

Current trends in library patronage by faculties in Nigerian universities: A study of Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho, Nigeria

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Received: 19 October 2012, accepted: 04 February 2013

The study, through a questionnaire survey, investigates library patronage by faculties of Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Three hundred and fifty (350) respondents were selected using stratified random sampling out of a total population of 700 from six faculties. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between library patronage of lecturers and level of awareness. The study also found out that majority of respondents used the library very frequently and most of the respondents used the library daily for class preparation, to seek information for general knowledge and specific interest. The study identified unavailability and inaccessibility of current information materials, poor reference and document delivery services etc as barriers to library patronage.

Keywords: Library patronage, Faculties, Nigerian universities, University libraries, Ladoke Akintola university

Introduction

The role of libraries in research, teaching and learning processes in the institutions of learning cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, the library provides an alternative that can make available the information sources and resources for the intellectual growth of both the students and lecturers of the university community. The library undoubtedly enhances the intellectual and academic input of the lecturers of the university community.

It is said succinctly that no system of education is complete without well-equipped libraries, with services operationalized either directly through contact with students and lecturers or indirectly through activities carried out behind the scene¹. Libraries, especially those attached to universities or any educational institution are to serve as an auxiliary to a parent institution in carrying out their objectives. It is also an important intellectual resource of the university community, and helps them to fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research².

Faculty or Lecturers of the university community are highly educated patrons with advanced degrees in their subjects of specialization. They patronize mainly academic and special libraries and the services required by them are specialized. Library patronage by the lecturers of the university community becomes

indispensable due to the fact that the lecturers depend largely and almost entirely on the availability and accessibility of information resources in the university library. Therefore, libraries must define and fulfill a reconfigured set of roles for serving their institutions.

The quality of information sources in libraries has an influence on the patronage of the library by lecturers of the university community. There would always be a correlation between quality of intellectual materials available and the quality of research and scholarship; that no educational system would ever be greater than the quality of its lecturers; and that teachers that are starved of current information sources would be ill-prepared to produce quality graduates³. However, libraries cannot play their roles if faculties do not make use of them. Researchers have affirmed that faculties were patronizing libraries⁴. They however advised that follow up studies must be carried out from time to time in order to identify new challenges and proffer solutions to them. The need to identify current trends in library patronage is what has prompted this study.

University libraries in Nigeria

Libraries in Nigeria came into being during the colonial administration in the west and later spread to

other areas as a result of socio-economic and political developments at that time. The history of university libraries development in Nigeria dates back to pre-independence when the University of Ibadan and its library were established in 1948. As pointed out by previous writers, there has been an upsurge in the establishment of educational institutions at all levels, especially university education⁵.

Successive Nigerian governments have continued to invest strongly in education. University libraries, being integral academic parts of the universities, generally emerged simultaneously with their parent institutions.

Currently there are about one hundred and ten Universities in Nigeria; one of which is the Ladoko Akintola University located in Ogbomoso, Southwest Nigeria.

Literature review

University libraries are service institutions. They exist in order to enable users to make the most effective use of the resources and services of the library. These libraries allow access to their collections and provide services to the users. University libraries are expected to convert potential users into habitual users. To this end, the objective of the university library has been to increase access to resources and information, and basic access has been provided through selection, acquisition and organization of resources⁶. The role of academic library should among others broaden the resources in support of academic enquiry and discovery⁷. University libraries by their very nature are expected to acquire, process into retrievable form, and make available the much needed information to the university community and the public at large who may require them for their various teaching and research activities. The accomplishment of these functions depends on the available stock of information sources in the university libraries. Such information sources include textbooks, journals, indexes and abstracts, monographs, theses, and dissertations, newspapers and magazines, government publications, research and technical reports, encyclopedias, manuscripts, publications of information organizations, patents and standards as well as microforms. Information resources may be classified as: fact oriented – Registers (manual and computerized catalogues and files), Problem oriented – official documents, general purpose – Experts, books, reports, journals, newspapers etc⁸. No matter

how large the stock of a library is, if its services, resources and facilities are not accessible, such a library will not attain its objectives⁹. The satisfaction of library users in sourcing information in the university library is generally taken to be a surrogate measure of success¹⁰.

