Attitude of Customers to the use of Information Resources in an Academic Library

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Abstract

This study investigated the attitude of library customers to the use of information resources in Nasarawa State University Library. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers sought to find out the kind of attitude exhibited by library customers to the use of information resources, identify varieties of information resources available for use, the strategies used by staff in informing library customers on the availability of information resources and challenges encountered in the use of information resources in Nasarawa State University Library. The survey research method was adopted for the study while structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The staff and customers of Nasarawa State University Library formed a total population of 125 for the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The researchers found out that the attitude put up by library customers showed that they did more of removing resources from their normal position and tearing off or mutilating page(s), The study also revealed the varieties of library information resources available in the Nasarawa State University Library such as poor/inadequate facilities to access e-resource; lack of enough sitting space for users of the information resources and inadequate time allotted for the use of information resources. The researchers concluded that the attitude put up by the library customers is as a result of limited copies of information resources and inadequate facilities. Recommendations were made in order to improve the attitude of library customers to the use of library resources in Nasarawa State University Library.

Key Word: Attitude, Library Customers, Information resources, University Library.

Introduction

Libraries exist in order to furnish people with relevant information resources. For libraries to function effectively and efficiently, they need available

information resources both in print and non-print format. The information resources provided in Nasarawa State University Library are meant to satisfy their customers. This is because customers are the focal point of the library as libraries primarily exist to satisfy their customers. A library is adjudged to have achieved its mandate when its customers are satisfied with the information resources provided to them. As a store house, it stocks all kinds of knowledge and carries information that is meant to be consulted and used by readers with little or no expenses on their part. Roberson (2005) defined a library as an institution that manages the intellectual products that individuals can gain access to. Abdulsalami, Nwachukwu and Paulina F. Salami (2014) described a library as a public institution or an establishment charged with the care of collection of books and making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person in its neighborhood into habitual library goers and readers of books. Libraries provide resources for knowledge acquisition, recreation, personal interests and inter-personal relationships for all categories of users. The information resources provided could either be print or non-print format or the combination of both.

The Nasarawa State University Library is expected to provide intellectual stimulation to the reader/learner in the forms of books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and ephemera, audio materials, film materials, graphic computers, etc. (Abdulsalami, et al. 2014). Fayose (2000) opined that library resources are made up of books and other information bearing media which can be categorised into two groups according to their functions and level of scholarship or according to their different formats. In Nasarawa State University, for example, the resources fall into two major categories according to the level of scholarship and their functions. These include study/teaching and research materials. Study/teaching materials are the resources required by students for their study. They consist of recommended textbooks, books to support class texts, journals, past examination papers, reference books, monograph, etc, while the research materials are used by postgraduate students and lecturers. These are made up of periodicals, documents of different kinds, treaties, manuscripts, pamphlets, government publications, conference proceedings, textbooks, etc.

The term, library customer, is used to include all those who avail themselves of the services offered by a library. It encompasses various words such as patrons, clients, readers, users, consumers, etc., as may be used in many different library settings. Although these terms can be used interchangeably, the underlying factor for all of them is that they apply to those seeking the services of a library. A library customer requires different kinds of information resources and any library which fails to provide sufficient and necessary materials for her clients

stands the risk of losing its users. Library customers vary depending on the types of libraries. Some customers are relatively homogeneous as in academic, school and special libraries, while in national and public libraries, the customers are heterogeneous (Abdulsalami 2005). This research work deals with customers' attitudes to and awareness of information resources in Nasarawa State University Academic Library, to be specific.

Attitudes are the feelings and beliefs that largely determine how individuals perceive their environment, commit themselves to intended actions, and ultimate behaviour (Velnampy, 2008). Paul et al., (2007) citing Taiwo, said attitudes are "inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears and convictions about any specific topic". He then cited Abdulsalami who stated that an attitude "is a mental and neutral state of readiness organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influences upon individual's response to all objects or situations with which it is associated". Attitudes regarding information resources in Nasarawa State University Library vary among library customers because they have different needs, qualifications, background, etc.

Statement of the Problem

The library in any institution of learning is supposed to provide information resources that supplement research, teaching and learning in all the disciplines or courses offered in that institution. Library information resources play an important role in the educational system for students and lecturers' use. It is necessary that we understand people's attitudes to the use of these resources. Attitudes have been discovered by sociologists to be responsible for a person's behaviour towards another person, object or situation. That apart, it is widely accepted that the way and manner a person perceives an object or another person determines, to a large extent, the amount of care and importance he/she attaches to the object. Achebe (2010) conceded that an attitude can be considered as the cause of a person's behaviour towards another person or an object. Attitudes are feelings, thoughts and predispositions directed towards a goal in the environment. Research revealed that attitudes are not expressed unless there is knowledge of the situation in question. In Nasarawa State University, due to inadequate and up-to-date information resources needed by the users, different kinds of attitudes are devised by the users to satisfy their information needs.

