

Evaluating Users' Satisfaction With Landmark University's Online Public Access Catalogue

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Abstract

This study evaluated users' satisfaction with online public access catalogue (OPAC) of Landmark University, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population were 200 students, which were purposively selected to participate in the study. Questionnaire were distributed to all the purposively selected undergraduates and all the 200 questionnaire were returned and found valid for analysis, thereby, giving a response rate of 100%. The findings revealed that users of online public access catalogue at Landmark University were highly satisfied with the performance and functions of the OPAC. Further, findings revealed that "use of library study skills and information communication technology course" created the necessary awareness on OPAC. In addition, findings revealed that 64.0% did not search OPAC for course materials. Overall, the respondents indicated a high knowledge level of OPAC. This study made recommendations to improve OPAC use.

Introduction

Technology is affecting the way that we relate to each other and the way we search for knowledge or information. At present, the localization of information is no longer conceived without the figure of the computer. The electronic environment is also producing a cognitive change in the way we interact with technical devices, and the online public access catalogue is no exception (Villen-Rueda, Senso, & de Moya-Anegón (2007). The ICT age has placed the online public access catalogue (OPAC) at the heart of rendering effective library services. Thus, providing access to important information resources through the library OPAC can offer a more complete research picture for users, which may in turn increase users' patronage of library resources. Hence, it is strategic and vital in providing access to library holdings.

The card catalogue and subsequently, the online public access catalogue (OPAC) have historically represented the central element of most libraries, the core component of the library as an organization and the centre of the automated system managing both the collection and the services relating to it (Ortiz-Repiso, Bazan, Ponsati & Cottureau, 2006). The library catalogue has always been viewed as a tool for the location of the resources of parent institution; it offers documentary substitutes of the primary sources and the physical location, represented by topographic signatures. This is the justification behind the greater use of the library than other facilities for obtaining specific information; that is, the user resorts to the library OPAC because after query he or she may wish to consult the original document, if it has not been viewed by other means (Villen-Rueda, *et al.*, 2007)

The library OPAC was developed as a tool to locate those information resources that had been acquired and stored by the library itself. However, within the integrated library management system, these resources were first described within the acquisitions and bibliographic database, and then

accessed by the public via the OPAC. The OPAC and the bibliographic database were two aspects of the same overall software. These include adapting bibliographic database capacity so as to include or reference non-print materials and digital content, such as images and full text on a local network, and, more recently, to link to wide-area networks and open web content. In all, with so many libraries professionally evaluating information content and possessing so much information about item usage, we must have one of the best recommendation data stores possible (Sokvitne, 2006). In addition, Mi & Weng (2013) likened an easy to use OPAC to a web 2.0 environment, which the ultimate goal is that users will be comfortable and confident using library OPAC for their information needs wherever a computer is available and without special training.

OPAC purport to allow complete retrieval, even though data structures and index definitions are not transparent. They necessarily impose a framework of retrieval that conceals information at the same time as it presents it, and therefore to an extent they undermine the very concept of information literacy. In an online environment, catalogues have been able to easily move beyond the scope of individual library collections and to incorporate an increasing range of non-traditional types of information (Wells, 2007). Thus, the OPAC continues to be an essential tool for providing access to quality information (Ortiz-Repiso, *et al.*, 2006)

According to Delsey (2001), two central aspects of online public access catalogues are integration and diversification. Integration refers to the fact that the catalogue contains not only documents that the library owns, but also others to which it provides access: e-books, e-journals, databases, free web resources and so forth. Furthermore, Webster, (2004) explained that diversification refers to the fact that these resources can be reached, moreover, via route and systems other than the OPAC. On the one hand, this enhances searching possibilities. However, on the other, the panorama is more

complicated for the end user who must use a variety of retrieval tools: for instance, the local OPAC or those of other libraries, a bibliographic database subscribed to by the library, a platform of e-journals, or a web search engine.

The OPAC continues to be a highly used search tool by library users. Nevertheless, catalogues developed in a web environment must find a way to implement more efficient search mechanisms than those based on Boolean operators and exact hits. Thus, the OPAC continues to be an essential tool for providing access to quality information. Such information can be in paper or in electronic format and available by accessing e-journals, bibliographic databases, and other resources selected and evaluated by the library itself. It is now necessary for the OPAC to insert itself into, and interact with, a much broader universe of information. According to Sridhar (2004) OPAC is an intrinsically rich tool which not only incorporates online circulation and new arrivals information of the library but even capable of providing quick, enhanced and easy access from the work place of the user with several additional search features compared to card catalogue and hence substantially saves the time of user. In this sense, the traditional card catalogue is no match to OPAC (Sokvitne, 2006). Consequently, OPAC should be designed to meet the needs of users better in the areas of ease of use and information retrieval.