Access to adequate library resources is essential to the attainment of superior academic skills¹¹. Quality attributes applicable to libraries and information services have been identified to include: performance (a library meets its most basic purpose), features (aspect of the service applied to users), conformance (the service meets the agreed standard including standards and protocols), durability (sustainability over a period of time), currency of information, serviceability (the level of help available to users), aesthetics and image (physical and web-based services); perceived quality (users' view of the service); and usability (particularly relevant to the electronic services)¹².

It is very important for the library staff of the university libraries to focus more on the utilization of information resources provided for the patrons, because university libraries resources are considered a good measure of institutions' excellence and quality¹³. However, much research has not been carried out on the factors affecting patronage of the library by the faculties of the university community but the ones carried out showed that because of economic recession, especially in Africa, acquisition of relevant and current books and journals is a very difficult task for most university libraries and is a major factor affecting library patronage. Other factors influencing library patronage by faculties of the university community include inadequacy of library materials, inadequate funding, non-availability of library resources probably due to mutilation and stealing by delinquent users and lack of integration of library resources and services in planning, administration, scarcity and shortage of foreign exchange¹⁴.

Evaluating the patronage of library and information system is one of the major concerns and an integral part of the university libraries. The purpose of evaluation is to gather information on how the library is accomplishing its objectives, with a view to improving the delivery of library services¹⁵. Furthermore, library patronage study as an aspect of user studies is a vital aid for effective planning and management in university libraries¹⁶. A major problem in patronage which libraries must deal with

is the explosion in the number of people aspiring to benefit from the book culture without a plan for the library to meet their information needs¹⁷. So, the university libraries have roles to play in order to increase the library patronage by the lecturers of the university community and hence their concern is to provide the needed information both in print and non-print media to meet the information needs of their patrons. In view of the above, the university libraries can improve the faculties' patronage by providing essential materials to support their teaching and research mandates, making sure that the materials and resources are in a retrievable form, ensuring that the university libraries are properly funded so as to provide necessary information needed by the faculties, ensuring adequate security of the library materials, creating awareness of the available facilities and resources for the lecturers and providing adequate and current information materials in relation to their various disciplines¹⁸. However, there is dearth of literature on current trends in library patronage by faculties in Nigerian Universities, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study is to investigate the extent of library patronage by the faculties of Ladoke Akintola University.

The following are the specific objectives of this study:

- To identify the library resources and facilities available in the Ladoke Akintola University;
- To ascertain the frequency of patronage of the library information materials available by the faculties of the Ladoke Akintola university;
- To determine the reasons for faculties' patronage of their libraries;
- To determine if there is any significant relationship between library patronage by the faculties and level of awareness of library materials available ;
- To determine the relationship between faculties' areas of interest and their library patronage;
- To determine the level of the faculties' satisfaction with available library resources for their lectures and research activities; and
- To identify the challenges that militate against adequate library patronage and factors which promote library use by lecturers.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey type of research design. The population of this study is lecturers of the Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho from faculties of Environmental Science, Management Science, Pure and Applied Science, Basic Medical Science, Engineering and Agriculture. The total population of lecturers in the six faculties is seven hundred (700), out of which 350 were used as sample for the study (Table 1).

The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study and data collection

was done using a questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents was subjected to both simple descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of frequency counts and percentages in order to show the responses of the respondents to the questions and as well as describe the findings of the study.

Analysis

The analysis discussed data collected from the sample of 350 respondents from six faculties of Ladoke Akintola University Ogbomosho.

Educational qualifications of respondents

Table 2 shows the educational qualifications of the respondents. Majority of the respondents 331(94.6%) did not respond to the question thereby creating difficulty in determining the level of skilled manpower of the selected university.

