

Provision and Use of Information Resources and Services in Academic Libraries: A harmonized conceptual framework for Service quality

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Abstract

This study explore on the effective ways of provision and use of information resources and services in Academic Libraries. The sole objective is to ensure that the right information is collected, processed and managed in the form that the users can easily comprehend. The paper gave a conceptual description of academic library and how such library can add value to humanities. The different types of information resources and services were also described. The paper elucidates on the concept of access and use of information resources in library and provides an analysis of the major challenges that effect the provision and use of information resources and services in Academic Libraries. From the critical review and analysis of the literature the researchers proposed a harmonized conceptual framework for effective provision and use of information resources and services in Academic Libraries. The proposed framework was developed based on the adoption and critical evaluation of the LibQUAL+™ Model and Resource- Based View Theory (RBV). The researchers evaluate, and harmonized the adopted models in one workable framework of action whichwould serve as guide for stakeholders in providing service quality with regard to provision and use of library resources and services leading to user satisfaction in Academic Libraries and beyond.

Keywords: Academic Library, Information Resources, Model, Service Quality, Use of Information Resources, User Satisfaction.

Introduction

The library worldwide acquire and organizes recorded information in such a way that the resources can be access by the users. Roberson (2005) defines a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products that individual can gain access readily. Libraries ensure that the right information is available in the form that the users can understand. Library users are satisfied when the library is able to provide quality information resources and services. According to Ola and Osagie (2011) stated that libraries serve as content and knowledge repository by collecting and providing access to books, journals and other recorded information through acquisition, re-packing and providing easy access to information. There are different types of libraries such as academic, public, special, school, private and national libraries.

According to Olajide and Yusuf (2010) affirmed academic libraries are libraries attached to academic institutions of learning to support teaching, learning and research. This is achieved through the provision of up –to-date information resources and services which support teaching, learning and research. Academic libraries provide resources for knowledge acquisition, recreation, personal interests and inter-personal relationships for all categories of users. In addition, library resources and services are expected to be sufficient in quality, depth, and diversity and current to support the institution curriculum. As a result of this, academic libraries are often considered as the most important resource centre of an academic institution.

Information Resources and Services provided by Academic Libraries

Information resources refer to any source that can be consulted and accessed to obtain information. It could be printed or non- printed such as books, journals, magazines, encyclopedias, government publication, audio and audio visuals, e-books and e-journals. According to Nwachukwu, Abdulsalam and Salami (2014) stated information resources are the equipment's and facilities, software and data, which are designed, built, operated and maintained to collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display and transmit information.

Print information resources in the library are those items that are printed on paper which appear in book. They contained information in a printed format. According to Ojedokun (2007) print resources are the oldest of the modern formats. They are one of the most current and user friendly formats for storing and accessing information. Such resources include books, journals, news magazines, newspapers, newsletters, dictionaries, government publications and pamphlets.

Book which is a print material and often bound in one or more volumes. It may be written by one or more individual persons or corporate bodies, Dictionary as a reference material , it lists words or terms of general or particular subject, profession, usually providing certain basic information about them. Dictionaries are also arranged in an alphabetical order some of the basic information which a dictionary provides is words and terms include their meanings, spellings, origin, pronunciation, use and abbreviations among others. Other print information resources are Dictionary,

Encyclopedia, Serials/Periodicals or journals, magazines, bulletins and newsletters, proceedings learned societies and associations. They are being published daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly as the case may be. In addition, print resources also include Government Publications like published laws, acts of parliament. Military decrees, state edicts by laws, constitutions of countries, correspondences between the three arms of books are pamphlets emanating from government.

The Non-Print or Electronic Information Resources on the other hand are information resources that are not produced in the traditional printed format. In the 21st century, electronic information resources are provided in electronic form, and they include e-databases, e-journals, e-books, e-data archives, e-manuscripts, e-maps, e-magazines, e-thesis WWW, e-newspapers, e- research reports, and e-bibliographic databases (Ankrah and Atuase, 2018).

