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Relationship Between Staffing and Utilization of Special Collections in Federal University Libraries in North – Eastern Nigeria

*Usman Chiya; **Samuel A. Amkpa, and Talatu Abubakar Boda

Department of Library and Information Science, University of Maiduguri

: usmanchiya2@gmail.com, and talaturabasa1@gmail.com,

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections in federal university libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives which determined the extent of special collections utilization; and the relationship between the staffing with utilization of the special collections. To achieve these objectives, one research question and one null hypothesis guided this study. It was hypothesized that, there was no significant relationship between staffing with users utilization of special collections. The study was a correlation study and utilized correlation research design and survey research method. Questionnaire was the research instrument used to gather data. The population used was 7860 with a sample of 760. The response rate recorded was 728(93%) which was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the research question, while hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). Findings showed that, there was a gross under-utilization of special collections by users in the libraries studied. A further analysis revealed that significant relationships between staffing with utilization of special collections information resources existed. Based on the findings, the study concluded that, there was gross underutilization of special collections; and that special collection staff are inadequate and untrained in the management of special collections. On the bases of the findings and conclusion drawn, the study recommended

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that, special collections units in the libraries studied should create awareness that would stimulate the users for frequency of utilization through user's education strategies; and staff adequacy, training and retraining in the art of special collection management is highly desirable.

Keywords: Staffing; utilization; special collections.

INTRODUCTION

For a library to be relevant to the university community, it must not only provide the information resources, but also ensure their effective use. This entails having adequate resources, manpower and management. Staffing is the process of getting the right people to occupy the positions created by the organizing process. The most essential things in any organization is that, the right calibre of staff must always be available, placed in the right position, doing the right thing at all time.

The entire activities and functions of the library in general such as selection and acquisition, processing of materials through cataloguing and classification, making available materials to users and dissemination of useful information to the academic community among others are occupational responsibilities of staff of the library. The type of staff in the employment of the library in general, greatly influence the quality and quantity of service rendered to the library clienteles. Special collections are special materials meant to serve special users and managed by special staff with required skill in special collection management

A special collections are seen as information resources collected because of their special nature, rarity, type, subject, origin, age, provenance, or some other defining characteristics (ARL, 2003 cited in Dupont and Yakel, 2011). They are special in the sense that they are self-contained collections, quite separate in every way from the library's ordinary book stock. In this study, special collections are seen as information resources collected because of their special nature, rarity, type, subject and origin. Materials that normally fall within this category are those

publications that includes Africana, Nigerian, Bornoana, Bauchiana, Government publications, International governmental and non-governmental organizations, Maps, photographs, Staff publications of the universities under study, theses/dissertations, manuscripts and reports that are not easy to come by or replaced. Love and Feather (1998) founded that staffing related issues in teams of personnel, their adequacy, training and ethical conduct enhance special collection utilization. Members of the staff of special collections are professional librarians who have a broad knowledge and specialization which are required in area of special collection management. Therefore, one aspect of library management which affects collection use is the staffing. Ajayi and Adetayo (2005) stated that the utilization of library as an instrument of learning is determined by the success with which it is able to provide the users with the information resources they need. According to findings by Echezona and Edoka (2009), the future of special collections in federal and state university libraries in Nigeria is threatened by worrisome problems which bedevilled special collections, and persisted due to the continued poor services rendered to users of special collections affected effective special collection utilization by users.

Based on personal experience and observation of the researchers, and comments from users of special collections under study, these collections are not given the right treatment in terms of staffing. The implication is that much of the valuable information resources in the collection could be underutilized. For such collections to be relevant to the university community, it must not only provide the resources but also ensure their effective use through sufficient and relevant staffing. The absence of this may be militating factors against effective utilization of special collections in academic libraries under study. This was the motivating factor that prompted this study to investigate whether there is a relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections in Federal University Libraries in the North - East Zone, Nigeria.

