

Availability, Access to and Level of Use of Academic Library Information Resources; Study of Selected Academic Libraries in South-Western Nigeria

Ishola, Bolanle Clifford, CLN*

DIL (UNIBEN), Bsc (AAU), MLIS (University of Ibadan), University Librarian, Oduduwa University
Ipetumodulle-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
Email:sholacbf@gmail.com

Obadare Sunday Oluwatimi, CLN

Herakish Oluwasanmi Library, Obafermi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife
Soobadare2003@yahoo.com

Abstract

In this paper, the authors examined the availability, access to and level of use of academic library information resources of selected academic libraries in South-western Nigeria. The objectives were to: determine the extent to which information resources are available for use; find out the extent of access to these information sources; find out the frequency of use of the information resources; determine the barriers to the use of information resources. The survey research method was used. The data collection instrument for the study was the questionnaire method. The major findings were that there is high level of availability of information sources in the selected Nigeria Universities studied; there is high level of accessibility of information sources in the selected Nigerian Universities studied; majority of the respondents used information sources daily. Services provided in the library are conventional, reactive and product oriented rather than proactive, customer oriented, innovative, and augmentative. Although, libraries tend to build up a vast resource collection, they provide insufficient user oriented programmes. The study recommended among others that Librarians should explore all available means, including lobbying, asserting their rights where necessary, request for gifts, donations and all wholesome means to ensure constant funding of their libraries ensure availability of current information resources and factor in modern ICT facilities and innovative approaches into their library services to further improve access and use of their services.

Keywords: Availability of Information Resources; Access to Information Resources; Use of Information Resources; University libraries- Southwest, Nigeria

1. Introduction

A library is an agency, which engages in the collection, Processing, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users (Oladokun and Salisu, 1993). Akande, (2008), described library as a collection of information materials and the place where the materials are kept for consultation. The person who makes the stored information accessible to users is referred to as the 'librarian'. A collection of information resources like books in room without a systematic organization to ease the retrieval does not make a library. Hence the library is a repository of various forms of recorded information which may be in print and non-print formats such as books, periodical, reference materials, manuscripts, magazines, theses, gazettes etc. Other non-printed materials like microforms, films, magnetic tapes, slides, video tapes and data stored in electronic media like discs, CD-ROMs can also be found in libraries. According to Okunoye (2007) who cited Gregorian (1998) an investment in libraries, is an act of faith in the continuity of life. He went further to represent the library in the following words;

Libraries contain the heritage of humanity: the record of its triumph and failure, its intellectual, scientific and artistic achievements, and its collective memory. They are source of knowledge, scholarship and wisdom. They are an institution without, where the left and the right God and the devil are together classified and retained in order to teach us what to emulate and what not to repeat. Libraries are in short the mirror held up to the face of human kind, the diary of human race. Libraries are not only repositories of past human endeavour, they are instrument of civilization. They provide tools for learning, a laboratory of human aspiration, a window to the future. They are a source of self-renewal, intellectual growth, and hope. In this land and everywhere on earth, they are a medium of progress, autonomy, empowerment, independence and self-determination. They have always provided and will always provide place and space for imaginative recreation, for imagination rebirth.

The basic purpose of academic libraries, according to Buckland (2002) is to provide access to information". In order to be able to do this, Ochoyera (2007) documented that libraries and other information related

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