

**POSTGRADUATE USERS' SATISFACTION WITH REFERENCE USER
EDUCATION SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT LIBRARY
PORT HARCOURT. RIVERS STATE NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined postgraduate library users' satisfaction with reference and user education services at the University of Port Harcourt Library. A descriptive survey design was used for the study and the population of the study was composed of 1,008 registered postgraduate students in the University of Port Harcourt Library in the 2020-2021 session. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 150 postgraduate library users out of the population. A 15-item four-point rating scale questionnaire was administered to 150 PG. users by the researchers and an assistant, 108 were successfully retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Findings of the study showed that post-graduate students' library users are satisfied with the reference and user education services offered by the University of Port Harcourt library with mean scores above 2.5 criterion mean except for some specific functions such as information literacy and lending of information materials that were below the criterion mean of 2.5. Some factors such as unqualified personnel, poor facilities, lack of technological skills and funds were revealed as militating against effective reference and user education delivered to students in the library. Based on the findings, following recommendations were made, students should be encouraged to access the references and services of the library because the service is satisfactory and librarians should improve on their lending service and information literacy instructions to users. Also, efforts should be made to provide qualified personnel with regular framing, improve infrastructure among others to enhance effective reference and user's education services delivery to users.

Keywords: Satisfaction. References service, User education.

Introduction

The school is an important vehicle for the development of man and society. It is a planned process of learning that equips learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to make meaningful contributions to themselves and society. However, no school can function effectively without the support of a good library. This is because libraries provide for the information needs of their users, it provides the information resources needed the effective teaching, learning, and research in the school.

Libraries are functional repositories of intellectual properties in different formats that are consciously organized, preserved and disseminated for the benefit of users. An academic library in particular is a specific library carefully organized to serve Institutions of higher learning such as universities, polytechnics, and other equivalent institutions to provide both physical and electronic collections that will support the school curriculum and extracurricular activities (Fourie and Loe, 2016).

A library will retain its pride of place if services and resources are satisfactory to users. No library user will continue to patronize a library that fails to meet his or her satisfaction. Ononogbo and Akanwa (2016) stressed that the satisfaction of library users is a function of the quality of resources, services, and access users have to the resources and services, and access users have to the resources and services. Different types of services are offered by the library to users. Iyishu and Nkanu (2013) outlined reference, lending, user education, indexes, current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, reprographics, circulation and others as essential services rendered in academic libraries.

According to Obi (2013), reference service is an essential service rendered in all academic libraries, it includes all the assistance, physical or virtual that a librarian gives to users to satisfy their information needs. It may be an advisory service, selective dissemination of information services, current awareness service, or provision of all special materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, serials and others.

User education services according to Ojeniyi (2018) include all the orientation, tutorials, lectures and guides a user is exposed to understand and make good use of the library. This is important since most library users are ignorant of the array of services and resources available in the library, some that are aware cannot use it effectively. Hence user education is to develop in the user the bibliographic knowledge of the content and arrangement of a particular library. Hence user education in the gateway or understanding and accessing the reference service of a library.

However our challenges hinder user satisfaction, these include poor attitudes of library staff unqualified personnel, lack of awareness about the available resources and poor ICT skills of users others can lead to the dwindling patronage of users in the library. This work, therefore, seeks to evaluate postgraduate users' satisfaction with reference and user education services in University of Port Harcourt library.

Statement of the Problem

Academic libraries' knowledge to systematically designed to support the realization of the goals and objectives of their parent institutions which include effective and efficient teaching, learning, and research therefore, its saddled with the responsibility of providing the information resources and services to promote academic excellence. However, the researchers, in recent times have observed a decline in the daily statistics of postgraduate users' attendance to the reference section of the University of Port Harcourt library. Also, from the researchers' interactions with post-graduate users of the library, many complained of the inability to explore the resources of the reference library, which could be the cause of" Hence, this work seeks to ascertain the extent of satisfaction post-graduate users derive from the services offered to them by the references unit of the University of Port Harcourt

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to ascertain the extent of post- graduate user's satisfaction with reference and user education services in the University of Port Harcourt Library

Its specific objectives are to

1. Find out if postgraduate users are satisfied with reference services in the University of Part Harcourt library.
2. Examine if postgraduate students are satisfied with user education service in the University of Port Harcourt library.
3. Ascertain the challenges militating against postgraduate library users' satisfaction with reference and user education satisfaction.