User study has been used to reveal the picture of what libraries should and could be to achieve best information systems that will provide maximum support by meeting the needs of the majority of users. Besides, information needs of users are dynamic and services for them should be proactive and directed towards

meeting these changing information needs. Thus, libraries need to develop effective mechanisms to receive regular feedback from users. Also, the result of this study could help eradicate the problems of intractability and idiosyncratic methods of organizing and retrieving information in order to promote the availability of adequate and up-to-date information in a research environment. Some of the negative attitudes displayed by library customers to library resources include marking on the pages of the library books, tearing off or mutilating pages, removing the books or materials from their normal positions and placing them where no other person except they can have access to it, outright stealing of the materials, etc.

Research Questions
1. What are the attitudes exhibited by library customers to the use of information resources?
2. What are the types of information resources made available to a customer's library?
3. What is the frequency of use of the information resources?
4. What are the constraints encountered by customers in the use of information resources?
5. What are the strategies used by the library to market library resources to customers?

Objectives of the Study
1. To find out the kind of attitudes exhibited by library customers to the use of information resources
2. To identify varieties of information resources made available to library customers.
3.To find out the frequency of use of information resources.
4. To find out the challenges encountered in the use of information resources.
5. To find out the strategies used in informing library customers of the availability of information resources.

Review of Related Study
A Library as an Organisation
    The word library comes from Latin word "liber" which means "book". Therefore, a library is defined as the collection of books made available to people for reading, study or reference. A library is an agency which engages in the collection, processing, preservation and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users. Apotiade (2002) defined a

library as an organized collection of sources of information and similar resources made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to materials, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both. A library's resources can be books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audio-books, databases, and other formats. It is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, a corporation, or a private individual. Public and institutional collections and services may be intended for use by people who choose not to, or cannot afford to purchase expensive collections themselves. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organising information and interpreting information needs.

Information Resources

The role of any academic library is to provide information resources to support the objectives of the parent institutions which are mainly learning, teaching, research, public services and conservation of knowledge and ideas. Academic libraries are an integral part of the institutions they serve. They have for long been recognised as the hearts of their institutions. They design their collections and services to meet the institutional programmes of their parent bodies.

Information resources is a term that has no acceptable universal definition; it is information bearing materials which enable the library to fulfil its goal of meeting the information needs of its users. Forrest (2006) noted that library resources include but are not limited to material, human and financial resources. Library resources consist of media, non-book and non-print resources. Examples of media resources include computer hard-drive, databases, library software; non-book materials include CD-ROMs, audio and video tapes, while print materials include pictures, magazines, books, maps and photographic materials. Apotiade (2002) defined information resources as the stock in trade of the librarian. These could be materials and human beings which make services possible in the library. It is materials which the customers come to consult, read or borrow and human beings who assist and teach customers how to use the library. Human resources in the library can be put into three (3) major categories, i.e., Professional , Para-Professional and Supportive Staff. The Professional Staff are those who have Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS), Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) or a PhD degree in librarianship. The Para-Professional Staff are the personnel that have Diplomas or Certificates in Library Studies, and the Supportive Staff are those that carry out administrative functions

such as accountants, personnel staff, clerks, messengers, cleaners, office assistant, etc, (Apotiade, 2002).

Types of Information Resources

Information resources are the tools with which library services are performed. They include books, microforms, tapes, computers and diaries among others. The importance of library materials can be seen from the fact that if they are removed, the library ceases to exist as what will be left is only a building. The library is made up of both the building and the materials and none of them can function effectively without the other. There are many types of information resources available for use in libraries. They are usually categorized into two forms: print and non-print materials.

Attitude of Library Customers

An attitude is stated as the feelings and beliefs that largely determine how employees perceive their environment, commit themselves to intended actions and ultimate behaviour. Nor (2007), citing Alexander and Filler defined attitudes towards the use of information resources as an "individual's feeling about resources, causing learners to approach or avoid the resources". He further added that attitudes and interests towards library resources can be related to an association with feelings and with learners' spirit to learn, or in this situation, it can be said to be best with the customers' spirit to use.

Attitudes regarding environment and electronic information resources vary among people. According to Walberg and Tsai (2005), a positive attitude towards the use of library resources is one of the strongest correlates of achievement. A study by Partin (2002) on the relationship between positive adolescent attitudes towards library resources and home environment showed that a positive attitude of students is significantly related to and fostered by the literary environment. But Ray and Day's (2008) study on students' attitudes towards electronic resources revealed that a large number of students leave universities without necessary skills to cope within the information based society.