However, 8 (2.3%) respondents were Ph.D degree holders, 5 (1.4%) master degree holders and 6 (1.7%) had bachelor degrees.

Table 1—Population and sample size

Faculty	Population	Sample
Faculty of Environmental Science	120	60`
Faculty of Management Science	120	60
Faculty of Pure and Applied Science	110	55
Faculty of Basic Medical Science	100	50
Faculty of Engineering	140	70
Faculty of Agriculture	110	55
Total	700	350

Table 2—Educational qualifications of respondents

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No response	331	94.6
HND/BSc.	6	1.7
Msc.	5	1.4
Ph.D	8	2.3
Total	350	100.0

Work experience of respondents

Table 3 shows the years of work experience of the respondents. The table revealed that the greatest percentage (31.1%) of the work experience fell between 6 to 10 years.

Work activities of respondents

Table 4 shows the work activities of the respondents which were measured on 4 point Likert scale- often, very often, occasionally and never. It was found that majority of the respondents were engaged in interacting with the students with 220(62.9%) for often, 66 (18.9%) for very often. About 38 respondents with 10.9% did that occasionally and very insignificant number never engaged in such work activities. Other activities such as research activities had 164 (46.9%) for often, 123 (35.1%) for very often

and 63(18%) for occasionally. Building opportunities and careers for students had 173 (49.4%) for often, 106 (30.3 %), 19 (5.4%) for occasionally and 52 (14.9%) for never. Provision of information to colleagues and students had 153 (43.7%) for often, 95 (27.1%) for very often, 56 (16%) for occasionally and 46 (13.1%) for never. Brainstorming had 151 (43.1%) for often, 130 (37.1%) for very often, 67 (19.1%) for occasionally and 2(0.6%) for never. Lecturing had a majority of 146 (41.7%) for often, evaluation of students had a majority of 159 (45.4%) in very often while developing teaching materials for academic programmes also had a majority of 168 (48%) in very often. From the results, it shows that the highest on the scale was interacting with students and the lowest on the scale were the provision of information to colleagues and students. Under normal circumstances lecturing should have the first priority of the respondents as it appears that majority of the respondents preferred interacting with students. Hence, lecturers took all their work activities very seriously.

Reasons for patronizing the library

Table 5 shows the reasons for patronizing the library by the respondents. It was discovered that majority of the respondents patronized the library for general knowledge [165(47.1%)] followed by class

Table 3—Work experience of respondents

No. of years	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 yrs	57	16.3
6 – 10 yrs	103	31.1
11 – 15 yrs	90	25.7
16 – 20 yrs	59	16.9
21 – 25 yrs	24	6.9
26 – 30 yrs	6	1.7
> 30 yrs	5	1.4
Total	350	100

Table 4—Work activities of respondents

Work activities	Very often	%	Often	%	Occasionally	%	Never	%
Interacting with students	66	18.9	220	62.9	38	10.9	26	7.4
Research activities	123	35.1	164	46.9	63	18.0	-	-
Lecturing	80	22.9	146	41.7	124	35.4	-	-
Building opportunities and carriers for students	106	30.3	173	49.4	19	5.4	52	14.9
Brain storming for solution to identified academic problems	130	37.1	151	43.1	67	19.1	2	.6
Evaluation of students performances	159	45.4	137	39.1	53	15.1	1	.3
Provision of information to colleagues and students	95	27.1	153	43.7	56	16.0	46	13.1
Developing teaching materials for academic programmes	168	48.0	125	35.7	55	15.7	2	.6

N = 350

Table 5—Distribution of respondents' reasons for patronizing the library

Field of interest	Agree	%	Strongly agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly disagree	%
Class preparation	153	43.7	184	52.6	9	2.6	4	1.1
Research	136	38.9	163	46.6	49	14.0	2	.6
Recreation	118	33.7	110	31.4	92	26.3	30	8.6
General knowledge	165	47.1	142	40.6	12	3.4	31	8.9

preparation [153(43.7%)], research [136(38.9%)] and recreation [118(33.7%)]. This implies that most of the respondents were less engaged in recreational activities but preferred to be engaged in general knowledge, class preparation and research.