Jonathan and Udo (2015) described Electronic resources as resources that can be accessed electronically via the internet or digital media. Electronic information resources are in form of electronic books, digital libraries, electronic newspapers, full text databases and CD ROM. The electronic books (e-books) are book publications that consist of texts, images made available and accessible in digital form. Nnadozie (2014) reiterate that the internet is in reality, an international network of computers which are physically separated. Audio visuals information resources are another type of non-print information resource provided by the Academic libraries. These are information resources that can be listened to view or read they include audio tapes, cassettes and discs, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) as an electronic information resource is a library database where library users can have accessed to the resources through online. While e-magazines and e- newspapers, are periodicals that exists on the World Wide Web or internet.

Haruna and Oyelekan (2010) describe information service as a generic term for a library or other organization which the main role is collection, analysis, dissemination and presentation of information. He further added that, such information may be held by the organization, assembled on demand or distributed for publicity purposes. Idowu (2011) identified a number of information services to include lending or borrowing and renewing services, reserve services, reference services, technical services, computerized interactive search, on-line services, serial services, user education services, selective dissemination services, current awareness services, referral services, reprographic services indexing and extracting services and exhibition and display services. Other services provided by Academic libraries includes Inter library loan services, Referral service mean a situation where the library cannot meet the information needs of its user, such user may be referred to other libraries that may be able to provide the needed information, which most of the time with a recommendation letter to the intended library. There is also the Current Awareness Service is a service whereby newly acquired collections in the library are brought to the knowledge of users. Bibliographic services are services that help users to identify and locate information resources that are relevant to the research.

The Reference services provide direct personal assistance to users on how to access and use the resources of an information centre. It also includes answering factual, directional and information queries from the users. Other services include: Photocopying/Reprographic services, Exhibition and Displays, Translation service, Reservation service, Indexing service, Literature search, Instructions in the use of online resources among others.

Access and Use of Information Resources and Services

Accessibility in general term can be viewed as the ability to access the functionality and possible benefit of some system or entity. According to Nwachukwu, Abdulsalam and Salami (2014) accessibility is the degree to which a system is useable by a wide range of users as possible. It is the degree of ease with which it is possible to reach a certain location from other locations. In the context of library information resources, it can be viewed as the ability to access information with little or no stress. Accessibility of information resources is an important recurring theme in the literature (Ternenge and Fanafa, 2019). The more accessible information resources are the more likely they are to be used. Utilization of information resources and services refers to the extent to which the available Information resources and services are used by students for the purpose of satisfying their information needs. According to Nwachukwu, Abdulsalam and Salami (2014), it is the extent to which users make use of the resources of a library to meet their information needs. In addition to that, Okpeke and Odunlade (2014) argue that effective utilization of information resources is hinged on awareness of the existence of a particular resource required to meet one's information needs. The ultimate aim of library resources, therefore, is use. Information use can be described as all activities that occur immediately the resources have been received by the user(s). It may be used to add to existing knowledge, generate new ideas, applied to solve problems and in many areas of human endeavor.

Challenges associated with the provision and Use of Information Resources and Services in Academic Libraries.

There are a good number of factors that hinder the effective provision and use of information resources and services include. Non provision of adequate fund, inadequate number of staffs, inadequate power supplies, lack of ICT facilities, delay in procurement process, lack of computers and poor internet connectivity, unreliable sources of power supply, lack of library guide to direct users to appropriate sections of the library and the lack of reading culture that is common to users

Several studies have identified a number of challenges affecting the provision and use of information resources and services in academic libraries. Aladeniyi and Arikawe (2017) reported identified lack of adequate skills on how effective to use the information resources and lack of internet access as major challenges hindering student nurses in their use of information resources. Atanda, and Brume-Ezewu, (2018) Investigated the Challenges of Utilizing Library Resources by Students in College of Education, Agbor .the researchers outlined a numbers of challenges affecting the library, theses includes lack of internet facility, photocopying services within the library, inadequate relevant materials, inadequate functional ICT facilities/lack of user education, un favorable state of the library, lack of awareness of the library resources and poor reading environment. Edeole (2019) reported problems of

inadequate current journals, erratic power supply, Unavailability of air conditioners, lack of up to date information resources and poor Abstracting services in college libraries examined by the researcher.

Theoretical Perspective on the provision and Use of Information Resources For Services Quality in Academic Libraries

The researchers used the theoretical frames of the LibQUAL+™ Theoretical Model and Resource-Based View Theory (RBV) as the theoretical bases for study.