In 2002 a group of librarians investigated “on-line public access catalogue use in Nigerian academic libraries.” The study was carried out through a questionnaire based survey and found that OPAC was used mostly for self-search rather than delegated search with author (59%) as major access point followed by subject (30.8 %) and large majority were found very satisfied (75%) with the OPAC (Oduwole, Oyesiku & Labulo, 2002). Further, in 2004, Campbell and Fast presented their analysis of an exploratory study of university students’ perceptions of searching OPACs and Web search engines. They found that students express a distinct preference for search engines over library catalogues, finding the catalogue baffling and difficult to use effectively. As a consequent, libraries OPAC have been highly criticised because they do not fulfil user needs (Tennant, 2005; Mi & Weng, 2013). This may be as a consequent of ineffective OPAC design to be at the root of unsuccessful OPAC use.

Furthermore, Campbell and Fast found in their study that “while the participants were generally happy with their understanding of search engines, they frequently expressed a low opinion of their ability to search the catalogue.” They also found that students felt that the web is cluttered; the catalogue is organised. However, this organisation

was not always helpful; it was admired, but not understood. It needs noting that the OPAC public interface and searching capabilities together function as a finding aid. It determines how successful a user is in retrieving information and is the gateway to library resources. The effectiveness of an OPAC bibliographic display affects the user’s understanding of the bibliographic description. Library users use bibliographic information to identify, select, and obtain library resources. Most user studies of OPAC are transaction-monitoring studies; this point to the paucity of an empirical evaluative study of user satisfaction. The primary goal of this study is therefore to analyze, evaluate, and determine the end users’ opinions and usage of the OPAC at the Centre for Learning Resources (CLR), Landmark University (LU). The targeted respondents in the study were undergraduates because they constitute a larger proportion of the users’ of OPAC.

Landmark University Library

Landmark University Library (Centre for Learning Resources) was established at the inception of the University. Centre for Learning Resources (CLR) is strategically located in heart of the campus; it consists of two multi-storey floors built with sophisticated infrastructures. It is a standardized library that renders services to staff and students. It acquires, organizes, stores and disseminates information in various formats. These include print and electronic formats. CLR is fully automated, with an OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) accessible to staff and students remotely. CLR uses Alexandria library management software to perform routine activities such as the creation of bibliographic databases, acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation, serials control, current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) services. The software is web-based and user friendly. Students and staff access the OPAC remotely from their lecture rooms, offices, staff quarters and hostel via landmarkgoalalexandria.com or opac.lmu.edu.ng

Research questions

- 1) What are the undergraduates’ source(s) of information on OPAC?
- 2) What are the respondents reasons for using OPAC?
- 3) What is the knowledge level of respondents on the facilities and functions provided by OPAC?
- 4) What is the overall perception of OPAC usefulness by respondents?
- 5) Were the respondents given instruction on how to use the OPAC?

- 6) To what extent are the undergraduates satisfied with the OPAC service in the library?
- 7) What are the Challenges encountered when using OPAC?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Data was collected from respondents through the administration of a closed ended questionnaire. This was used to elicit information from the respondents. The target population were 200 students, which were purposively selected to participate in the study, consequence of their physical presence in the library during the period of the study and constituting the larger proportion of users of the library’s OPAC. Questionnaire was distributed to all the purposively selected undergraduates and all the 200 questionnaire were returned and found valid for analysis, thereby, giving a response rate of 100%.

Descriptive statistical tools of analysis such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Regarding the demographic information of respondents, descriptive statistics revealed that 200(100%) responded, slightly more than half of the respondents 102(51.0%) were males, while their female counterparts were 98(49.0%). The result of the statistics also revealed that 91(45.5%) of the respondents were from College of Business and Social Sciences (CBS), 26(13.0%) were from College of Agricultural Science (CAS), while 83(41.5%) were from College of Science and Engineering (CSE). Additionally, findings further showed that 59(29.5%) of the respondents were aged 15-18 years, 104(52.0%) were aged 19-22 years, 34(17.0%) were aged 23-26 years, while 3(1.5%) were aged 27-30 years. On the level of study of respondents, findings showed that

39(19.5%) of the respondents were in 100 level, 76(38.0%) were in 200 level, 39(19.5%) were in 300 level while 46(23.0%) were in 400 level.

The study sought information on the source(s) of information about OPAC from respondents; this is useful and insightful in an evaluative study as this. The responses in Table 1 revealed that a large proportion 89(44.5%) of the respondents were informed of OPAC through the ‘use of library study skills and ICT’ course taught by their lecturers. This was followed closely by library orientation 85(42.5%) and colleagues 63(31.5%), while a vast majority of the respondent 179(89.5%) did not get information about OPAC from signs\notices in the library. These findings indicate that the “use of library” course created the necessary awareness on OPAC among majority of the respondents.

Our previous analysis established the sources of information on OPAC, we took a step further to ascertain the respondents reason for using OPAC. The results of statistics in Table 2 showed that more than half of the respondents 108(54.0%) made use of OPAC to conduct research and this was followed by 83(41.5%) who used OPAC to search materials for assignment. It is however worrisome to note that 132(66.0%) of the respondents did not use OPAC to search materials for thesis\project and 128(64.0%) does not search OPAC for course materials. Also negligible is the percentage of the respondents that made use of OPAC ‘to keep abreast’ 12(6.0%). Sridhar (2004) found that a sizeable percentage of respondents 65.5% of the use of OPAC were to search various databases. Querying the system for circulation information is also a respectable 32.9%. However, searching journals database (both current issues and bound journals) and browsing new titles of library resources are negligible and they are respectively 4.1% and 1.6%.

