

A SURVEY OF LIBRARY EQUIPMENTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IBADAN, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the availability of library and equipment tools used in selected academic libraries in Ibadan, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was developed to elicit information from the personnel of the selected libraries on the equipments and tools available in their respective libraries. The data were collated, analyzed and interpreted based on standard statistical method. The results of the study revealed that equipment in academic libraries in Ibadan were grossly inadequate for processing and information services that, the relationship between libraries size and equipments available in academic libraries is not statistically significant and that staff output is affected by equipment availability. This was found to be as a result of inadequate funding, poor infrastructural facilities and more attention given to ICT facilities by most of the libraries. Based on the outcome of the study, it was recommended that adequate funds be made available to the libraries to procure library equipment on regular basis and that staff productivity be enhanced by adequate provisions of tools and equipments.

Keywords: Library equipment, academic libraries, Ibadan, Oyo State

Introduction

Equipment in any setting is a panacea to efficiency and productivity. Library system is not an exception to this rule as there are several tools and equipments which enhance service delivery. Maidabino (2010) citing Gelfand (2005) calls the library, “the only centralized location where new and emerging information technologies can be combined with knowledge resources in users-focused, services-rich environment that supports today’s social and educational patterns of learning, teaching and research” library services can only be achieved through the availability of adequate library equipments which facilitate collections acquisitions and processing. Anunobi and Okoye (2008) state that “academic libraries are faced with hybrid challenges of managing resources and are challenged to acquiring the necessary skills.” One challenge is the issue of inadequacy of equipments and tools with which the library personnel work.

Library science, more accurately labeled *librarianship*, is a professional area of study designed to prepare individuals for careers as librarians. Librarians are

primarily concerned with such tasks as evaluating, processing, storing and retrieving information (Halsey 2009). Librarians also help library patrons use collections, software and online public access catalogs (OPACs). According to Oni (1992), facilities constitute a strategic factor in organizational functioning. This is so because they determine to a very large extent the smooth functioning of any social organization or system including library. He further stated that their availability, adequacy and relevance influence efficiency and high productivity.

The equipments range from buildings housing the library collections, other equipments as well as library staff. These equipments play pivotal role in the actualization of the aims and objectives of academic libraries by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of the staff and students as well as other category of library users. Knezevich (1975) emphasized that the physical needs are met through provision of safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual environment, appropriate thermal environment and sufficient shelter space for his work and play. His emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment. This study therefore provides an overview of the different types of library equipments and tools and explains in detail their usage and importance to library and information services.

Literature Reviews

The central mission of a library is to collect, organize, preserve access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserves a valuable record of culture that can be passed down to succeeding generations. Libraries are an essential link in this communication between the past, present and future. Whether the cultural record is contained in books or in electronic formats, libraries ensure that the record is preserve and made available for later use. Libraries provide people with access to the information they need to work, play, learn and govern. In order to meet the challenges as highlighted above, academic libraries and the staff therein need to be provided with adequate tools and equipments with which to carry out laudable services to achieve its mission.

Bureau of India Standards (2011) provide that a library should have a stack room, a Librarian's room and a Reading Room having seating capacity of 40 to 120 chairs. The stack room should be big enough to accommodate between 6,000 and 10,000

books. The library-in-charge would need to plan actual library size and seating capacity of 'reading room' keeping in view the optimum number in an adult education setup, the variety of library services it is planning to offer, and the members of the adult community who would be coming to visit the library for social interactions. The library equipments and tools like furniture, fitting and accessories should be of standard pattern and design, so that users feel comfortable in using them.

People in many professions use library resources to assist them in their work. People also use library resources to gain information about personal interests or to obtain recreational materials such as films and novels. Students use libraries to supplement and enhance their classrooms experiences, to learn skills in locating sources of information, and to develop good reading and study habits. Public officials use libraries to research legislation and public policy issues. One of the most valued of all cultural institutions, the library provides information and services that are essential to learning and progress. Reference books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, directories and picture books are costly and heavy in weight. They must be handled with care.

Normally, books and other reading materials in a library are organized into different collections such as book collection, rare book collection, periodical collection and reference collection etc. books are arranged according to classified order. Besides, when some books are more in demand than others in such cases the library may consider creating a separate sequence of books in great demand. Reference books are also arranged in classified order. Periodicals are arranged by journal title. Shelving and shelf rectification of reading material in different collections must be done preferably every day to ensure that shelf arrangement of books and other reading material is as per prescribed order. Shelf rectification is undertaken to ensure that books and other reading are kept on the shelves as per prescribed order. In case they are not, necessary rectification is done to restore their orders on the shelves. This is important so that one could trace books on shelves from their prescribed locations on the shelves when required. Other activities of library maintenance are: taking out worn out books and other materials for repair or binding, sending new books and journals for shelving, display of new books and other reading materials received in the library, preparing stack room guides, and shelving volumes returned after use, etc. library may also perform

stock verification on periodical basis, with a view to weed out books, as per its policy and writing off-books etc.