Research Questions

1. Are postgraduate users satisfied with the reference services in the University of Port Harcourt library?
2. Are postgraduate students satisfied with user education services in the University of Port Harcourt library?
3. What are the challenges militating against post-graduate library users' satisfaction with references and users' education in the University of Port Harcourt library?

Literature Review

Reference service is an essential service rendered in all academic libraries. It is the assistance given to library users who need information materials. It is the direct contact library staff has with information seekers to help them secure the information resources they are looking for without spending more time than necessary. According to Opera (2006), reference services are the act of bringing information resources to the users at the right time and place. Obi (2013) described reference services as all the efforts library staff make to link users with their desired information materials. This includes when librarians painstakingly search and locate information materials users had searched for unsuccessfully.

A work carried out by Davide-West and Owate (2019) on reference services in academic libraries itemized some important parts of reference services to include all the efforts and commitments Information specialists invest in supporting library users on how to use the different devices either manually or electronically to examine different formats of information carriers to answer the different information queries of their choices

Oguniyl, Esela and Shell (2013) summarized reference service as comprehensive assistance that is specifically targeted at filling the information needs of individual users such as lending information photocopying of needed materials, selective dissemination of information, and referral services among others. These can be done either through telephone, mulls, video calls or chat, direct walk-in consultations, and other means through which the reference librarian's services can be reached.

According to Olokundum and Agbola, (2016) Information materials for reference services should be current are of high quality, information specialists in charge of reference services should possess some special qualities such as good experience, dedication, intelligence, determination, and user-friendly. Every user community has its information needs therefore; a reference personnel should be able to the information needs of their community and work to provide it. He should be a good listener who can easily articulate and understand the users' needs and devise ways to solving, good communication and interpersonal skills such as the lone of voice, gesture, and eye contact, writing clearly, listening effectively and comprehensively, knowledge of information resources, tolerant and friendly are essentially needed. Dhanavandan (2016) stressed the importance of digital knowledge and skills as essential competencies needed for effective reference job performance. A reference librarian should be able to use the computer, navigate the internet with different search engines, manage a database and explore the social media tools.

A related work done by Motiang, Wallis, and Karodia (2014) on user satisfaction with library services affirmed that reference librarians must be vast in knowledge about reference materials and general information tools. They must be determined to go all out the connect users to their needed materials through inter-library loans, selective dissemination of information and other avenues available to satisfy the clientele Hence, they must be determined to see their library users happy.

User education is very important in the library, do doubt, tots of the intellectual properties would be optimally accessed and used if users' instruction or education in the library is taken with levity User education helps library clientele to make good use of the resources stocked in the library. According to Uchenda and Ezchuiry (2010), this type of instruction in the library involves enlightening the users on how to use the different units, sections, or departments of the library. Also, Ahiauzu, Akobo and Igben (2007) described user education as instruction given to users on the physical organization of the library, the content of the library catalogue, and other bibliographic features that will enable them to make good use of the library and its resources.

In a related work done by Mishra and Mahapatra (2013), the need for user education in libraries identified some services such as bibliographic Instruction orientation programmes, information literacy are essential user education programmes that should not be neglected in the academic libraries if users will get maximum satisfaction from their holdings. Although user education is mostly associated with academic libraries, where they ensure programmes of studies, and activities are drawn up for her community of information seekers to bring to their understanding bibliographic instructions on how information resources in the library are been acquired processed, organized and disseminated.

According to Onuoha (2017), information users are been exposed to the various steps, procedures, and access points to the different resources available in their docks and how these resources can be easily noticed to save users time as advocated by Ranganathan law. In the contemporary global village of information explosion information is in different formats and many quantities hence library users without the guide would not adequately and promptly access needed collections.