The LibQUAL+™ theoretical model has its roots in the Gap Theory of Service Quality and the SERVQUAL instrument (Cook, Heath, Thompson and Webster 2003). According to Simba (2006), the Texas A&M University research team launched a pilot project that had its origins in the Gap Theory of Service Quality to develop a new measure to assess service quality in research libraries. The LibQUAL+™ survey instrument is used to measure the library user's perceptions of service quality and identifies the gaps between the desired, perceived and minimum expectations of service (Moon 2007).

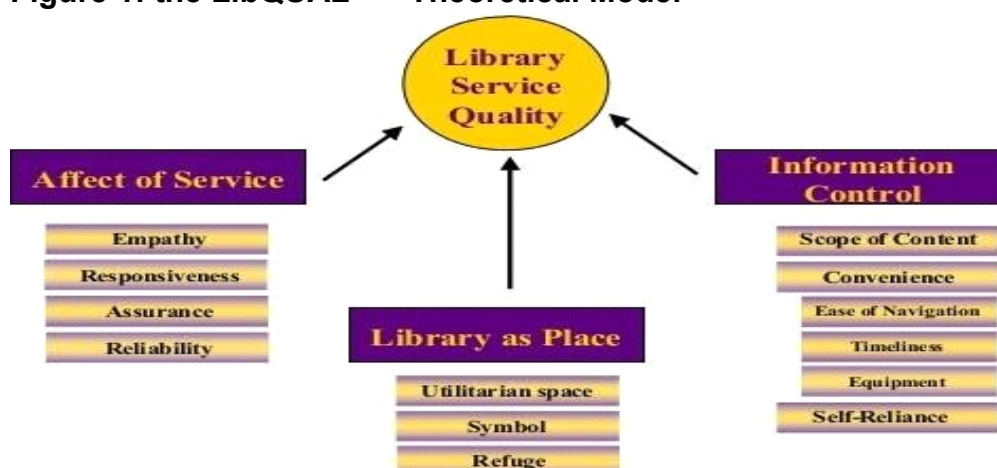
LibQUAL+™ evolved from eight dimensions (LibQUAL+™ 2000) to three dimensions (LibQUAL+™ 2004). The three dimensions are:

- Effect of service – how well users are served and treated by library staff;
- Information control – the ability to navigate the information universe;
- Library as place – how well the library meets the individual needs of users who look for a place to do research and study. (Crawford 2006)

This study has adopted the 2004 version of LibQUAL+™ with the following components:

- i. Effect of service – focuses on the effectiveness of library staff and types of information service provided in the Academic Libraries.
- ii. Information control – focuses on ability to access collection on timely basis regardless of the location of the user.
- iii. Library as place – focuses the physical environment

Figure 1: the LibQUAL+™ Theoretical Model



2. Resource- Based View Theory (RBV). The resource-based view (RBV) theory is a managerial framework used to determine the strategic resources a firm can exploit to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The RBV focuses managerial attention on the firm's internal resources in an effort to identify those assets,

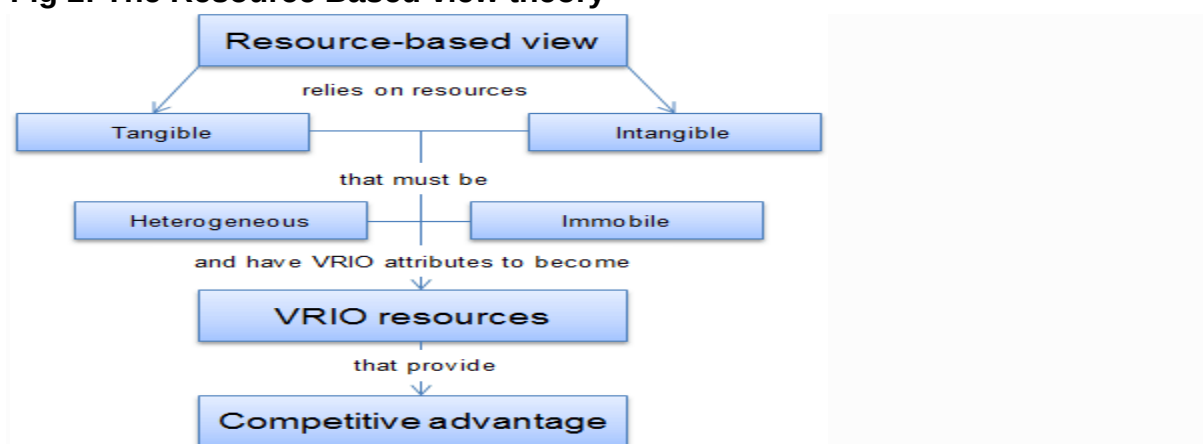
capabilities and competencies with the potential to deliver superior competitive advantages. According to the resource-based view (RBV), firms derive competitive advantage from the possession of, or access to, unique bundles of resources and capabilities (Mahoney and Pandian, 1992; Peteraf, 1993; Teece *et al.*, 1997). The origin and background of the Resource –based view (RBV) theory was during the 1990s, the resource-based view (also known as the resource-advantage theory) of the firm became the dominant paradigm in strategic planning. The resource-based view is based on the idea that a company's resources determine its success. RBV focuses attention on an organization's internal resources as a means of organizing processes and obtaining a competitive advantage. Under the RBV theory, resources are defined as the assets, attributes, know-how, capabilities and processes that enable businesses to develop and implement strategies for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly, what makes the organization distinctive is the unique blend of the resources it possesses that derive the competitiveness of the organization.

