

AN ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN KASHIM IBRAHIM LIBRARY, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, NIGERIA

Hassan Usman

PhD Research Scholar, Career Point University Kota, Raj. India

Email. - Hassansamaru31@gmail.com

Abstract: This study was carried out to investigate customer care services and strategies in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. To achieve this objective, the researcher raised the following research questions: What are the information resources available in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria? What are the information services offered in Kashim Ibrahim Library? To what extent are the customers satisfied with the services rendered by Kashim Ibrahim Library? Survey Research Method was adopted for the study and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. 200 sets of questionnaire were issued to the respondents and the study observed that familiarity of information products and services is triggered by the currency of information resources for user needs. It is noted that currency of information brings stability and use of information resources as it makes the library user-friendly to the library customers. It was then recommended that that the library management increases its budget in order to afford buying what would stimulate the use of the library by its users.

Key Words: Kashim Ibrahim Library, library management, journals, Books, Newspapers, Service.

INTRODUCTION:

The library undoubtedly enhances the intellectual and academic output of students and staff. It is the most conducive environment for learning to all students and staff. Library is an important organ of academic environment, it assist the institution by providing information and services that enhanced in providing the useful information and services to its users. As we all know the basic service delivery expected from the library is to provide services that will help users in their academic and research activities. Commenting on the importance of the library as an organ of academic discipline, Nwalo (2000). Observed that no institution can function and meet the required needs of its staff without well-equipped libraries, with special services carried out directly through contact with students (readers' services) or indirectly through activities carried out "behind the scene" (technical services) such as cataloguing, classification etc. He also argued that a library attached to a university, college or any higher educational institution is known as an academic library. Academic libraries differ from a public library or a special library in purpose and services. The main function of an academic library is to serve as an auxiliary to a parent institution in carrying out its objectives. The library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research, Rathinasabapathy (2005). In an academic community, librarianship is very important in terms of the role the library is expected to play. Kothari (2004) also described the importance of librarianship by pointing out that academic libraries should provide facilities and services necessary for the success of all the stakeholders of that institution which comprises the management, staff and students. Library served as a medium in which it bring books, students, and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self-discovery, personal growth, and the sharpening of intellectual intelligence. Therefore, the academic library has to build a strong collection of information resources in physical and digital formats to provide the knowledge requirements of students, faculty members, research scholars, and scientists of the academic institution.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A library's fundamental purpose has always been to support the process of research and education by helping users find information and ascertain its value. In any academic institution, it is expected that the library provide

opportunities for librarians to serve users in different ways, for example, by providing by providing information resources and services that will assist the students in carrying their educational activities while staff also conduct in-depth research on how to contribute to knowledge. Furthermore, the library performs the role of enhancing the creation of new academic communities on campus. One of the most vital advantages of an academic library is space. It is often observed that the library inhabits the most desirable real estate on any college or university campus. Geographically and symbolically, it occupies the centre of a community established to support the advancement and perpetuation of knowledge. Academic libraries exist to serve the learning needs of students, academics, researchers, the community and those people mandated to use it. Academic libraries are expected to make sure that all services and products available are useful to its users and that its customers' needs are well catered. Experience has shown that service providers, for instance librarians that are reluctant to associate themselves with customers end up having no users and books lie on shelves unread because information products and services are not marketed to the clients, whose needs are not normally known and satisfied.

OBJECTIVES:

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To find out the information resources available in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
2. To find out the type of information services offered by kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
3. To investigate the extent at which the customers are satisfied with the services rendered by Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

The scope of the study covers the customer services unit/section of the Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

This study is limited in the areas of time, cost and resources. The researcher had no money to cover all the libraries in the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Library Complex.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

All over the globe, various researches has been conducted to explore the importance of library and the roles it play, users of the library as well as policies guiding the use of the Library. This chapter reviews literature considered related to this area of study. To achieve this review exhaustively, it will be presented under the following subheadings:

- **Roles of Academic Libraries**
- **Customer resources in the library**
- **Customer Services in the Library.**

ROLES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

To be competitively ahead libraries must come to define and fulfill a recognized set of roles for serving their institutions. To be sure, some elements of commitment must be put in place in order to compete favorably with others as libraries continue to support the core research and educational purposes of the academy. To act on these core purposes in today's academic environment, however, requires that libraries move beyond parameters of earlier times to pursue new modes of serving their institutions. Rajendran and Rathinasabapathy, (2005). Maintained that the role of academic libraries should, among others, expand the catalogue of resources in support of academic inquiry and discovery. A library's fundamental purpose has always been to support the process of teaching and research in education by helping users find information and ascertain its value. In any academic institution, it is expected that the library provide opportunities for librarians to serve users in different ways, for example, by providing more in-depth consultation to research questions or assembling new types of tools that enable users to guide themselves in specialized disciplines. The fundamental value of academic libraries and their staff must increasingly reside in the guidance they provide as well as the technical infrastructures they develop and maintain. Furthermore, the library performs the role of enhancing the creation of new academic communities on campus. One of the most vital advantages of an academic library is space. It is often observed that the library

inhabits the most desirable real estate on any college or university campus. Geographically and symbolically, it occupies the centre of a community established to support the advancement and perpetuation of knowledge. The positioning of the library has made it more composed in such a way that large collection of knowledge and information from various discipline assembled together for everyone to come and make use of it.