Frequency of use of the library

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents based on the frequency of library patronage by lecturers of Ladoké Akintola University, Ogbomoshó. Results shows that majority of the respondents agreed in affirmative that they patronized the library at least once-a-day [235 (67.1%)] while 115(32.9%) respondents stated that they never patronized the library on a daily basis. Majority of the respondents

Table 6—Frequency of respondents' use of the library

Frequency of patronage	Yes	%	No	%
Once a day	235	67.1	115	32.9
Once a week	155	44.3	195	55.8
1-3 times a week	163	46.6	187	53.4
4-5 times a week	212	60.6	138	39.4
Once in 2 weeks	156	44.6	194	55.5
1-3 times a month	98	28.0	252	72.0
4-5 times a month	131	37.4	219	62.6
Less than once	128	36.6	227	63.4
Not at all	123	35.1	217	64.9

N = 350

also patronized the library 4-5 times a week [212 (60.6%)]. This value seemed to be on a high side compared to the respondents that patronized the library 1-3 times in a month with 98(28.0%) which was the lowest in the scale. This implies that on a general note, lecturer of the Ladoké Akintola University patronized the library frequently for their teaching and research mandates.

Use of library materials and services

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents were aware of the available library products and services, hence, they made use of them. Nevertheless, majority of the respondents never made use of some of the library materials and services. Services such as telephone services were never used by the respondents [128(36.6%)] in the library. Seventy nine i.e. (22.6%) never used the selective dissemination services provided by the library. This implies that the management of the selected University Library should as a matter of urgency improve on the SDI services. It also revealed that some of the library materials like books 189(84.9%); conference proceedings 124(35.4%); research reports 137(39.1%); government publications 123(35.1%); bulletins/newsletters 132(37.7%) etc., were consulted often and very often. Other library resources such as journals/periodical 183(62.3%) were used often.

Table 7—Frequency of use of library materials and services available

Types of material	Often	%	Very often	%	Occasionally	%	Never	%
Periodicals/journals	183	52.3	122	34.9	44	12.6	1	.3
Books/monographs	122	34.9	189	54.0	38	10.9	1	.3
Conference Proceedings	124	35.4	100	28.6	105	30.0	21	6.0
Research reports	137	39.1	113	32.3	39	11.1	61	17.4
Government publications	123	35.1	76	21.7	111	31.7	40	11.4
Feasibility reports	136	38.9	72	20.6	98	28.0	44	12.6
Bulletin/Newsletters	169	48.3	74	21.1	71	20.3	36	10.3
Newspapers/magazines	132	37.7	116	33.1	83	23.7	19	5.4
Trade literature	163	46.6	84	24.0	86	24.6	17	4.9
Gazette	166	47.4	68	19.4	52	14.9	64	18.3
Patent to standards	134	38.3	51	14.6	104	29.7	61	17.4
Radio/Television	110	31.4	103	29.4	70	20.0	67	19.1
Internet/mail services	107	30.6	118	33.7	75	21.4	50	14.3
On-line Databases/OPAC	62	17.7	123	35.1	85	24.3	80	22.9
Telephone services	52	14.9	93	26.6	77	22.0	128	36.6
Inter-lib. Loan services	59	16.9	114	32.6	67	19.1	110	31.4
Lending services	102	29.1	78	22.3	86	24.6	84	24.0
SDI	6.6	18.9	145	41.4	60	17.1	79	22.6
Reprographic services	144	41.1	101	28.9	83	23.7	22	6.3

N = 350

Table 8—Correlation between frequency of library patronage and level of awareness of the library materials available

Variables	X	SD		Freq. of library patronage	Level of awareness
Freq. of library patronage	23.7819	6.2346	Pearson correlation	1.000	.088
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.098
			N	350	350
Level of awareness	10.94	10.945	Pearson correlation	.088	1.000
			Sig (2=tailed)	.098	
			N	350	350

