

Availability and Use of Information Resources and Services in Bauchi State Public Library

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ABSTRACT

This study ascertained the Availability and Use of Information Resources and Services in Bauchi State Public Library. The survey method was adopted for the study while a structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Two hundred and twenty-nine (229) were used as the sample size for the study from a population of two thousand two hundred and eighty-eight (2288). Data collected were analyzed descriptively. The data were presented in frequency tables and percentages. The findings revealed that the information resources and services were made available to users. It was discovered that books, newspapers, and dictionaries (84.3%, 67.0%, 61.4 %,) respectively were the most available information resources. Furthermore, the available information services were exhibition and display, lending services and library orientation/user education (45.9%, 47.0%, 42.2%) respectively. The study concluded that the users of public libraries were not satisfied with the information resources and services due to the inadequate attention given to library services. One of the main recommendations made by the study is that there is urgent need by the management of library board to make information resources and services available and accessible to users.

Keywords: Information Resources, Services, Public Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The study investigates the availability, and use of information resources and services among information seekers of Bauchi State public library. The term availability must be distinguished from accessibility. The availability of information resources means ensuring their presence in the libraries for immediate use (Aguolu and Aguolu, 2002). Learning materials might be available i.e. the library has acquired them but inaccessible for use to those who need them for whatever reason (Un-cataloged, miscataloged, miss-shelved, etc.). Accessibility means that users can identify and use resources.

The library means different things to different people and institutions. To some, it is a place where books and non-book materials are preserved for the dissemination of information and knowledge and for the benefit of the society it is meant to serve. To others, the library is an institution where books and other information resources are collected, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated. The public library unlike other types of libraries is not restricted to any group of users. It is more or less a universal library. It is expected to serve all kinds of people including young children and people

with disabilities and even people who for one reason or the other are incapacitated. Such people include patients in the hospitals, prisons, etc. they are generally managed, financed and supported by government, local communities and occasionally non-government organizations, etc. some National Libraries in Africa develop, operate and maintain public libraries (Aina, 2004). Bauchi public library is one of the libraries established by Bauchi State Library Board to provide resources and services, making them readily available for access at all times such that the users would have maximum satisfaction whenever they want to utilize the library resources and services. Bauchi State public library was established in 1976 under the Bauchi State library Act (No 37). The Bauchi State Government considered the library as one of the important media of mass education. It places more emphasis on attracting young readers and fostering the reading habit at an early stage. The facilities provided by the library also help the adult population to conquer ignorance, superstition, disease, and poverty. The library is situated at the heart of the capital. It has a total of 8,000 volumes of books. According to the Library annual report (2013), the library has a total staff strength of 120 and

opens for service from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm from Monday to Friday. However, as important as this library was it has been observed that information resources are not readily available probably due to poor budgetary allocation from the state Government. Another problem observed is that the accessibility of the information resources seems difficult. This perhaps might be as a result of poor processing of the information resources. The problem with the use of information resources as observed in the library is that users appear not to be aware of the information resources and services available in the library probably because they are illiterate or do not know the library setting/use. When library resources are not available they cannot be accessed it means that the library itself is not being utilized. It is against this background that, the researcher tends to investigate the availability, accessibility, and use of information resources and services among information seekers of Bauchi State public Library.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For a library to be functional, it has to meet its user's needs and ensuring that users make functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. All activities, resources, and services of the library are geared towards helping the general public to achieve its information needs. However, as important as this library was it has been observed that information resources are not readily available in Bauchi state public library, probably may be due to poor budgetary allocation from the State Government. Another problem observed is that the accessibility of the information resources seems difficult. This perhaps might be as a result of poor processing of the information resources. The problem with the use of information resources as observed in the library is that users appear not to be aware of the information resources and services available in the library such as illiteracy or do not know the library setting/use. When library resources are not available they cannot be accessed it means that the library itself is not being utilized.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to

- Find out the type of information resources available in the Bauchi public library.
- Investigate how information resources and services are accessed by the user in Bauchi State public Library.