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Research problem

Special collections are special materials meant to serve the information needs of relevant users. The necessity to acquire, process, preserve, retrieve and utilize information resources efficiently, economically and conveniently, makes it imperative to manage special collection resources to facilitate and optimize services to the university community. Special collections staffing requirements are quite distinct, varying considerably from the rest of the library (Evans & Carter, 2009), which suggests that careful selection of special collection staff is necessary. However these collections are not given the right treatment in terms of staffing. Observation shows that, librarians in charge of special collections are inadequate and untrained and have not received on the job training and retraining on the management of special collections. The implication implied that users are not adequately served. Further implication is that, because of the lack of knowledge in the management of special collections, the process of organization of the materials may not be properly done resulting to poor information retrieval, accessibility and underutilization of special collections information resources. Therefore, its underutilization assumes a worrisome dimension, given that libraries have a responsibility of ensuring that their resources are effectively utilized. The justification for embarking on this study is partly informed by these observation that, inaccessibility of information resources and ineffective use of special collections may be due to inadequate staff and lack of training in the art of special collection management in the federal university libraries under study, which to a certain extent may be factors for underutilization of these special collections.

In essence, problems involved in the management of these special materials are associated with personnel which may have hinders effective utilization of resources in special collections. Staff levels and available skills are inappropriate to support the growing size and scope of special collections; and lack of following established guidelines for what constitutes adequate access. Based on personal experience and users lamentations, the current trend seems to show that special collections are grossly under-used due to the question of proper staffing which is a sore-point. These may have undermined accessibility and utilization of these collections.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to determine:

i. The extent of utilization of special collections in the Federal University Libraries in North - Eastern Nigeria.

ii. The relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections in the Federal University Libraries in North - Eastern Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the extent of utilization of special collections in the Federal University Libraries in North - Eastern Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between staffing and users' utilization of special collections in the Federal University Libraries in North - Eastern Nigeria.

Literature review

A library is a unique repository of recorded knowledge, which its utilization is dependent on the organization of human and information resources. In any resource service, the role of the staff is paramount and effectively determines whether the resources they control will be used to the best advantage or not. Reiterating staff importance, a study by Chibnall (1976); Camble (1985); Bavakutty and Majeed (2005); Onifade (2006) stated that, Staff are the organizers. They organize the centre, they organize its resources (both materials and equipment), they organize the approach to the resources, and they organize the user so that his problem can be matched to the facilities available. Librarians, protect the user from the medium (that is, arrange books so that the user can find what he wants); he provides an inclusive knowledge of media (that is, he knows his way round bibliographies, abstracts, other libraries, resources); he determines the style, suitability and choice of material (that is, he is responsible for the

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build-up of the collection); he organizes, manages and coordinates (that is, he does just that). The staff therefore selects, organizes, manages and coordinates special collections for effective utilization.

Literature on special collections staff requirements in terms of number and qualifications confirms the facts that, staff in special collection need to be a specialist. According to Traister (2003); Ajayi and Adetayo (2005); and Edoka (2000), the staff of such department (special collection unit) may need to include *inter alia*, specialists in reader services, preservation and conservation, exhibitions, original cataloguing of special/rare books. That, staff in special collections reflects a growing emphasis on both librarianship and subject expertise. Professional degrees in librarianship and advanced degrees in academic subject fields relevant to those represented in the collections are now commonly demanded of those aspiring to work in special collections. Both the professional and the nonprofessional staff in a library play a major role in the coordination of resources availability, organization and utilization. The capabilities of the personnel are required to get things done for easy identification and location of special collections resources. Bozimo (2006) postulated that the process of finding books in library is much more efficient and effective when mediated by well-trained and conscientious librarians or others who fill the role of the librarian.

A study by Little (2012), found a significant correlation between the ratio of staff to constituency and overall satisfaction, and suggested a high ratio of degree professionals and subject specialists would have a significant effect as well, and suggested, competent; professional; customer focused staff as the most important element to overall patron satisfaction.

Studies suggest that librarians must orientate themselves and their programs to become better customers' advocates and address their problems solving needs. It is one thing to generate as much information as possible and it is quite another thing however to make such information available to others when needed. The

need for staff to redirect their attitudes to be able to provide and interpret the collection of books and periodicals as required by users is stressed by Andaleeb and Simmonds (1998); Oyesiku and Oduwale (2004); Emerole and Ogugua (2007); Chiya (2014), that, the use of academic libraries largely depends on staff attitude which promote active, constant and frequent use by staff and students of the institution.