A related work carried out by Uwakwe Onyeneke and Njoku (2010) on the effect of user education on law students' use of library revealed that effective user education positively affects the use of the library and academic performance. They identified some problems affecting user education including overpopulation of users, inadequate infrastructure lack of qualifications among others.

There is no doubt that a beautiful library building filled with collections without being patronized by users is as good as nothing users education is a platform to create awareness and sensitize users on the easiest access to the different resources in a Library. It is done in different surges as the situation at hand demands either an individual user or a group of users.

This type of service in the library can be categorized as formal and informal. Informal user education each time a library user is shown how best to use library resources such as catalogues. Bibliography and the likes Informal user education is not systematically planned for a target audience it occurs incidentally. Such occurs especially in the academic library where new intakes approach library personnel for on how best to use the different resources in the library. Also, it is done when younger learners are brought to the library on excursions and sneezing or learning tours user education programme could also be referred to as user instruction It is a process n wall-planned, systematically, and sequentially pedagogical classroom instruction designed for targeted users and it's under the control of the library. This type of instruction takes place in academic libraries only. Ahiazu, et al (2007) pointed out that, the content of the lecture very library organization of resources, different search methods in the library, and other bibliographic-related instruction which will be essentially necessary for the student's academic success and not only on how to use the library resources.

According to Otokundum and Agbola (2016), many library schools and libraries see information literacy instruction only as orientation programmes given to fresh users, which ought not to be so, In contemporary global society where information literacy is considered a necessary lifelong skill teaching users education help to build in users the understanding of

knowing when, why, and how to find information as well as how to evaluate and use such to their benefit.

Edoka as cited in Onuaha (2017) outlined the benefits of user education to the users to include:

- Helping to create awareness about the library and its available resources to the users.
- Building in the user, strong bibliographic skills and making library use easy.
- Enlightening the users on the organization of materials in the particular libraries like catalogue arrangement and the scheme in use.
- Exposing users to information literacy and reading culture
- Enlightening users on referencing and other editorial styles and alleviating library anxiety in new users.

Ogunbodede, Odewasi, Ibubor and Onwovosa (2020) asserted that, to a large extent, anxiety creates very big barriers to patron's use of the library particularly the academic library and for a library to provide expected services to their numerous clients there must be adequate measures to expose users and one of such is user education. This plays a major role in enlightening users' particularly new users to understand that it is normal to feel lost, confused, fearful, and over anxiety when coming in contact with the library for the first time hence, they should avail themselves of the opportunities user education will offer to overcome. They identified lack of qualified to the crowd of users, poor facilities, lack of funds as major barriers to user satisfaction in academic libraries.

Satisfaction can be seen as the level of fulfilment, or achievement derived from using a product or service, it is the way one feels when an expectation is met. According to Lyishu and Nhanu (2013), the library as a service-rendering organization must be alive to its functions to ensure users are satisfied with the services and resources it offers. They see library user satisfaction as the level of fulfilment, value, contentment and gratitude users felt from the products (book and non-book resources) and services offered to them by the library.

A user is satisfied if his level of contentment, excitement and fulfilment increases as a result of the products and services he received from the library but he is unsatisfied if he leaves the library unhappy, unfulfilled, or disappointed as a result of the services the products receive. For libraries to satisfy users they must provide efficient services and resources that are adequate, functional and relevant w the needs of their patrons, their services must meet the needs of their user community, Andong. Daze and Hamza (2017) opined that user satisfaction studies are an important means of measuring library performance and ensuring a library meets its set goals. A satisfaction survey is a landable effort that is supposed to be continuous in the library this is because the purpose of a library will be defeated if it fails to satisfy its users

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study, this design is considered an unbiased method of getting opinions of users. The study area is University of Port Harcourt library. The population of this study consisted of all the 1,008 postgraduate students of the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) for the 2001-2021 academic session that are duly

registered with the Donald Ekong Library University of Port Harcourt. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 out of the population as a sample of the study.

A 15-item four-point rating scale questionnaires designed by the researcher were used to collect data from the respondents. The content and face validation of the instrument were done by an expert in measurement and evaluation while the reliability of the instrument was established using the split-half reliability technique, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the reliability coefficient which was 0.87 A total of 150 copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers and one assistant. 108 copies were successfully retrieved. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation a criterion mean of 2.5 was set as a benchmark, a mean score above was accepted and below was rejected and considered not satisfied.