- Find out the frequency of usage of information resources and services provided in the Bauchi State Public library.
- Determine the challenges affecting the availability and use of information resources and services among information users of Bauchi State Library.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are as follows;

- What are the types of information resources provided by the Bauchi State public library?
- How do users access Information resources in Bauchi State public library?
- What is the level of availability of information services provided by the Bauchi state public library?
- What are the challenges affecting the availability and use of information resources and services among information seekers of the Bauchi State library?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The availability of information resources refers to the presence of books and non-book materials in a library and information center. Buckland (2008), asserts that "the logical problem of making books physically available in the library when wanted by information seekers is central to librarianship'. The central rule of library stock control is that both the information resources and the policy should be related to the level of demand for items. Acquisition policy should help a library to decide on what to buy where and when to increase access, ability to needed information resources. Managing the physical resources of the Bauchi state public library depends on the availability of the resources. Abdul salami (2013) remarks that availability requires workable performance measures to back it up even if the ultimate benefit to the individual user and the community is difficult to assess. The access to library resources of the library is also a factor of availability for without the physical presence of a document a user cannot access anything. This, therefore, reveals that the effective use of any library is best measured in terms of access and demand for its resources and services. Abdul salami (2013) stated that "Book availability is an indicator of stock effectiveness". Libraries consider their task to be that of collecting, storing and measuring of books. Aguolu (2002), argue that availability should be viewed from both material

and instructional levels. The attribute to lack of availability of information resources to the steady proliferation of universities: Federal, state and private, along with the increase in students and faculties and the diversification of courses, academic, and research program without adequate information source to meet the actual and information needs. The problem of managing information resources in Bauchi public library depends on the availability of these facilities, Buckland (2008) remarks that availability requires workable performance measures to back it up even if the community is difficult to access. Access to the facilities of the library is also a factor of availability for without the presence of the resources a user cannot access anything. Therefore, the effectiveness of any library is the best measure in terms of access and demand for its services.

The essence and function of information are to adequately equip the information seekers to make the right decisions among the choices. Ajala (2004) reported in Adekunmisi (2005) opined that for information to be valuable and meaningful, it should be accurate, timely, relevant, reliable, verifiable, understandable and complete. Any item of information that meets these characteristics will surely be an asset to the senior administrative staff of polytechnics in the southwest, Nigeria to help them in the process of decision making as policy formulators and implementers. Popoola (2007) quoted in Nnadozie (2008) reported that adequate utilization of information resources enhances job performance among high ranking government officials. The position occupied, and the job performed, by employees necessitates, and sometimes influences, their quest for and utilization of various information resources (Nnadozie, 2008). Several factors determine the use of information resources in different organizations.

Uhegbu (2007) agreed that demand for and utilization of information is a product of factors such as research, job performance, examination, leisure/recreation, problem-solving, awareness, and education. The information-seeking behaviours of the senior administrative staff of polytechnics in the south-west, Nigeria fall within the ambit of Uhegbu's position above. This means that utilization of library resources by the senior administrative staff of polytechnics in south-west, Nigeria will be for purpose of enhancing their job performance either through in-depth research; recreational reading; need for awareness; solutions to official and

personal problem; need for training and retraining programmes (staff development) for the purpose of discharging their responsibilities. Library resources which senior administrative staff of polytechnics could utilize to enhance their job performance and creativity include resources identified by Popoola and Haliso (2009) as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CDROM databases, Internet/E-mail, videotapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, microforms, etc. The advent of Internet access in academic libraries which facilitates speedy and easy access to unlimited information from different sources has helped to transform the level of access by users. The Internet is an information resource that brings a wide range of materials from around the world to the user.

Various factors affecting the availability and use of Information resources and services. Gardner (2014), one of the key problems affecting the availability and use of library resources in developing countries is that of inadequate funding. Likewise, Chisenga (2004), in his study of ICT utilization in public libraries in Africa also identified a lack of funds as one of the major barriers that affect ICT application in public libraries. Similarly, Okiy's (2005) survey of ICT in Nigerian university libraries highlighted 'economic barrier' as one of the obstacles to utilization of libraries resources; while Afolabi and Abidoye (2006) also indicated 'poor funding' as one of the barriers to availability and use of information resources and services. Okiy (2005) indicated 'lack of infrastructure' as one of the barriers to utilization of resources libraries, Public libraries, whose scope of coverage is wide, both in terms of audience and subject area must ensure that the infrastructure/equipment is in place if they are to provide effective service to their patrons.

From the foregoing, funding, which is an indispensable factor in the availability and use of information resources and services in public libraries appear to be a scarce resource for most libraries. Public libraries, in their quest for utilization of resources in their operations and services, need adequate funding. Without adequate funding, the possibility of them fulfilling their dream of providing effective and efficient library services to users would remain elusive.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research design to investigate the availability and use of information resources and services in the Bauchi

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state public library. Trochim (2016) defines survey research as one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research also; Ekere et al (2016) explained that survey research is often being used as a tool for assessing service quality and user satisfaction maintained that the survey method focuses on people, the vital facts about people and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, innovation, and behaviours, identify the present condition and integrate data and point to implications and interrelationship. The targeted population for the research comprised 220 staff Bauchi state public library, both male and female.