Awareness of Library Customers

Arif and Meadows (2004) reiterated that once customers become aware of an information resource, they tend to use it. The implication of this is that information resources which customers are not aware of would be underutilized. Therefore, what is fundamental to a library information provision is to create users' awareness. Belkin (2002) was of the opinion that customers have a gap in their knowledge and so seek for information to bridge it. French (2000) observed

that a proliferation of information resources has made information provision a cumbersome task. He therefore, advocated for a speedy document delivery system and a greater need for partnership with customers to shape collections for maximum satisfaction.

Nigerian universities' libraries have not taken customer education programmes as a means of stimulating the use of library resources very seriously. In view of the fact that the library is one of the university's educational resources and a sophisticated information system, staff and students can derive maximum benefit from it only if they are taught how to sharpen their information handling skills. Neelameghan (2005) posited that the scenario in many libraries in developing countries is underutilization of information resources and services, partly due to inadequacies in relation to customer needs and to the lack of or poor information marketing and customer education efforts.

The Use of Information Resources

Libraries provide resources for knowledge acquisition, recreation, personal interests and inter-personal relationships for all categories of library customers. However, in an academic environment, attention is basically focused on academic and non-academic staff, students and researchers. The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of library services and provision of relevant resources for customers. To this end, professional librarians continue to strive to collect, store, organise and disseminate all forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future information needs of users.

The role of an academic library is to provide information materials in support of the objectives of the parent institutions which are mainly teaching, learning, research, public services and conservation of knowledge and ideas (Ifidon, 2005). Academic libraries are an integral part of the institutions they serve. They have for long been recognized as the heart of their institutions as they design the collections and services to meet the institutional programmes of their parent institutions.

Library resources include everything that is used in providing the required services to the clientele and Fayose (2000) identified them as those materials which enable libraries to carry out their functions effectively. They are made up of books and other information bearing media. Academic libraries, according to Oyewusi and Oyebade (2009), are a collection of a variety of materials for preservation and for library patrons. These resources include not only traditional print-on-paper media like books, journals, newspapers and maps but also audio-visual materials like records, audio cassettes, video cassettes, and projects. Some other library resources that could be available in the libraries are maps,

microfiches, CD-ROMs, computer software's online databases, internet, electronic books and e-journals and other media. In addition, to preserve various collections within library buildings, libraries often provide telecommunication links in order to enable users to have access to information at remote sites (Halsey, 2006).

In using information resources, one is likely to encounter the following challenges: fragility of some materials and poor and inadequate facilities. Krolak (2005) posited that appropriate materials are needed to provide protection for library equpiment. He averred that books, computers, and audio-visual materials are very sensitive and have to be protected from extreme weather conditions. Poor and inadequate facilities have also become an undermining issue for libraries to meet their goals of providing information for development. Apotiade (2002) argued that libraries need sufficient space and facilities to accommodate the use of library materials such as computers, CD-ROM etc. Also, adequate space is needed for readers to use information resources.

Methodology and Sampling Technique

The design used for conducting the study is descriptive survey research method. 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 as a representative of the population within a certain degree of error.The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of librarianship. A total population of 125 staff and students was the sample through the distribution of one hundred and twenty five (125) questionnaires which were all duly filled and collected by the researchers.

Instruments for Data Collection and Procedure for Data Analysis

The researchers used questionnaires for collecting data for the study. The data was presented and analysed using the frequency table and simple percentage which enabled the researchers to calculate the observed frequencies of the responses, followed by the explanation of the table for a better understanding and easy comprehension of findings.

Data Analysis

These sections analyse and discuss the data collected for the purpose of answering the four research questions raised in the study. Frequencies and percentages were used for the analysis to achieve the desired results.

Table 1: Attitude of Library Customers to the use of Information Resources

Attitude of a library customer	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marking on pages	39	31.2
Tearing off or mutilating pages	14	11.2
Removing the book or materials from their normal position	62	49.6
Stealing of items	10	8
Total	125	100

Table 1 above indicated that 62 (49.6%) of the total respondents exhibited the attitude of removing books or materials from their normal positions. 39 (31.2%) of the respondents showed that marking on the pages of library materials was the common attitude exhibited by library customers in the use of information resources.14 (11.2%) of the respondents indicated that tearing off or mutilation of pages were the attitudes exhibited by library customers. Lastly, 10 (8%) of the respondents opined outright stealing of the materials as the frequent attitude exhibited by library customers. Based on the analysis, removing of books or materials from their normal positions was the most common attitude exhibited by library customers in the use of information resources.

