market of compelling interest to higher education. He further suggested that academic libraries should provide appropriate educational support while improving awareness of the importance of libraries as competitive advantages in distance education. Jacobson and Newkirk (1996) used questionnaire and examined printout of search strategies to measure the impact of librarian instruction and assistance on students' CD-ROM search proficiency. They found some evidence that instruction or assistance had a positive effect on CD-ROM searching skill level, and a majority of students also reported that their search results were valuable which the authors referred to as "high satisfaction level". Henderson (1992) on his own enumerated the benefits of information technology to library users thus:

- i. provision of round-the-clock access to user;
- ii. provision of access to unlimited information from different sources;
- iii. provision of speedy and easy access to information;
- iv. provision of more up-to-date information and;
- v. provision of information flexibility to used by any individual according to his or her requirements.

He stressed further that information technology is a tool which provides opportunity for full organizational restructure in order to provide enhanced user satisfaction, rapid responses and easier operational procedures.

Methodology

A survey method was used for this study. Three selected academic libraries in Kwara State, comprising University of Ilorin, Federal Polytechnic Offa and College of Education Ilorin were used. Based on the year 2002/2003 register booklet, a total number of 3998 were registered users and 10% of the total registered users was used for the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The population for the study consisted of students from the three selected academic institutions in the state, i.e. University of Ilorin, Federal Polytechnic Offa, and College of Education, Ilorin.

Purposive sampling was adopted to select three academic libraries, i.e. University of Ilorin, Federal Polytechnic Offa and College of Education, Ilorin. The choice of three (3) institutions made the findings representative of three types of tertiary institutions that are in the state

Table 1. Sample size for the study.

Name of Institution	Total No. of Registered Student Users	10% of the Total No. of Registered Student Users for the Study
University of Ilorin	1,615	162
Federal Polytechnic, Offa	1,303	130
College of Education	1,080	108
Total	3,998	400

Source: Register booklets for the year 2002/2003 in academic libraries of selected institutions

Based on the above table, the sample size for the study was 400 being 10% of total number of registered students in the selected academic libraries.

The distribution of questionnaire was carried out during the hours of 9 am and 11 am each day in each library. This was to ensure that a student did not receive a copy of the questionnaire more than once. Moreover, the selection of respondents was based on systematic sampling. At the entrance of the libraries, every fifth respondent was selected among the students that came into the library for the day. This was continued until all the questionnaires meant for each library were exhausted.

Research Instrument

A four-point rating scale was used for the study. They were 4, 3, 2, 1: a high score denoting strongly satisfied and a low score for strongly dissatisfied as follows:

'SS' Strongly Satisfied	4
'S' Satisfied	3
'D' Dissatisfied	2
'SD' Strongly Dissatisfied	1

Administration of Research Instrument

The researcher sought permission of the institution librarians in the selected libraries for administration of the questionnaire. The researcher thereafter administered the questionnaire to students personally.

The distribution of questionnaire to students started with determination of every fifth student that came into the library. This eliminated possible bias. The respondents were informed to drop the questionnaire with the porters on their way out of the library.

Data Analysis

Three academic libraries were used for the study. These are University of Ilorin Library, Federal Polytechnic Library, Offa and College of Education Library, Ilorin. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered, out of which 374, that is 93.5% were returned

Institution Library	Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number Returned	Percentage
University of Ilorin, Ilorin	162	162	100
Federal Polytechnic, Offa	130	120	92.3
College of Education, Ilorin	108	92	85.2
Total	400	374	93.5

Effect of Library inputs for satisfactory use of collections.