Customer care Products and Services of Libraries:

Dlamini (2002:22) refers to the product as anything that can be offered by a library to satisfy a user or customer need. He also pointed out that in relation to the library, a product is associated with information sources/resources offered by the library. These authors further identify the information products as follows:

The traditional printed journals:

These journals are usually in a paper form and are placed on shelves in an information center or library. They are placed on shelves systematically and consulted for a particular reason, by learners and educators as well as researchers. Wells (1999) notes that communication between scholars depended heavily on personal contact and attending meetings that were arranged by the early learned societies such as the Royal Societies. Because of the large numbers of the membership; he, observes that more people could not attend the meetings therefore proceedings that were usually circulated as the record of the last meeting became a place to publish papers for the benefit of the members who were not at the meeting. Scholarly journals therefore developed this way (Wells, 1999).

The electronic journals:

According to Klemperer (1999) electronic journals are serial publications that are available in digital format. These electronic journals may be distributed in various ways such as CD-Rom and internet. Those delivered through internet are available through World Wide Web and E-mail. Sweeney (1997) defines electronic journals as “pay as you go” ... DIALOG may be an example whereby powerful searching tools are used to retrieve documents from printed journals.

CD-ROMS:

CD-ROMS tend to be electronic versions of the existing printed journals. Powerful searching tools are used with CD-ROMS (Hornby 2002).

Books:

According to Hornby (2002:122) a book is a printed work with pages bound along one side. They are kept in one place systematically, usually in libraries or bookshops.

Newspapers:

Hornby (2002:789) defines a newspaper as a set of large printed sheets of paper containing news, articles, and advertisements and usually published every day or every week. They usually contain local, regional and national as well as international news.

Cassettes:

They are flat plastic case containing tape for playing or recording music/sound or information/photographic films that can be put into camera, radio or VCRs, (Hornby, 2002:168). It is normally used by those people who want to listen to the music, stories, and watch films. In libraries cassettes are placed in the audio-visual section.

Microfilm:

They are usually kept in the audio-visual section, according to subjects. Microfilms are used for storing written information on in print of every size. It can only be read by a special machine (Hornby, 2002:741).

CUSTOMER SERVICES IN LIBRARIES:

Mason (2003) defines customer service as a means of more than a polite “have a nice day”. It means having the knowledge and ability to explain important points to potential and existing customers. According to Banwet and Datta (2003) the quality of library services can be classified into two dimensions technical (outcome) dimension and the functional (process) dimension. Technical quality or tangible quality can be expressed primarily as a quality and volume of literature available in the library. Functional quality or intangible quality refers to the

manner in which the library services are delivered. Services achieve quality in perception when its performance meets or exceeds the level of the consumer's expectations.

Leonicio (2001) affirms that customer service has seven characteristics which depicts; a written statement of customer service philosophy, training of employees in effective service delivery, evaluation and measurement of service quality, use of data to monitor policies, services and operations, established process of gathering data, service policies that provide latitude for staff to service customers and an internal customer service program.

The University of Otego library (2002) and Ximena (1994) point out that library customer service has to ensure that services are always provided in a fastest possible time whenever needed. Secondly, ensure that high standard of service is provided to users. Thirdly, provide continuous, helpful and skilled assistance to users. Fourthly, to meet the needs of the library's users for ready access to clear and comprehensive records of the collections by building and maintaining a bibliographic database.

METHODOLOGY:

The Survey research method was adopted for this study. A survey is a systematic method of collecting data from a population of interest. It tends to be quantitative in nature and aims to collect information from a sample of the population such that the results are representative of the population within a certain degree of error. According to Aron (1997) the purpose of a survey is to collect quantitative information, usually through the use of a structured and standardized questionnaire. The population of the study consists of all the registered Academics, Library staff and students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Neuman (2003:216) observes that a target population represents a specific pool of cases that a researcher wants to study.

Systematic Random Sampling technique was adopted for this study. According to Umar (2013) a systematic random sample is obtained after the required sample size has been calculated, every 9th member is selected from a list of population members. As long as the list does not contain any hidden order, this sampling method is as good as the random sampling. A Sample of 100 Academic staff and 200 students were randomly selected from those that frequently use the Library out of which only 143 responded.