Availability of staff has equally been adjudged to have impact on collection use. According to Law (1996), one aspect of library management which affects collection use is the availability of staff to assist the user. The way in which staff resources are allocated to the activities will inevitably determine the quality of services to readers. Findings by Echezona and Afolabi (2009) revealed that, special collections were characterized by inadequate and untrained staff in special collection management. The result of the study implied that users are not adequately served. Another implication is that the process of organization may not be properly done resulting to poor information retrieval. Accordingly, the various studies provided an overview showing the importance of staff towards library utilization. The studies have linkage and relevance in the understanding of how important available, knowledgeable and staff attitude toward effective utilization of special collections.

Methodology

The relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections, is a correlation study aimed at determining the relationship between variables and therefore, correlation design was adopted for the study. The study examined the relationship between staffing and users' utilization of special collections. This study covered Federal University Libraries in the North East zone of Nigeria, namely: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Library, Bauchi Bauchi State (1988); Ibrahim Babangida Library, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State (1988); Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri, Borno State(1975); University Library,Federal University Gashua, Yobe State(2013); University Library, Federal University Kashere, Gombe State(2010); and University Library, Federal University

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Wukari, Taraba State.(2010)

However, only special collection in ATBU library and Ramat Library University of Maiduguri were utilized for this study, because they have well developed special collections. Ibrahim Babangida Library, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola do not have special collection unit and Federal Universities Gashua, Kashere and Wukari are newly established universities. The target population for this study is seven thousand eight hundred and sixty (7,860) users, consisting of post-graduate students, academic and senior administrative/technical staff of the universities under study, all of which are potential library users. This is because the usage of special collections is usually restricted to these categories of users. Based on this definition, the population of the study is therefore all the post-graduate students (4389), academic staff (1553) and senior administrative/technical (1918) staff in the two federal universities in the North-East under study as presented in table 1 below:

Table 1: Population of the Study

University	PG students	Academic staff	Snr/Tech.	Total
*ATBU, Bauchi	2,092	612	818	3522
**Univ. of Maiduguri	2,297	941	1,100	4338
Total	4389	1553	1918	7860

Source: * ATBU Bauchi, University Handbook and MIS bulletin, 2011.

**University of Maiduguri, Academic Planning Nominal Roll, 2010/2011

Proportional stratified sampling technique was employed to ascertain the representative sample of seven hundred and eighty six (786) users of the special collections in the two federal universities under study. The sample (786) is ten (10) percent of the target population of seven thousand eight hundred and sixty (7860), which is proportionate to each stratum of the population.

The ten (10) percent representative sample is based on suggestions on the desired level of confidence of sample size of the population if the population size is too large. For instance, Wimmer and Dominick (1987) a minimum sample size of ten (10) percent or five (5) percent should be used for populations that are up to ten thousand (10,000). It is on the basis of these recommendations that the researcher used ten (10) percent of the total population as sample based on proportional stratified sampling technique. The research instrument used for the study is self-design, pre-tested, and validated questionnaire. The data obtained was analyzed using frequency tabulation and percentages to answer the research question. The hypothesis was tested with statistical methods of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) with the use of computer programme of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Results

A total of 786 copies of questionnaires were administered and 728 were retrieved and found to be useful, which represent 93% response rate, and is adequate for making generalizations. The only research question of the study is answered using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages displayed in table below.

Research Question:
What is the extent of utilization of special collections in the two Federal University Libraries in North-East zone, Nigeria?

Table 2: Frequency of Utilization of Special Collections in the libraries under Study

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S/N	Frequency of special collection utilization	N	Responses on frequency of special collection utilization												
			Low						Medium		High				
			SA		A		Agreement total score and percentage		UD		D		SD		Disagreement's total score and percentage	
	I use the special collection:		Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%	frq	%	frq	%	frq	%	Frq	%
1	Less than once a month		268	37	234	32	502	69	00	00	102	14	124	17	226	31
2	1-3 times a month	728	283	39	201	28	484	67	00	00	156	21	88	12	244	33
3	1-3 times a week		97	13	168	23	265	36	00	00	310	43	153	21	463	64
4	4-5 times a week		73	10	128	18	201	28	00	00	319	44	208	29	527	72
5	On daily basis		68	9	114	16	182	25	00	00	243	33	303	42	546	75

Answer to this question is presented by the analysis of five indices of frequency of use of special collections in libraries under study presented in table 2. As shown in the table, the index of once a month of users frequency scored with a total of 502(69%) and the frequency use of 1-3 times a month with a total scored of 484(67%) agreed that they use their special collections once and 1-3 times a month respectively. These suggest that, majority of the respondents are under utilizing their special collections.