Table 9—Correlation between frequency of library patronage and lecturers' interest

Variables	X	SD		Freq. of library patronage	Lecturers' interest
Freq. of library patronage	23.7819	6.2346	Pearson correlation	1.000	.097
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.068
			N	350	350
Lecturers' interest	14.1558	1.8938	Pearson correlation	.097	1.000
			Sig (2=tailed)	.068	
			N	350	350

Relationship between frequency of library patronage and level of awareness of the library materials available

Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation between frequency of library patronage by the lecturers of Ladoke Akintola University and their level of awareness of the library materials and services available in the library for their consultation. It is obvious that frequency of library patronage positively related to the level of awareness of the library materials and services available. This indicates that creation of awareness by the management of the libraries is very crucial to the enhancement of greater patronage. Therefore, the extent to which libraries create awareness of the available resources determines the accomplishment of the lecturers patronizing the library.

Relationship between frequency of library patronage and lecturers' interest

Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation tables between frequency of library patronage by the lecturers of Ladoke Akintola University and their areas of interest. It was found that the areas of interest of the lecturers determined their level of patronage of the library. This implies that the lecturers of Ladoke Akintola University Ogbomosho patronize the library, depending on their particular interest at the moment which could be for research, class preparation, and general knowledge or for recreation.

Library resources and facilities

Table 10 shows the library resources and facilities available in selected university. Gazettes

Table 10—Resources and facilities available in the library

Sl. No.	Items	Available	%	Not Available	%
1	Research reports	324	75.8	26	7.4
2	Lending	267	76.3	83	23.7
3	Book (monographs)	326	93.2	24	6.9
4	Gazette	331	94.6	19	5.4
5	Bulletins/ Newsletters	292	83.4	58	16.6
6	Conference proceedings	308	87.9	42	12.0
7	Telephone services	294	84.1	56	16.9
8.	Government publications	298	85.2	52	14.9
9	Newspapers/ magazines	298	88.1	52	14.9
10	Patents/ Standard	278	79.4	72	20.6
11	Online /Data base OPAC	271	77.4	76	22.6
12	Internet/ email service	286	81.5	64	18.3
13	Motion Pictures	304	86.9	46	13.1
14	Graphs/Charts	277	79.2	73	20.9
15	Feasibility reports	266	76.1	84	24.0
16	Interlibrary loan services	295	84.5	55	15.7
17	SDI	263	75.2	87	24.9
18	Maps/Atlases	257	93	93	26.0
19	Periodicals (Journals)	233	66.5	117	33.4
20	Reprographic services	256	72.2	94	26.9
21	Electronic Inf. Services	234	66.6	116	33.9
22	Trade literatures	245	79.0	105	39.0
23	Radio/Television	194	54.7	156	44.6

were ranked highest by the frequency of 331(94.6%), followed by books with frequency count of 3256(93.2%), research reports with 324(75.8%), conference proceedings with 308(87.9%). Few respondents with frequency score of 19 (3.4%) never knew that gazettes were available in the library. Thus, it implies that almost all the lecturers were aware of the availability of the majority of the library's resources and facilities.

Barriers to library patronage

Table 11 shows the inhibitions to library patronage by the faculties of Ladoke Akintola University. Lack of current listing of literatures (50.6%) was ranked highest, inaccessibility of current information materials (50%), epileptic power supply (45.1%), lack of guidance in the use of library information (44%), inadequate library information materials (43.1%), poor attitude and unfriendliness of the library staff (38%), lack of current awareness services (34.9%), obsolete and

outdated journals (25.4%), poor attitude to library staff (23.7%), and lastly non-availability of internet connectivity (17.7%) respectively. This indicates that the management must endeavour to stock the library with current and relevant library materials in order to satisfy the users, and as well encourage patronage. There should also be a stand-by generator to elevate the epileptic power supply as majority of the respondents indicated that, that was a major problem with a high rank of 158(45.1%).