Barney (1991) categorizes three types of resources:

1. Physical capital resources (physical, technological, plant and equipment),
2. Human capital resources (training, experience, insights),
3. Organizational capital resources (formal structure).

This theory emphasized that the success and attainment of competitive advantage by organizations like libraries is determined by possession of, or access to, bundles of resources such as the tangible (e.g. human resource/manpower, facilities) and intangible (e.g. skills, expertise). In this regard, the theory is relevant in addressing issues of the types of information resources provided in Academic Libraries.

Fig 2: The Resource Based view theory



The diagram shows the version of resource based view theory which has been used by researchers that relies on resources, the tangible and intangible resources

1. **Tangible Resources:** Are the physical resources such as the print information resources that can be easily displayed.
2. **Intangible Resources:** Are everything that has no physical presence such as the non print information resources.

Proposed Conceptual framework for effective Provision of Library Information Resources and Services to Academic Libraries

From the critical analysis and evaluation of the two theoretical models, the researchers developed a proposed conceptual framework for effective provision and use of information resources and services in Academic Libraries (Figure 3). The framework emphasized that several factors most to be consider for effective provision and use of information resources and services for educational development. The researchers therefore, built upon the LibQUAL+™, Model and Resource based view theory. The researchers used the main constructs of Effect of services, Information control and Library as place dimension, in addition to other variables found in the literatures reviewed on the access to and use of information resources and services in Academic Libraries that include: information resources and services provision, students access to information resources provision and service, use of information resources and services and factors facilitating use of information resources provision and services in Academic Libraries.