Results

Research Question 1: Are postgraduate student users satisfied with the reference services offered in the University of Port Harcourt library?

Table 1: Postgraduate students' satisfaction with reference services in University of Port Harcourt

| S/N | Post Graduate users are satisfied with | SA | A | D | SD | \bar{X} | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|-----------|-----|---------------|
| 1. | Support by library staff in accessing information resources | 60 | 40 | 8 | 0 | 3.3 | 0.8 | Satisfied |
| 2. | Loan services of the reference library | 8 | 10 | 30 | 60 | 1.9 | 1.0 | Not satisfied |
| 3. | Reprographic services of the reference library | 40 | 40 | 20 | 8 | 3.0 | 1.0 | Satisfied |
| 4. | Referral services | 50 | 40 | 10 | 8 | 3.2 | 0.9 | Satisfied |
| 5. | Selective Dissemination service | 52 | 26 | 20 | 10 | 3.1 | 1.0 | Satisfied |

Source: Field work. 2021.

Table 1, showed that users are satisfied with support by library staff, reprographic services, referral services, and selective dissemination of information services of the reference unit of the Uniport Library with a mean of 3.3, 3.0, 3.2, and 3.1 and a standard deviation value of 0.8, 1.0, 1.0 and 1.0 respectively. These mean scores are higher than the criterion mean of 2.5. Item question 2 had a mean score of 1.9 and SD of 1.0 which is less than the criterion mean score of 2.5 therefore regarded that users are not satisfied with the loan services of the library.

Research Question 2: Are postgraduate students users satisfied with user education services offered in the University of Port Harcourt library?

Table 2: Postgraduate students' satisfaction with user education service in University of Port Harcourt

| S/N | Users are satisfied with | SA | A | D | SD | \bar{X} | SD | Decision |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|-----------|-----|---------------|
| 1. | Bibliographic instruction offered by the library | 50 | 40 | 12 | 6 | 3.2 | 0.9 | Satisfied |
| 2. | Instruction on materials in users' subject area | 60 | 28 | 10 | 10 | 3.1 | 1.0 | Satisfied |
| 3. | Freshers orientation programmes | 65 | 30 | 5 | 8 | 3.4 | 0.9 | Satisfied |
| 4. | Sensitization programme of the library | 40 | 20 | 40 | 18 | 2.9 | 0.9 | Satisfied |
| 5. | Information literacy instruction of the library | 20 | 10 | 50 | 28 | 2.2 | 1.1 | Not Satisfied |

Source Field work, 2021

Table 2, above respondents' responses, indicates that users are satisfied with the bibliographic instruction offered by the library with a mean score of 3.2 and SD 0.9 which is greater than the criterion mean hence, It is considered that users are satisfied. In Items 2, 3 and 4 users are satisfied with instruction given by libraries to users on materials on users' subject seen with 1.1, SD 1.0, skills w users the e-resources of the on freshness orientation programmes, respondents accepted with a mean of 34, SD 0.9. Sensitization programmes of the library also give users the desired level of satisfaction with a mean of 2.9, SD 0.9 while respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the library's level of teaching information literacy.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges militating against post-graduate users' satisfaction with reference and user education services in the University of Port Harcourt library?

Table 3: Challenges militating against postgraduate students' satisfaction with reference and user education services in University of Port Harcourt Library

| S/N | Challenges to users' satisfaction | SA | A | D | SD | \bar{X} | SD | Decision |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-----------|-----|----------|
| 1. | Lack of qualified reference personnel | 62 | 33 | 5 | 8 | 3.3 | 0.8 | Accepted |
| 2. | Poor facilities | 30 | 20 | 50 | 8 | 2.7 | 0.7 | Accepted |
| 3. | Poor knowledge of technology | 20 | 10 | 50 | 28 | 3.2 | 0.8 | Accepted |
| 4. | Poor funding | 60 | 28 | 10 | 10 | 3.1 | 0.9 | Accepted |
| 5. | Ignoring orientation programmes | 60 | 25 | 20 | 3 | 3.4 | 0.9 | Accepted |