The extent to which the libraries assist students in getting materials they need was also tested with the use of various variables like shelf guides, library catalogue, book arrangement, etc. Their responses are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Various Inputs by Libraries

INPUTS	SS	S	D	SD	Total
Shelf Guides	120 (32.1)	196 (52.4)	48 (12.8)	10 (2.7)	374 (100%)
Library Catalogue	101 (27.0)	212 (56.7)	50 (13.4)	24 (6.4)	374 (100%)
Book Arrangement	117 (31.3)	158 (42.2)	75 (20.1)	24 (6.4)	374 (100%)
Help from Staff	82 (21.9)	184 (49.2)	83 (22.2)	25 (6.7)	374 (100%)
Recency of books	41 (11.0)	192 (51.3)	110 (29.4)	31 (8.3)	374 (100%)
Book lending	97 (25.9)	189 (50.5)	58 (15.5)	30 (8.0)	374 (100%)
Reservation of heavily used books	97 (25.9)	192 (51.3)	92 (24.6)	24 (6.4)	374 (100%)

Table 3 shows that inputs made by libraries to give satisfactory services to students in academic libraries are achieving its objectives. However, shelf guides and catalogues play the greater role, as over 80% of the respondents attested to their relevance. Recency of books thus plays the least role in this regard.

Users' Assessment of Interlibrary Loan Services

It is very natural that academic libraries cannot provide all that is required by their users in spite of their large collection development drive. As such, there is the need to assist users in getting what they require from another library in order to satisfy user needs. These therefore make it necessary for users to rate the interlibrary loan services of their libraries. Students' responses on interlibrary loans are therefore shown in table 4.

Table 4: Students' satisfaction with inter -library loan services

FACTORS	SS	S	D	SD	TOTAL
Issuance of letters	29 (7.8)	137 (36.6)	164 (43.9)	44 (11.8)	374 (100%)
Prompt attention of staff	69 (18.4)	190 (50.8)	94 (25.1)	21 (5.6)	374 (100%)
Approachability to reference librarian	71 (19.0)	202 (54.0)	85 (22.7)	16 (4.3)	374 (100%)
Pursuance of requests	26 (7.0)	129 (34.50)	189 (50.5)	30 (8.0)	374 (100%)
Availability of the requests from other libraries	29 (7.8)	122 (32.6)	180 (48.1)	43 (11.5)	374 (100%)

The fact that efforts were made by the library through issuance of referral letter as attested to by 44.4% of respondents, prompt attention 69.2% and approachability of staff 73.0% is an indication that libraries are insensitive to the issue of interlibrary loan. Furthermore, 41.5% of the respondents agreed that requests are pursued and 40.4% get their request which is not too bad.

However, as stated earlier, economic factor and level of ICT could play an interactive role in reducing the level of requests pursued and obtained.

Assessment of Library Environment for Conducive Reading

Table 5: Environmental Factors in the Library

FACTORS	SS	S	D	SD	TOTAL
Furniture	74 (19.8)	202 (54.0)	73 (19.5)	25 (6.7)	374 (100%)
Lighting system	97 (25.9)	196 (52.4)	63 (16.8)	18 (4.5)	374 (100%)
Ventilation	91 (24.3)	206 (55.1)	55 (14.7)	22 (5.9)	374 (100%)
Noise control	69 (18.4)	139 (37.2)	108 (28.9)	58 (15.5)	374 (100%)
Provision of toilets	34 (9.1)	43 (11.5)	115 (30.7)	182 (48.7)	374 (100%)
Provision of junk magazines & newspapers	99 (26.5)	185 (49.5)	64 (17.1)	26 (7.0)	374 (100%)
Opening hours	89 (23.8)	190 (50.8)	65 (17.1)	30 (8.0)	374 (100%)

Based on table 5, most respondents were satisfied with the furniture provided for them in the selected academic libraries. This is coupled with the lighting system that makes reading easy for the users in the libraries. However, majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the inability of the academic libraries to provide users with toilet facilities in the libraries under study.

Effect of Library Instruction and orientation programme on students' use of Library

Table 6: Students' satisfaction with library instruction and orientation programme.