The frequency use of 4-5 times a week with a total score of 201(28%) and the frequency of special collection use on daily basis with a total score of 182(25%) agreed that their frequency use was 4 - 5 times a week and on daily basis respectively. This is an indication that the majority of the users do not frequently use their special collections. Hence, it is another evidence of under utilization.

The analysis of the five indices of extent of utilization of special collection as regards to the research question of the study can be concluded that special collections in the Federal University libraries studied in North-Eastern Nigeria are underutilized. This is because, the analysis shows that the user's strength of frequency of use is positively agreed on indices of once a month and 1-3 times a month as indicated by 69% and 67% respectively.

Testing of Hypothesis

To test this hypothesis, the data collected was analysed using the Pearson Product- Moment Corrections Co-efficient (PPMC) analysis. The result obtained is presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Relationship between staffing and users' utilization of special collections in Federal University Libraries under study

N	Σx	Σy	Σx^2	Σy^2	Σx	r-value	p-value	Df	Decision
728	7116	15980	76106	354910	155463	0.142	0.105	727	S

0.05 level of significance

The calculated r-value was 0.142. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value at 0.05 significant levels, with 727 degree of freedom. Thus, since the calculated r-value is greater than the p-value of 0.105, the tested null hypothesis which predicted that there is no significant relationship between staffing and users' utilization is rejected. Therefore quality staffing has significant relationship with users' utilization of special collections in the Federal University Libraries under study.

Findings
The study's statistical analysis yielded the following findings:
1. The indices of extent of frequency of utilization of special collections as regards to the research question of the study revealed that special collections in Federal University libraries studied were underutilized. This is because, the analysis showed that the users' strength of frequency of use is positively agreed on indices of less than once a month and one-three (1-3) times a month respectively.

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2. Testing of the variables in the hypothesis (Ho$_1$) suggests a strong relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections in the university libraries studied (r = 0.142, P = 0.105).

Discussion

While a relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections by users' has been found, evidence of special collection management in the libraries under study is grossly inadequate which contributed to the under utilization of special collections in these libraries studied.

The only research question analyzed revealed that, the frequency of utilization of special collections in the libraries studied was than once a month and 1-3 times a month as indicated by 69% and 66% respectively. The result is an indication of under utilization of these special collections. This result is significant and corroborated those of Onifade (2006) that special collections in some university libraries are fairly utilized while in others underutilized.

There was significant relationship between staffing and utilization of special collections in the libraries studied. This finding rejected the null hypothesis which predicted, that there was no significant relationship between the two variables. The finding of the study corroborates Ajayi and Adetayo (2005); Oyesiku and Oduwale (2004); Emerole and Ogugua (2007); Echezona & Afolabi (2009); and Chiya (2014), lamented that, the effectiveness of library services depends upon the availability, competence and good attitude of staff, which are the most important elements in resources utilization. It is evident from the finding that the special collections studied lacked adequate, knowledgeable, competent, and courteous staffing with willingness to help users which ensures utilization and users satisfaction. This finding is in agreement with the early result which showed negative frequency of special collection utilization by users, because of inadequate, untrained and knowledgeable staff with empathy to users which are the bedrock for the utilization of special collection and the

libraries in general. Therefore, positive relationship does exist between staffing and utilization of special collections in the libraries under study. Unorganized, untrained and insufficient staff as evident from the finding has been the most fundamental factors of under utilization of special collections in the libraries studied. Hence, staffing and utilization of special collections have significant relationships.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based upon the findings, the study concludes that from the survey results, special collections studied are grossly underutilized. This is in confirmation with the literature reviewed. Special collection staff in the libraries studied are inadequate in number, untrained on special collection management and lacked apathy to the users. Therefore, staff inadequacy and knowledge in special collection management, supported the under utilization of special collections in the Federal University libraries examined.

2. Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, the study recommends for the university libraries that, Special collection librarians should be trained and retrained in the art of special collection management in order to offer needed services that will ensure utilization of these collections.

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