IT Facilities

Information technology (IT) is for better management and exchange of information for more efficient communication and ultimately for the benefit of the people using IT (Bryson, 1990). Information is a dynamic and unending resource that affects all disciplines and all walks of life as it supports education, research and development. As libraries and information centers deal mainly with information, majority of their technical applications will be in the collection, handling, storage and dissemination of information or information technology. Technologies, especially computer and telecommunication technology have highly revolutionized the field of library and information services. They facilitate collections, storage, organization, processing, analysis, presentation, communication and dissemination of information. With the introduction of new technology, libraries are expected to use various types of technology to provide information, more quickly and in greater volume than before.

The advantage of IT applied to information retrieval is the immediate and local access to a much wider range of library resources. Information technology has also made an impact on the alerting services, mainly by providing speedy access to information that appears initially and the news and business services of one kind or another in electronic form. Electronic delivery of materials has also made a major impact on information service operations providing increased flexibility, customization of services and opportunities for entirely new types of services in the widespread information transfer (Varalaksmi, 1992). The advancement in technology will continue to improve the effectiveness of the libraries and become indispensable for handling information between libraries and library patrons to librarian and vice versa (Kumbar, 1996).

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the adequacy or otherwise of the equipments used in selected academic libraries with a view to making useful suggestions toward improving library information services. The specific objectives are to:

- Determine the equipment and tools available for use from library services in selected academic libraries.
- Determine the criteria for acquiring the equipments used in selected academic libraries.
- Determine whether or not staff output are affected by availability or otherwise of library equipments in academic libraries

Research Questions/Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses will be tested in the course of this study

Hypotheses one: There will be a significant relationship in the output of staff and equipments available in academic libraries.

Hypotheses Two: There will be significant relationship in the size of library and equipments available in academic libraries.

Methodology

The design of the study is a descriptive survey on library equipments available for use in selected academic libraries. The instrument used for this study was developed as Library Equipments Survey Questionnaires (LESQ) which was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument is divided into three sections. The Friedman test was used to analyze the data collated in section A and the Pearson correlation matrix where (df=39, r.obs=5, at P<0.05) was used in analyzing the data in section B.

Section A: Demographic Variable of the Respondents

The items included in this part were respondents gender, age, highest educational qualification, department/section/division, and length of service.

Section B

This part of the survey contains ten items measuring output of library staff in selected academic libraries. Respondents were asked to answer yes or no questions about their belief in availability of library equipment and its applications to library practices on a 2-point scale: 2= Yes and 1= No.

Section C

This part contains seven items assessing the staff output based on the availability of equipments in the library, types of equipments available in libraries as well as criteria for acquiring such library equipments.

Population and Sample

The study targeted library staff (the professional, para-professional and non-professionals) in the three academic libraries in Ibadan. All categories of staff in the population were included in the survey. A librarian in this study is assumed to mean a full time professional with at least a Master degree in Library Science. A Para-professional in this population is assumed to mean a staff with at least a diploma certificate in Library Science while a non-professional means a staff of the library without a formal training in the field of Library and Information Science.

Table 1: List of the Surveyed Libraries and Librarians

Libraries	Number of librarians
Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. (KDL)	21
SS Peter And Paul Seminary Library (SSPLIB)	2
The Polytechnic Ibadan Library (POLYLIB)	8
Lead City University Library (LCUL)	20

The selected libraries comprised four academic libraries situated in Ibadan, Oyo state. The libraries were censured and within each library, librarians were also censured.

Presentation of Findings

The outcomes of the survey are presented as follows. Table 1 shows the libraries under study as well as the number of librarians in each of the libraries. From the table, Kenneth Dike Library has the highest number of librarians closely followed by Lead City University.

ICT Resources of Surveyed Libraries

The libraries in this survey use various types of electronic equipment and communication technologies to ensure the smoothness of library activities as evident in the table below.

Table 2: ICT Facilities of Surveyed Libraries

Library Name	KDL	SSPPLIB	POLYLIB	LCUL
Computers	227	8	16	37
Computers connected to internet	177	8	3	37
CD-Rom	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Photocopier	10	2	1	6
Printer	10	1	3	2
Scanner	6	1	1	3

Table 2 revealed that the ICT equipment and facilities are moderately available in the surveyed academic libraries with KDL having almost all the IT facilities surveyed while the SSPPLIB had the least. This is partly due to the size of the library as well as the volumes of the collections and readership involved.

