Library Usage by Private University Clientele in Southwest Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the frequency of library use by students and staff at four private universities in Southwest Nigeria. Simple Random technique and a self-developed questionnaire were used to collect data from both the staff and students of the four universities. It was found that 66.5% of the respondents did not visit the library website and that 82.4% did not read library newsletter. *On the other hand, 71.5% were satisfied with the services provided by the library and that 72.2% were happy with library open hours.*

I. Introduction

The academic library is at the heart of a university. The purpose of its establishment is to support the educational needs of the host institution.

Roberson (2005) defined "library as an institution that manages the intellectual products of society and processes them in such a manner that the individual can gain access to them readily" (p.48). Library information resources can be in both printed and electronic formats such as books, journals, indexes, newspapers, magazines, reports, CD-ROMs, computers files, microfilms. Library services such as current awareness, reference services, indexing and abstracting, photocopying, printing, and bindery are added services.

Since the academic library is established to serve the needs of its host community, then the services rendered must cut across the community by meeting the needs of all students and staff in the institution.

While technological innovations have enhanced access to information, they have also posed challenges to the existence of libraries. Librarians are encouraged to embrace the ever emerging technologies and use it to achieve their aims of meeting the information needs of their patrons.

II. Objectives of the Study

- ➢ To find out the frequency of library use of the four private universities in Southwest Nigeria.

> ➤ To find out how libraries services can be improved.
> ➤ To find out how users access library information resources and services.

III. Literature Review

Freeman (2005) emphasized that the "academic library as place holds a unique position on campus. No other building can so symbolically and physically represent the academic heart of an institution".

In the present information age, there is a revolution in the information house. According to Ugwuanyi, Okwor, and Ezeji (2011), "there is a migration from print to electronic resources, from the library as a place to the virtual library. 21st century is an era of information economy, and information literacy skill is indispensable to enjoying the economy" (p.93).

Adeogun (2008), as cited by Ugwuanyi, Okwor, and Ezeji (2011),

> called for a knowledge based pedagogy in university education in which both students and faculty acquire information seeking and management skills, e-learning, open access to resources: distance education, interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration enhanced by information and communication technologies. This new learning system is virtual, distributed, problem solving, student-centred is facilitated by global information networking. This reshaping of library services is equally affecting the library as a place. (p. 93)

Popoola (2008) stated that

> university libraries by their very nature are expected to acquire, process into retrievable form, and make available the much needed information to the academic community and the public at large who may require them for their various teaching and research activities. The accomplishment of this function depends on the available stock of information products in the university libraries. (p. 92)

Popoola (2008) went on to say that "Nevertheless, information availability does not mean accessibility and utilisation. University libraries can stimulate primary demands for their products and services through functional library promotion programmes". (p. 92)

One of the library promotion programmes is the current awareness service. Kiscaden (2014), citing Mahesh and Gupta (2008), stated that "Library current awareness services, commonly referred to as 'table of contents' services, historically involved the dissemination of information in the form of print journals or photocopied journal contents routed to library users subscribed to the service" (p. 51).

Due to the changes in technologies and the way libraries now operate, it is pertinent for libraries to adopt a shift from paper-based current awareness to electronic method of current awareness creation in academic libraries. According to Kiscaden (2014), citing Maheshand and Gupta (2008),

As libraries adopted electronic journals, many paper-based current awareness services transitioned to an electronic table of contents service utilizing email alerts or referred users to RSS feeds made available by publishers and database vendors. A common challenge to a library-managed electronic table of contents service is the complexity of managing alerts for hundreds of electronic journals for multiple patrons. More often, libraries make individual users responsible for subscribing to email alerts or RSS feeds on their own, effectively transferring the responsibility of subscribing to, filtering, and managing incoming information to the user. (p. 51)

Despite the number of discovery tools available, library users are often unaware of journals and other information materials available in an electronic format through their library. Weingart and Anderson (2000), stated that "Information management tools have become necessary in our current information environment; with the abundance information available, keeping up-to-date with new information in a discipline can be overwhelming" (p. 127).

Kiscaden (2014) concluded that "Therein exists an opportunity for libraries—academic, special, and public—to revitalize current awareness services and build information management tools using aggregate feeds" (p. 52).

IV. Research Methodology

Data for this study was gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire. 245 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to both staff and students of four private universities in SouthWest Nigeria: Ajayi Crowther University, Caleb University, Mcpherson University, and Redeemers University.

V. Findings and Discussion

The findings from the study as presented below were derived from the analysis of the data collected from the respondents in the four private universities. The demographic information regarding sex, age, qualification, status was used.

Table1. Respondents by Category

Category of Users	Frequency	Percent
student	169	69.0
Staff	76	31.0
Total	245	100.0

Table 1 shows that 169 respondents in this study were students (69%) while 76 were staff (31.0%). This is because there are more students than staff on campus. So this is a natural phenomenon.

Table 2. Respondents by Institution

Name of Institution	Frequency	Percentage
McPherson University	39	15.9
Ajayi Crowther University	72	29.4
Redeemer University	55	22.4
Caleb University	79	32.2
Total	245	100.0

Table 2 shows that most respondents (79, 32.2%) were from Caleb University, followed by Ajayi Crowther University (72, 29.4%), Redeemer University (55, 22.4%), and McPherson University (39, 15.9%) respectively.