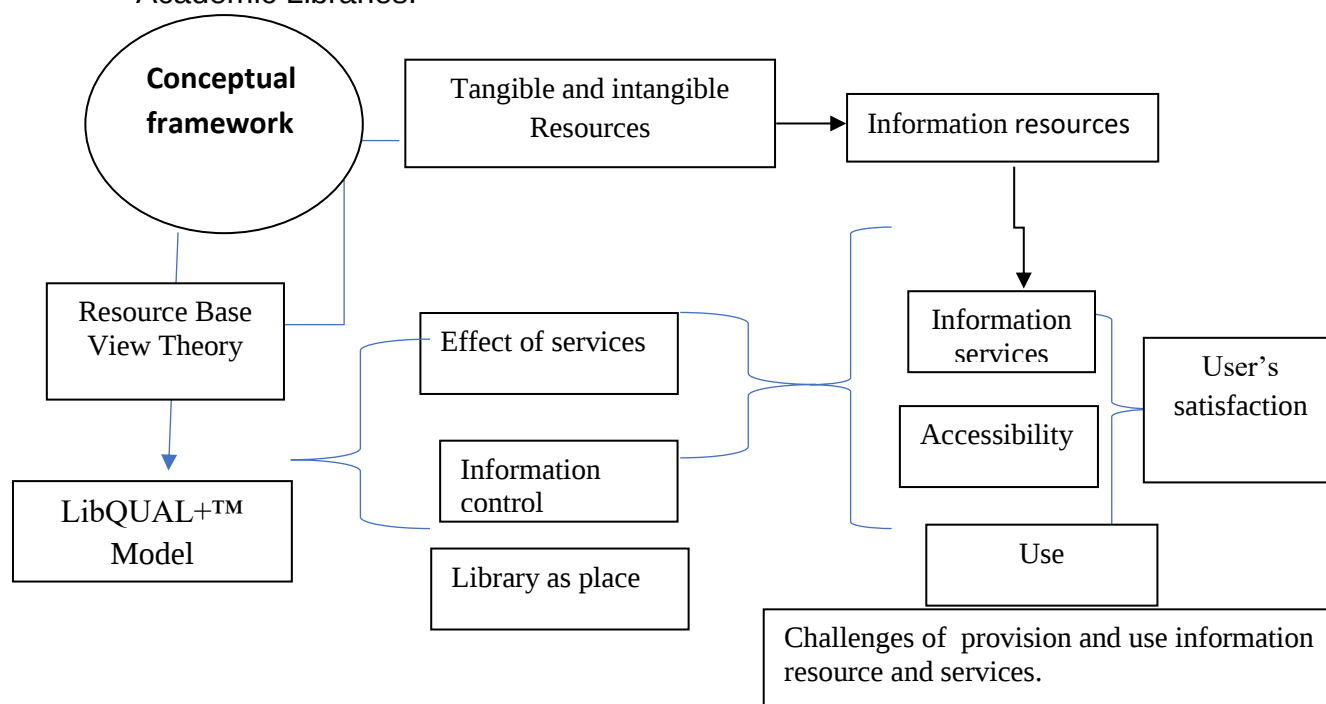


Figure 3: Proposed Conceptual Framework of the study based on the LibQUAL+™ Model and Resource base view Theory

The proposed conceptual framework depicts the framing of the study using the service quality Model (LibQUAL+™) and Resource base theory. The framework comprises the Tangible and Intangible Resources, dimension on effect of library service, information control and library as a place as the construct of the model and the theory, and their relationship with the research variables of information resources, information service, accessibility of information resources and services, use of information resources and services and challenges on the provision and use of information

resources and services as the variables of the research. A detail of each component/determinant is provided below:

- i. **Information Resources:** Are the equipment facilities data that are used for academic activities and are the fundamental and essentials for the research which assist for betterment of the user in the Academic Libraries. Information sources are the bearing materials that are both in print and non-print materials such as electronic books, newspapers, visual and audio-visual. And when timely information resources are provided.
- ii. **Information Services:** These are the regular and routine activities of librarians to users. They are the services provided to users of Academic Libraries for them to meet their need which include current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, reference services.
- iii. **Accessibility:** Access in general term is the attribute of being easy to meet or deal with something. It connotes a way of entering or reaching something. Accessibility of information resources and services in so many ways facilitate and influences the intention to use the facilities available.
- iv. **Use of information resources and services:** This refers to the set of conditions that help in achieving the smooth utilization of information resources and services in Academic Libraries to satisfy the information need of users academically.
- v. **Challenges of Information resources and services provision:** The problems associated with the provision of information resources and services in Academic Libraries which include Lack of infrastructure, lack of adequate finance, system failures and shortage of manpower.

Conclusion

Many scholars have carried out studies on the role of librarians and libraries to human endeavors, to national development and in particular to educational development. Consequently, there is need for professionals to re-strategies in terms of providing effective services to their users. This means the need for professionals to explore holistic ways of putting the resources and services available for use to users in their libraries. This includes provision of information resources and services to users and to support educational development from the model perspective especially when nations are faced with so many national challenges.

The proposed theoretical model is expected to provide stakeholders with a fundamental basis on which effective library resources and services are provided for educational development. This study was guided by the theoretical assumptions of two different models; the LibQUAL+™ model and Resource based view theory. The two models were critically evaluated and harmonized in order to depict how the components of the models were adopted and used in the present study. The justification for using the LibQUAL+™ Model and Resource based view theory is because the models were found to be applicable in Nigerian environment especially in the area of assessing quality and user's satisfaction and effective provision and use of information resources and services for educational activities in Academic Libraries.

Suggestions

Academic Libraries should implement an intergrated service quality framework that alingns resources, services and modern technology to ensure steady and effective service delivery and also conduct regular service quality evaluation using standardized performance indicators to identify gaps and support continue improvement on service quality and effective resource utilization.

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