Table 2: Types of Information Resources Available to Library Customers

Information resources	CUSTOMERS	
	Students	Staff
Books	√	√
Serial/periodicals	√	√
Government publication	√	√
Reference materials	√	√
Maps and atlases	√	√
Pamphlets and chippings	√	X
Manuscripts	X	X
Online resources (e-books, e-journal)	√	√
CD/DVDs	√	-
Cassettes/video tapes	X	X
Microforms	X	X

From table 2 above, it is clearly shown that books, serial/periodical, reference materials, government publications, maps and atlases, online resources, CD/DVDs, cassettes/video tapes, pamphlets are available to all the library

customers (both undergraduate, postgraduate and staff) in Nasarawa State University Library while chippings, manuscripts and microforms are not available to all the library customers. Manuscripts and microforms are the only information resources not available to both students and staff. This clearly shows that Nasarawa State University Library has most of the materials needed by library customers. But the question is "are the above materials enough to satisfy the information need of all the library customers?

Table 3: Customers' Frequency of use of Information Resources

Information resources	Frequency of use		
	Daily	Occasionally	Weekly
Books	√	-	-
Serial/periodicals	√	-	-
Reference materials	-	√	-
Maps and atlases	-	√	-
Online resources (e-books, e-journal)	-	√	-
CD/DVDs	√	-	-

From table 3 above it is clearly shown that books, serial/periodical and CD/DVDs are consulted or used daily. Reference materials, online resources, maps and atlases and cassettes/video tapes are used occasionally. These findings have a significant implication. Government publications, pamphlets and chippings, manuscripts, microforms and cassettes/video tapes are resources not made available or are in short supply to users.

Table 4: Challenges Encountered by Customers in the use of Information Resources

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Limited information resources	45	36
Fragility of some materials	-	-
Poor and inadequate facilities to access e-resources	35	28
Inadequate space to use the information resources	24	19.2
Time allotted for the use of information resources is limited	21	16.8

Total	125	100

Table 4 revealed that 45 (36%) of the respondents indicated limited information resources for use in Nasarawa State University Library, 35 (28%) indicated poor and inadequate facilities access to e-resources, 24 (19.2%) of the respondents indicated lack of reading space to use the information resources and 21 (16.8%) of the respondents indicated limited time allotted for the use of some information resources. It explained why students often exhibited delinquency to most of the library resources.

Table 5: Strategies used by library management for informing library customers on the availability of information resources in Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi.

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Workshops/Seminars	-	-
Bulletin	-	-
Circulars	27	21.6
Notifications by the Librarian	98	78.4
Library website	-	-
Total	125	100

Table 5 indicated that 98 (78.4%) of the respondents ticked Notifications by a Librarian as the major way of informing customers about the information resources. 27 (21.6%) of the respondents indicated Circulars. The results showed that majority of customers got information resources through notifications by a Librarian and through Library Circulars. This indicated that workshops/seminars, library bulletin and library website were not used to advertise/ market their new resources to their clients.

Findings

From the study, it was found that the attitude put up by library customers showed that they did more of removing resources from their normal positions as attested to by 62 (49.6%) respondents, marking on library resources represents 39 (31.2%), tearing off or mutilation of page(s) 14 (11.2%) while the least of the attitude was stealing of library items 10 (8%). This may be due to proper checking. The variety of information resources mostly available includes books, serial/periodical, reference materials, government publications, maps and atlases, manuscripts, online resources and microforms. Cassettes/video tapes are in short supply.

Library resources often consulted were text books, serial materials, CD-ROMS while reference materials, maps/atlases, and online resources were

occasionally used by the clientele. Some of the challenges encountered by customers were limited information resources 45 (36%), poor and inadequate facilities to access e-resources 35 (28%), lack of space 24 (19.2%) and limited time allocation for reserve books usage 21 (16.8%). The strategy used to notified library users by library management about new arrival of titles were through the librarian 98 (78.4%) and through circulars 27 (21.6%). The findings clearly indicated some constraints encountered by the library customers and the library staff on the use of information resources in Nasarawa State University Library.

Conclusion

Customers of Nasarawa State University Library require quality and adequate information resources in order to carry out research and in preparation of lecture notes. However, in the 21st century global growth of information resources in print and electronic formats therefore, customers need quality and adequate information gadgets that would help them identify, access and utilise the required quality of information.

Based on the findings of this study, one can therefore, conclude that the attitude put up by the library customers is as a result of limited copies of information resources and inadequate facilities.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the attitude of library customers to the use of library resources in Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi.

- There should be a balanced collection development which has been the major headache of the library management in Nasarawa State University Library due to low budget allocations and inflation.
- It is equally important that the library management take cognizance of the needs of users, specifically staff, undergraduate and post graduate students and avail them of information resources.
- There is the need for multiple copies of information resources and provision of ICT facilities.
- Warning labels or notes should be strategically placed in the library to avoid removal of books or materials from their normal positions.
- Some materials such as pamphlets and chippings, manuscripts, CD/DVDs, cassettes/video tapes, microforms need to be provided for the library.

- The Ministry of Education and the University management should increase their budgetary allocations to the library to enable them to tackle other challenges like poor and inadequate facilities for assessment of e-resources.

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