The researcher used only questionnaire for collecting data in this study. According to Umar (2013) close ended questionnaire have the advantage of restricting the respondents from deviating on the major issues and it minimizes the analysis time for the data collected. Questionnaires are the most widely used survey data collecting instruments that are normally distributed through the post to be completed by the respondents during their own time.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.1 Information Resources available in Kashim Ibrahim Library

Resources	Available	Not Available
Books	143(100%)	-
Journals	135(94.4%)	8(5.6%)
Magazines	100(69.9%)	43(30.1%)
Newspapers	78(54.5%)	65(45.5%)
Encyclopedia	50(35%)	93(65%)
Dictionaries	67(46.9%)	76(53.1%)
Online Databases	50(35%)	93(65%)
CD ROMs	67(46.9%)	76(53.1%)
Videos	43(30.1%)	100(69.9%)
Radio Cassettes	56(39.2%)	87(60.8%)

Table 4.1 shows the information resources that are available in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Majority of the respondents indicated the availability of Book 143(100%), 135(94.4%) of the respondents indicated the availability of journals, 100(69.9%) indicated the availability of Magazines, 78(54.5%) indicated the availability of Newspapers. This means the respondents are aware of the availability of these resources in the Library but the question is that of utilization of these resources. This finding is line with Frishammer (2002) who opined information resources includes books, conference proceedings,

government/corporate reports, newspapers, journals, pamphlets, hand bills, minutes, posters, pictures, films etc. most organizations have wealth of information resources to carry out their work. Majority of the respondents are not aware of the availability of Online Databases 93(65%), Videos 100(69.9%), encyclopedia 93(65%) and radio Cassettes 87(60.8%) and CD ROM 76(53.1%). This implies that since they are not aware of the availability of these resources they do not make use of them. This is in line with Gooch (1995) who reported that even though many libraries and information units in Africa adopted the CD-ROM technology pretty well, the sustainability of CD-ROM databases appears to be threatened by low usage statistics, lack of confidence from library and information staff, unfamiliarity of users with the system, and lack of awareness by managers about its potential as a valuable resource to support research

4.2.2 Information Services offered by Kashim Ibrahim Library

Services	Frequency	Percentage
Reference	40	28%
Circulation	50	35%
Current Awareness Services	13	9.1%
Internet Access/Online Services	38	26.6%
User Education Services	2	1.3%
Total	143	100%

Table 4.2 shows the services offered by Kashim Ibrahim Library. Majority of the respondents indicated that Circulation services 50(35%) are offered by the library, 40(28%) indicated that reference services are rendered by the library, 38(26.6%) attested to Internet Access/Online Services, 13(9.1%) of the respondents indicated that current Awareness Services are offered in the Library, while 2(1.3%) indicated User Education Services are offered by the Library. This means users are virtually left to fend for themselves in the library.

4.2.3 User satisfaction with the services rendered by Kashim Ibrahim Library

Services	Satisfied	Not Satisfied
Reference	50(35%)	93(65%)
Circulation	78(54.5%)	65(45.5%)
Current Awareness Services	43(30.1%)	100(69.9%)
Internet Access/Online Services	67(46.9%)	76(53.1%)
User Education Services	43(30.1%)	100(69.9%)

Table 4.2.3 shows users' satisfaction with the services of Kashim Ibrahim Library. It could clearly be seen that respondents are not satisfied with the services rendered by the Library. This is evident in their responses. Majority of the respondents indicated their satisfaction only with the circulation services 78(54.5%). While reference service and current awareness services are not satisfied at all with 93(65%) and 100 (69.9) respectively.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. Academic libraries are described as the "heart" of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge. The study has found that academic libraries serve similar customers who consist of; students, academic and administrative staff, researchers and external students from other institutions. The majority of the respondents considered themselves as customers of academic libraries because; they heavily rely on information products and services of libraries for their learning and research uses. It must be noted that anyone using the library resources is considered a customer.
2. Studies by Cooper and Dempsey (1998) and McCarville, O' Delle and Siegenthaler (2000), point out that satisfaction represents the degree to which a library has met a user's needs and expectations. It is believed that customer satisfaction create a win/win situation in which libraries gain valuable support from their constituents. According to Rowley (1994), in the ever-more competitive world of information and document delivery channels, libraries used to focus on customer satisfaction, since satisfied customers are

returning customers. In supporting the views of the six authors above, academic staff and students respondents have shown that they are satisfied with information products and services offered. Library staff respondents on the other hand have shown that users come back to say "thank you very much for the support", which in essence means that users are satisfied with information products and service offered. There is a link between currency of information resources and satisfaction of library customers.

3. The study observed that Kashim Ibrahim Library does not have proper customer care strategies in place. Those strategies, which are in place, are unknown among the library staff members and to the library users/customers.

CONCLUSION:

This study has looked at customer care services and strategies in academic libraries in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It looked also at how library users perceive customer care services and strategies in their libraries. It focused mainly on problem areas, such as customer care policy and structures of the library, methods of conducting customer care, information products and services offered by the library, satisfaction of users with information resources, and strategies of customer care used by academic libraries. These problem areas have resulted in the study drawing a conclusion based on the findings from the library staff and users as well as the literature review. It was evident from the literature review and findings that academic libraries have customers, which rely heavily in the use of information products and services offered. In addition it was found that Kashim Ibrahim Library has customer care policies, even though some academic libraries do not have it in place. It has also shown that library users are aware of these customer care policies. This confirms the clarity by Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (2002), "that library policy covers all aspects of accessibility to library services including location, opening hours, physical access, furniture and equipment, stock and services, access to staff and adequate space". The policy sets the standards against which individual users and communities can measure their needs, rights and expectations.

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