Table1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30 years	60	27.3%
	21-40 years	50	22.7%
	41-50 years	60	27.3%
	51-60 years	40	18.2%
	60 and above	15	4.5%
Sex	Male	145	65.9%
	Female	75	34.1%
User category	Primary school students	17	7.7%
	Secondary school students	42	19.1%
	High Institution student	81	36.8%
	Public servant	58	26.4%
	Businessmen and women	22	10%

Findings show that sixty (27.3%) respondents each fell within the age bracket 20 - 30 and 41 - 50 years, 50(22.7%) were between 21 – 40 years old, 40(18.2%) were in the age bracket of 51 – 60 years while 15(4.5%) were 60 years and above. Respondents were made up of 145(65.9%) male and 75(43.1%) female. It can also be seen that 81(36.8%) of the users category were high institution students which were the majority of the respondents and

The questionnaire was divided into the following section A and B section, a focused on the background information of the respondent which is their demographic variables. While section B is all about questions.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- The result of the analysis and interpretation of the results are stated below.
- Demographic Information
- Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents surveyed for this study.

normally use the library for examination reading purpose, 58(26.4%) of the respondents were public servant,42(19.1%) of the users category were secondary school students, while 22(10%)of the respondents were business women and 17(7.7%) of respondents were primary school student who uses the library for recreational activity. This implies that the majority of the public library users in Bauchi are from higher institutions and public servants.

Table2. Types of Information Resources Available and Information Services accessed by users in Bauchi State Public Library

Variable	Category	Available	Not Available	Frequency	Percentage
Types of Information Resources	Books/ Journals	√		60	27.3%
	Computer and internet facilities	√		30	13.6%
	Newspapers	√		50	22.7%
	Audio-visual materials	√		25	11.3%
	Dictionaries	√		10	4.6%
	Illustrated books	√		9	4.1%
	Pamphlets	√		15	6.8%
	Government Publications	√		11	5%
	Graphics/ Maps, Atlases	√		10	4.6%
	No of Responses			220	100%
Information Services	Category	Accessible	Not Accessible	Frequency	Percentage
	Computer and internet services	√		32	14.5 %
	Current Awareness Services	√		27	12.3%
	Lending Services	√		26	11.8 %

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Library-Orientation/User Education	√		29	13.2 %
Inter-Library Lending	√		15	6.8%
Reservation Service	√		13	5.9 %
Reprographic		√	2	0.90%
Exhibition & Display	√		16	7.3 %
Spiral binding		√	10	4.5%
Reference Services	√		19	8.6 %
Library Publications	√		16	7.3 %
No of Responses			220	100%

The findings in table 2 above revealed the types of information resources available in Bauchi State public Library. The study reveals that 60(27.3%) of the respondents indicated that books/journals are available for use in the library, while 50(22.7%) of the respondents indicated that there were sufficient Newspapers for use. 30(13.6%) expressed that computers and internet facilities were not sufficient. 25(11.3%) responded that audiovisual materials were in limited quantity and 15(6.8%), 11(5%), 10(4.6%), 9(4.1%) others believe that pamphlets, government publications, Graphics, and illustrated books were not enough for the use of clients who visit the library to get materials of interest to use. The most common information services in Bauchi state public

library were computer and internet services with 35(15.9%), current awareness service and lending services 30(13.6%), 26(11.8%), library orientation/user education and references services 29(13.2%) and 21(9.5%) the table also revealed that 20(9.1%) of the respondents accessed inter-library lending services while response rate of 18(8.2%) accessed reservation service and 16(7.3%), 16(7.3%) indicated that they library publication services and exhibition and display service. And finally, 15(6.8%) indicated that they accessed photocopying services. Further findings revealed that only who make use of the library have access and benefit from the services available in library and also information services remain important services in the library

Table3. Frequency usage of Information Resources and Challenges affecting the availability and use of Information Resources by users in Bauchi State Public Library

Variable	Category	Frequently Utilized	Not Utilized	Undecided
Frequency usage of information resources	Books/ Journals	190 (86.4%)	30 (13.6%)	0
	Computer/Internet services	115 (52.2%)	61 (27.8%)	44 (20%)
	Newspapers	165 (75%)	45 (20.5%)	10 (4.5%)
	Audio-visual materials	20(9%)	175 (79.6%)	25 (11.4%)
	Dictionaries/Graphics	-	140 (63.6%)	60 (27.3%)
	Illustrated books	-	35 (15.9%)	173 (78.6)
Challenges affecting the availability and use of information resources and Services	Category		Frequency	Percentage %
	Inadequate funding	√	65	29.5%
	Lack of infrastructural equipment and facilities	√	50	22.7%
	Low level of staff skills	√	49	22.3%
	Poor and inadequate facilities	√	40	18.2%
	Lack of bibliographic information on the resources	√	16	7.3%
	No of Responses		220	100%