Table 3: Equipment Availability and Adequacy

Library equipments	Name of library			
	KDL	POLYLIB	SSPLIB	LUCL
Photocopier	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Document scanner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Binding equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Microfiche reader	Yes	Nil	Nil	Yes
Display board	Yes	No	No	No
Information on new arrivals	Yes	No	No	No
Issue and return counter	Yes	No	No	No
Stand for magazines	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Cabin with seating capacity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Catalogue cards	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Racks for library books	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Librarians information boards	Yes	No	No	No
Soft board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Key: Yes means adequate; No means not adequate; Nil means not available at all

Table 3 indicated that the Kenneth Dike library responded in the affirmative to all the equipment surveyed while the SSPLIB has the least positive responses. However, it was observed that even though where the equipments are available they are grossly inadequate considering the size of the libraries and collections therein.

Hypothesis One

This hypothesis states that there will be no significant relationship in the level of equipments and staff output in academic libraries. This hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in table 4

Table 4: Availability of Equipment and Staff Output

Variable	Number of respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	R	P	Remark
Equipment	45	26.73	3.35	0.09	0.03	Significant
Staff output	45	26.75	3.22			

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

From the table 1, it could be seen that there is a significant relationship in the output of staff and the equipment available in the library with correlation coefficient R being 0.09 and P is 0.03. Hence the hypotheses is accepted. This means that there is a significant relationship in the output of staff and the equipments available in academic librarians in Ibadan

Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis is states that there will be significant relationship in the size of library and equipments available in academic libraries. The result of the findings is as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Library Size and Equipments

Variable	Number of respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	R	P	Remark
Library size	45	21.06	3.57	0.15	0.81	Not Significant
Library equipment	45	21.32	3.23			

Table 5 shows that, the relationship between library size and equipments available in academic libraries is not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). The null hypothesis that states that “there is no significant relationship between library size and equipments” was therefore accepted. This implies that library size has no significant relationship with equipments availability in academic libraries.

Discussion

The foregoing results have revealed that library equipments have a significant relationship with staff output in academic libraries in Ibadan. It means that availability and adequacy of the right equipments, tools and facilities have a positive impact on the efficiency and productivity of library staff. This is agreement with the findings of Knezevich (1975) as well as Oni (1992) who found that facilities have great impact on productivity and strategic planning and development of a library is guided mainly by the goals and objectives of the parent institution of which the library is a part.

Furthermore, the second hypothesis revealed that the size of an academic library has nothing to do with equipment availability. This is obvious as equipment and facilities acquisitions depend on the policies of the academic libraries as well as the parent institution (dahwan, 2009). It is the duty of the library management to offer proactive services for effective use of all types of library materials. The finding of this study also indicated that the surveyed libraries concentrate more on the acquisition of ICT facilities and equipments without corresponding increase in the manual tools and equipment. This is contrary to the findings of Zabed (1998). This is a paradigm shift from conventional librarianship and it must not be allowed to subdue the conventional practice.

Conclusion

The need to provide adequate working tools, facilities and equipments for efficient and productive service delivery cannot be overemphasized. This study has revealed that most of the academic libraries surveyed in Ibadan tend to concentrate more on collection acquisition with no corresponding improvement on equipment and tools for operations and library services. Researchers have however shown that availability of resources and facilities and in leading their human capital are known to give better performance. Library management involves functions such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Planning is about systematically making decisions about the library goals. Organizing is about assembling and coordinating human, financial, physical, informational, and other resources needed to achieve library goals. Leading is about functions that involves efforts on the path of the librarian to stimulate high performance by employees and controlling about monitoring various library operations and services through adequate provision of equipment and tools.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

There is a need to set up a Library Advisory Committee, which would perform the role of advising the library on its growth and development. It will also act as interface between the library management and the top management in the academic institution and between the users groups, for ensuring smooth functioning of the library operations and services without compromising on policies set out for library development.

It is a good practice to undertake budget planning exercise in consultation with the Library Advisory Committee for developing collections, library equipments, library furniture, media equipments etc. in order to promote and enhance library service productivity and efficiency.

Also, adequate equipment should be procured on regular basis for effective service delivery. This could be achieved by regular feedback from library staff who are directly involved in handling such equipments as well as heads of various sections and units of the library. If this is done it will go a long way in improving staff productivity in academic libraries.

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