Source: Field work 2021

Table 3 shows that respondents accepted that attitude of staff in charge of these services, poor facilities, poor knowledge of technology poor funding and ignoring orientation programmes by users militate against postgraduates library users' satisfaction with mess Scores of 3.3 and SD 1.8, 2.7, and SD 0.7.2.2 SD 0.8, 3.1, SD 0.9, and 3.4. SD 0.9 respectively

Discussion of Findings

Postgraduate student's user's satisfaction with reference services offered in the University of Port Harcourt library

Findings revealed that postgraduates are satisfied with the support by library staff in accessing information materials, they are satisfied with referral and selective dissemination of information as well as the reprographic services which are essential reference services of the library. Findings also showed that users are not satisfied with the loan services. These results are in line with the views of Motiang, Wallis, and Karodia (2014) and the work of Oguniyi, Isofa and Sheji (2013) who revealed that reference service is comprehensive assistance to individual users such as lending information resources, photocopying of needed materials, selective dissemination of information, referral services among others. However, this does not fully agree with the views of Ayangbekun (2017) who stated that most reference librarians do not have a good working attitude towards users in assisting them in achieving their aim of visiting the library and this causes users dissatisfaction.

Postgraduate students' satisfaction with user education service in University of Port Harcourt library

Findings on user education revealed that post-graduate users are satisfied with the bibliographic instruction, fresher orientation, and sensitization programmes offered as user education services in the library except for information literacy which they dissatisfaction. This result agreed with the study of Mishra and Mahapatra (2013) who posit that user education should be able to broaden users' knowledge of bibliographic skills to access a library. Also, the result is in line with that of Onuoha (2017) who affirmed that academic library users are been exposed to the various steps, procedures, and access points to the different resources available in their stocks and how resources can be easily retrieved to save users time. However users are not satisfied with the information literacy instructions this agreed with the work of Olokundum and Agbola (2016) who revealed that many libraries see information literacy instruction only as orientation programmes given to new users, they objected that it goes beyond such to broaden the users' knowledge on the 'How', Why and When' of information search and utilization.

The challenges militating against post-graduate users' satisfaction with reference and user education services in the University of Port Harcourt library.

Findings show the major factors that militate lack of qualified reference personnel, poor facilities including outdated information resources poor knowledge of ICT, poor funding, and ignoring orientations programmes by users, These results are the same as the findings of Ogunbodede, Odewasi, Ibudor and Onwovosa (2020) whose work affirmed poor facilities, poor knowledge of ICT by staff and others as major limitations on the efforts of libraries to give users station, Ales Uwakwe Onyeneko and. Njika (200) in identified some problems affecting user education with user education in the library to include reputation of users. Inadequate infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel among others.

Conclusion

The role of the library in promoting teaching, learning and research cannot be overstressed. Reference services are in high demand by users while user education exposes users to how to get the best from consulting the library. Hence, there is a need for regular user satisfaction studies such as this to ascertain if users are satisfied with the services offered to them in the library.

The users are satisfied with the reference and user education services rendered in the University of Port Harcourt library except for some specific functions such as the lending of information materials and teaching of information literacy to users. Therefore, more effort should be strengthened to improve on lending, reprographics and information literacy instruction to enable users to have maximum benefits from the library. There should be the provision of the needed manpower with regular training and facilities to promote effective reference and user education services.

Recommendation

1. Students should be encouraged to use the reference library because the services rendered are satisfactory. Reference librarians should be more committed to providing lending and reprographic services where necessary to users.
2. Users' education in academic libraries should be improved to cover information literacy skills; this will enable users to determine how, why and where to effectively access and use the information resources in the library.
3. Government and parent institutions of libraries should ensure the provision of qualified reference personnel in academic libraries to adequately provide satisfactory reference and user education services to patrons. There should be costume training and retraining for staff. The infrastructure should be strengthened, increase in the funds to academic libraries for effective reference and user education services.

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