Table 3. Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
< 35 Years Old	107	43.7
35-45 Years Old	96	39.2
45-55 Years Old	26	10.6
55 Years Old and Above	3	1.2
No Response	13	5.3
Total	245	100.0

Table 3 shows that 107 respondents (43.7%) were below the age of 35 years old, followed by 96 (39.2%) in the category of 35-45 years old, 26 (10.6%) in the category of 45-55 years old, and 3 (1.2%) in the category of above 55 years. There were 13 respondents who did not provide information on their age. The findings indicate that there were more people who were less than 35 years old in those four private universities where the research was conducted.

Table 4. Respondents by Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching Staff	28	11.4
Non-Teaching Staff	44	18.0
Undergraduate	146	59.6
Post Graduate	21	8.6
No Response	6	2.4
Total	245	100.0

Table 4 shows that more than half of the respondents (59.6%) for this study were undergraduate students. Non-teaching staff and teaching staff accounted for 18.0% and 11.4% respectively. The remaining 8.6% were postgraduate students. There were 6 respondents who did not provide information on their status.

The findings indicate that undergraduates were the largest group of library clientele in the four universities. Therefore, more attention should be paid to this group while other age groups should also be encouraged to patronize the library.

Table 5. Library Website Usage

			Name of Institution				
			McPherson University	**Ajayi Crowther**	**Redeemer University**	**Caleb University**	**Total**
Website Visit	Yes	Count	5	26	36	15	82
		Percent	12.8%	36.1%	65.5%	19.0%	33.5%
	No	Count	34	46	19	64	163
		Percent	87.2%	63.9%	34.5%	81.0%	66.5%
Total		Count	39	72	55	79	245
		Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents (65.5%) in Redeemer University visited their library's website while the others (34.5%) did not. As a whole, however, most of the respondents (66.5%) in those four universities did not visit their respective library's website.

Table 6. Library Newsletter

			Name of Institution				
			McPherson University	**Ajayi Crowther**	**Redeemer University**	**Caleb University**	**Total**
Library Newsletter	Yes	Count	12	11	6	14	43
		Percent	30.8%	15.3%	10.9%	17.7%	17.6%
	No	Count	27	61	49	65	202
		Percent	69.2%	84.7%	89.1%	82.3%	82.4%
Total		Count	39	72	55	79	245
		Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6 shows that the majority of the respondents (82.4%) in these four universities did not read their library's newsletter. In other words, library newsletters there were not effectively utilized in disseminating and gathering information about the libraries.

Table 7. User Services

			McPherson University	Ajayi Crowther	Redeemer University	Caleb University	Total
			Name of Institution				
User Servicer	Excellent	Count	6	8	15	5	34
		Percent	15.4%	11.1%	27.3%	6.3%	13.9%
	Good	Count	24	46	37	34	141
		Percent	61.5%	63.9%	67.3%	43.0%	57.6%
	Fair	Count	8	15	2	24	49
		Percent	20.5%	20.8%	3.6%	30.4%	20.0%
	Poor	Count	0	0	0	8	8
		Percent	.0%	.0%	.0%	10.1%	3.3%
	Don't Know	Count	1	2	1	7	11
		Percent	2.6%	2.8%	1.8%	8.9%	4.5%
	No Response	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		Percent	.0%	1.4%	.0%	1.3%	.8%
Total		Count	39	72	55	79	245
		Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7 shows that most (57.6%) respondents perceived library user service as "good", followed by "fair" (20.0%) and "excellent" (13.9%). So in general, students and staff were satisfied with the library user services provided in those four universities.

Table 8. Library Open Hours

			McPherson University	Ajayi Crowther	Redeemer University	Caleb University	Total
			Name of Institution				
Library Open Hours	Excellent	Count	10	20	27	8	65
		Percent	25.6%	27.8%	49.1%	10.1%	26.5%
	Good	Count	23	32	26	31	112
		Percent	59.0%	44.4%	47.3%	39.2%	45.7%
	Fair	Count	5	14	1	24	44
		Percent	12.8%	19.4%	1.8%	30.4%	18.0%
	Poor	Count	1	4	0	9	14
		Percent	2.6%	5.6%	.0%	11.4%	5.7%

Don't Know	Count	0	0	1	7	8
	Percent	.0%	.0%	1.8%	8.9%	3.3%
No Response	Count	0	2	0	0	2
	Percent	.0%	2.8%	.0%	.0%	.8%
Total	Count	39	72	55	79	245
	Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8 shows that most (45.7%) respondents perceived the open hours of the libraries as "good", followed by "excellent" (26.5%) and "fair" (18.0%). So in general, students and staff were satisfied with the library open hours in those four universities.

VI. Conclusion

The study found that 66.5% of the respondents from the four private universities in Southwest Nigeria did not visit the library website and that 82.4% did not read library newsletter. On the other hand, 71.5% were satisfied with the services provided by the libraries and that 72.2% were happy with library open hours.

The decline of the library website visit may be caused by the preference of social media by students and staff. Therefore, libraries should utilize various social media to reach out to their clientele, especially undergraduate students. An effective use of social media to create awareness of library services and resources will encourage patronage and use of libraries.

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