From the table above, the majority of the respondents utilized books/journals frequently. 125(56.8%) of the respondents utilized books/journals frequently. 65(29.6%) of the respondents were not utilizing books/journals regularly while 30(13.6%) respondents were undecided. Books/journals regularly and occasionally were the most frequently utilized information resources by the respondents. This is because books/journals were highly demanded by users and are to be made available in the library. 165(75%) respondents frequently utilized, 45(20.5%) of the respondents

were not utilizing the newspapers and 10(4.5%) of the respondents were undecided. were Newspapers was indicated by 100 (45.4%) and respondents who use the computers/internet were 66 (30%). Other information resources were less utilized by most of the respondents even where they were available as indicated in the table. This finding implies that despite the availability of some of the information resources in Bauchi state public library, it indicated that information resources were made available to users but some resources were less utilized. This

could be tied to the fact that the majority of the resources were not relevant and as well it is evident that users do not even avail themselves for the use of the library as expected. The utilization of information resources could be an effective tool to ensure the restoration of a socially acceptable life.

Table 3 shows the response of the respondents on the challenges that hinder the effective availability and utilization of information resources in the Bauchi state public library. 65 (29.5%) respondents concurred that inadequate funds constitute the greatest challenge to the availability and utilization of information resources in the Bauchi state public library. Similarly, the respondents also agreed that inadequate infrastructural equipment and facilities (such as accommodation, space, etc) 50 (22.7%) serve as a serious barrier to effective availability and utilization of information resources in Bauchi state public library. 49 (22.3%) respondents considered that a low level of staff skill served as hiccups to effective use of information resources in the public libraries in Bauchi state public library. However, the poor and inadequate facility was also considered to be a stronger barrier with 40 (18.2%). Another barrier that was regarded as a threat to the effective utilization of information resources in Bauchi state public library was lack of bibliographic data of the information resources with 16 (7.3%)

FINDINGS

The summary of the research findings are as follows:

- The study revealed that books are the major information resources in Bauchi state Public Library. The result showed that 125(56.8%) of the respondents indicated that books/journals are the most available information sources in the library.
- It was also established that Bauchi state public library provides users with computer and internet services with 35 (15.9%),
- It was also found that the respondents are very satisfied with the books/journals indicated by 125(56.8%). This figure reflects an appropriate presence of these information resources in the Bauchi state public library that was studied. This high response is connected with the fact that books/journals constitute the bulk of library information resources.
- It was also established in the findings that information resources in Bauchi state Public

Library are adequate. The respondents expressed that there are fairly adequate information resources in Bauchi state Public Library 70 (61%) expressed.

- The study also identifies challenges that hinder the effective availability and utilization of information resources in the public libraries in Bauchi. Respondents 65 (29.5%) concurred that inadequate funds constitute the greatest challenge to the availability and utilization of information resources in the Bauchi state public library. Similarly, the respondents also agreed that inadequate infrastructural types of equipment and facilities (such as accommodation, space, etc) 50 (22.7%) is a serious barrier to effective availability and utilization of information resources in Bauchi state public library.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be expressed that information resources are available in the library, but users cannot make good use of them. Therefore, the users need to be educated on how to use the catalog to locate information. Accessibility is dependent on availability. If information resources are not available the users would not find anything to lay hands on. To improve accessibility to information resources in the library therefore, other retrieval devices should be developed to make it easier for users to locate the resources. The effectiveness of any library depends on the resources availability, accessibility and use of its information resources by information seekers. Therefore, proper management of its information should be the focal point of the library to meet the demands of the users.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It's recommended that well-meaning individual and non-government agencies should also participate in equipping public libraries with information resources. Public libraries should also adopt other methods of acquiring information resources such as gifts and exchange, grants, etc.
- Public libraries should organize orientation on the use of the library regularly. This can be done through talk show, workshops and seminars. The orientation should focus on library use and how to gain access to information resources in the library.

- Comprehensive tools and retrieval devices should be provided to direct users to specific locations of information resources in the libraries.
- The public library management boards should provide library staff with training and re-training opportunities so that they would provide effective and efficient information services to the users.
- The library managers should encourage them to use more current services to be current and be up- to- date in the quest and research of knowledge. It was established that the public library offered leading services on some materials.

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