FACTORS	SS	S	D	SD	TOTAL
Understanding of library use	92 (24.6)	227 (60.7)	44 (11.8)	11 (2.9)	374 (100%)
Impact on student academic performance	111 (29.7)	210 (56.1)	44 (11.8)	9 (2.4)	374 (100%)
Level of satisfaction of the programme	52 (13.9)	237 (63.4)	71 (19.0)	14 (3.7)	374 (100%)
Organization of the lecture	50 (13.4)	203 (54.3)	96 (25.7)	25 (6.7)	374 (100%)
Competence of the instructors	64 (17.1)	216 (57.8)	71 (19.0)	23 (6.1)	374 (100%)

Table 6 shows that respondents are satisfied with the competence of instructors on use of library. Furthermore, the effects of the competence of the instructors was also revealed in responses of the students on the understanding of library use.

The Effects of Library automation on effective use of the Library

Table 7: Assessment of automation system in the libraries

FACTORS	SS	S	D	SD	TOTAL
Efficiency in getting information	45 (12.0)	170 (45.5)	12 (29.9)	47 (12.6)	374 (100%)
Availability of computers	22 (5.9)	75 (20.1)	128 (34.2)	149 (39.8)	374 (100%)
Provision of user instruction	36 (9.6)	150 (40.1)	123 (32.9)	65 (17.4)	374 (100%)
Level of accessibility to computers	15 (5.0)	27 (7.2)	134 (35.8)	198 (52.9)	374 (100%)
Assistance given by library staff	13 (3.5)	16 (12.3)	110 (29.4)	205 (54.8)	374 (100%)

Table 7 indicates that respondents are satisfied with the efficiency of computer in getting their required information. However, users were strongly dissatisfied with the non-availability of computers for their use in the selected libraries.

As evident in Table 7, in libraries where computer are available there was very low accessibility to its use by students. This was indicated by 88.7% being the highest percentage of respondents that were either strongly dissatisfied or just dissatisfied with low accessibility to computers.

Also, it seems automation in the libraries needs general improvement ranging from provision of more computers for students use to training and retraining of library staff in order that they would be of assistance to students in time of need.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that shelf guides and catalogues play significant roles in the proper use of library materials, thus corroborating Nwalo's (2000) assertion that public catalogue is an important reference tool in the library and that it serves the interest of both the library staff and its users.

The study equally established the fact that efforts were made by libraries in assisting students to get required information from other libraries through interlibrary loan services. It is interesting to note in Ajibero (1998) that interlibrary loan subsystem would enhance library-to-library communication. He explained further that with automation, interlibrary loan services would become more efficient and eliminate time-consuming labour intensive tasks associated with interlibrary, borrowing and lending.

The fact that over 50% of the respondents were satisfied with each of the environmental factors except the provision of toilets was revealed in this study. Fidzani and Oladokun's (2001) study pointed out that library building should provide well-planned, secure space for users and staff, and space for the provision of services and programmes.

Furthermore, the study showed the importance of library instruction to students' use of libraries. The responses agreed with Ajibero (1998) when he emphasized the need for library instruction by both library educators and librarians in our universities. He explained further that the skill needed in effective use of library resources is not usually acquired easily by both students and academic staff. Hence, libraries must ensure that the users are aware of the library resources and how to use them.

It has equally been discovered from the study that enough computers were not made available for students' use in search of their information needs. This indicates that even though students are very conscious of the role computers play in effective library and information services yet, the non-availability of set of computers incapacitated the students. The responses agreed with Madu and Dirusu (2002) that affirmed in their study that the search for information now is assuming a dimension whereby and information user is increasingly becoming conscious of individualistic approach. They stated further that the traditional information sources like encyclopaedia, directories and world of learning would not be able to provide the above opportunity.

Conclusion

From the above findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

- i. Inputs by the library through library guides, library catalogues and proper arrangement of books assist students in the proper use of library.
- ii. Library instruction and orientation programmes improve students understanding of the use of library.
- iii. Most students are yearning for proper use of computers in search of information needs in all the academic libraries under review.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions reached, the following recommendations are hereby made;

- i. Academic libraries with similar interests should be involved in interlibrary co-operation in order to share their resources for the benefit of their students or users.

- ii. Libraries should provide toilets for students within the library building.
- iii. More emphasis should be on library instruction and orientation programme in order to encourage better library use.
- iv. Academic libraries should improve their automation system and make more computers available for student's use.

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