Users' satisfaction with library services and materials

Table 12 shows the level of user's satisfaction with library's services and materials. Users were most dissatisfied with selective dissemination of information (SDI) services (38.9%) followed by Bulletins/Newsletters (36.9%), Patents and Standard (34.3%), Gazette (31.4%), Online Database/OPAC (31.1%) and so on.

Table 11—Barriers to library patronage as given by respondents

Sl. No.	Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Strongly agree		Agree	
		Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
1	Non-availability of current information materials in the library	18	5.1	80	22.9	103	29.4	149	42.6
2.	Lack of current listing of literatures	24	6.9	74	21.1	177	50.6	75	21.4
3	Inaccessibility of current information materials	17	4.9	95	27.1	175	50.0	63	18.0
4	Lack of document delivery services	61	17.4	83	23.7	87	24.9	119	34.0
5	Epileptic power supply	27	7.7	104	29.7	158	45.1	61	17.4
6.	Poor reference services by the library staff	25	7.1	148	42.3	76	21.7	101	28.9
7	Inadequate library information materials	10	2.9	151	43.1	151	43.1	38	10.9
8	Lack of guidance in the use of library information	27	7.7	128	36.6	154	44.0	41	11.7
9	Obsolete and outdated journals	63	18.0	114	32.6	89	25.4	84	24.0
10	Lack of current awareness services	39	11.1	138	39.4	122	34.9	51	14.6
11	Lack of quality information materials	50	14.3	158	45.1	50	14.3	92	26.3
12	Poor attitude of library staff	85	24.3	147	42.0	83	23.7	35	10.0
13	Non-availability of Internet connectivity	107	30.6	123	35.1	95	27.1	25	7.1

Table 12—Level of Users' satisfaction with library services and materials

Sl. No.	Item	Highly Satisfactory		Very Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Dissatisfactory	
		Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
1	Electronic information services	103	29.4	72	20.6	119	34.0	56	16.0
2	Reprographic services	30	8.6	119	34.0	88	25.1	3	0.9
3	Graphic Charts	34	9.7	112	32.0	106	30.3	98	28.0
4	Gazette	36	10.3	82	23.4	122	34.9	110	31.4
5	Periodicals (Journals)	60	17.1	151	43.1	103	29.4	36	10.3
6	Online Database/ OPAC	13	3.7	118	33.7	110	31.4	109	31.1
7	Inter-library loan services	20	5.7	115	32.9	116	33.1	99	28.3
8	Newspapers/ Magazines	24	6.9	140	40.0	106	30.3	80	22.9
9	Selective dissemination of information (SDI)	8	2.3	72	20.6	134	38.3	136	38.9
10	Patents & Standard	12	3.4	85	24.3	133	38.0	120	34.3
11	Government publications	24	6.9	94	26.9	137	39.1	95	27.1
12	Bulletins/ Newsletters	7	2.0	77	22.0	137	39.1	129	36.9
13	Internet/e-mail services	11	3.1	110	31.4	126	36.0	103	29.4
14	The quality of library services	5	1.4	125	35.7	126	36.0	94	26.9
15	Information sources in specific subject discipline	2	0.6	239	69.2	77	22.0	32	9.1
16	Conference proceedings	4	1.1	118	33.7	137	39.1	91	26.0
17	Books (monographs)	4	1.1	199	56.9	102	29.1	45	12.9

N = 350

Conclusion

Stocking a balanced collection of information materials has been the major concern in Nigerian universities. This has been as a result of low budget allocation by the government as well as fluctuations in exchange rate. It is vital that librarians match the needs of patrons specifically lecturers to the available information materials and services. It is believed that these materials and services are the major components of the library system upon which the library services are hinged. The utilization of these available materials indicates how effective a library is, hence its extent of patronage. The respondents were fully aware of the available materials and services, and those materials were utilized for different purposes.

For university libraries to continue to meet up with the expectation of faculties in the face of the current wave in technological advancement there is the need for increased funding of university libraries in order to cope with modern day academic challenges. Libraries should endeavour to stock current and relevant materials especially journals and electronic media resources.

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