Table 1: The undergraduate source(s) of information on OPAC

S\N	Items	No	Yes
1	Signs\notices in the library	179(89.5%)	21 (10.5%)
2	Librarians	162 (81.0%)	38(19.0%)
3	Lecturers (use of library Study Skills &ICT Course)	111(55.5%)	89(44.5%)
4	Library Orientation	115 (57.5%)	85(42.5%)
5	Colleagues	137(68.5%)	63(31.5%)

NB: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one source

Table 2: Reasons for using OPAC

S\N	Items	No	Yes
1	To conduct research	92(46.0%)	108(54.0%)
2	To search materials for thesis\project	132(66.0%)	68(34.0%)
3	To search materials for exam	162(81.0%)	38(19.0%)
4	To search materials for assignment	117(58.5%)	83(41.5%)
5	To search materials for seminar	169(84.5%)	31(15.5%)
6	To search for course materials	128(64.0%)	72(36.0%)
7	To keep abreast	188(94.0%)	12(6.0%)
8	Personal interests	177(88.5%)	23(11.5%)

Table 3: Knowledge level of respondents on the facilities and function provided by OPAC

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Deep knowledge	41	20.5
Average knowledge	127	63.5
Little knowledge	32	16.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 4: Overall respondents' perception of OPAC usefulness by respondents

S\N	Items	Never	Rarely	Frequently	Always	Mean	Std
1	The system is user-friendly	4 2.0%	15 7.5%	62 31.0%	119 59.5%	3.48	.72
2	The information is clear	2 1.0%	26 13.0%	52 26.0%	120 60.0%	3.45	.76
3	Using the OPAC makes retrieving library resources (textbooks, journals, handbook, encyclopaedia, etc) easy	7 3.5%	27 13.5%	70 35.0%	96 48.0%	3.27	.83
4	The output is presented in a useful format	3 1.5%	35 17.5%	68 34.0%	94 47.0%	3.26	.80
5	The systems provide sufficient information	1 .5%	34 17.0%	101 50.5%	64 32.0%	3.14	.70
6	I get the information I need in time	3 1.5%	37 18.5%	97 48.5%	63 31.5%	3.10	.74
7	The information content on the system meets my needs	3 1.5%	33 16.5%	121 60.5%	43 21.5%	3.02	.66
8	The system provides the precise information needed	1 .5%	45 22.5%	107 53.5%	47 23.5%	3.00	.69

Table 3 showed that 41(20.5%) of the respondents indicated deep knowledge, 127(63.5%) indicated average knowledge, while 32(16.0%) indicated little knowledge. The overall high knowledge level may be traced to the library instruction give to respondents on the use of OPAC. The study is supported by the research of Ortiz-Repiso, *et al.*, (2006) on the use of the OPAC of the Spanish council for scientific research library network, which found that the majority of the respondents that participated in the study considered themselves to be average users of the OPAC.

Table 4 revealed the respondents perception of OPAC usefulness. With a high mean score of 3 and above on a 4 point Likert scale; we tend to conclude that Landmark University OPAC is very

useful to the respondents, since findings showed that it eases information retrieval. The responses to the rating of the items on evaluating the OPAC usefulness goes thus; 'the system is user-friendly' (mean =3.48) ranked highest in the mean score rating. This was followed by 'the information is clear' (mean =3.45), 'using the OPAC makes retrieving library resources (textbooks, journals, handbook, encyclopaedia, etc) easy (mean =3.27), 'the output is presented in a useful format' (mean =3.26), 'the systems provide sufficient information' (mean =3.14), 'I get the information I need in time' (mean =3.10), 'the information content on the system meets my needs' (mean =3.02) and lastly 'the system provides the precise information needs' (mean =3.00).

Table 5: Provision of training on the use of OPAC by the library

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	119	59.5
No	81	40.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 6: Undergraduates' satisfaction with OPAC services in the library

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely satisfied	64	32.0
Very satisfied	76	38.0
Slightly satisfied	54	27.0
Dissatisfied	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 7: Challenges encountered while using OPAC

S\N	Items	D	SD	A	SA	Mean	Std
1	Access restricted to library only	60 30.0%	31 15.5%	69 34.5%	40 20.0%	2.44	1.12
2	Inadequate IT infrastructure e.g computer systems	66 33.0%	26 13.0%	75 37.5%	33 16.5%	2.37	1.11
3	Erratic power supply	50 25.0%	56 28.0%	65 32.5%	29 14.5%	2.36	1.01
4	Low internet speed	79 39.5%	39 19.5%	39 19.5%	43 21.5%	2.23	1.18
5	Lack of ICT skills of library staff	77 38.5%	46 23.0%	47 23.5%	30 15.0%	2.15	1.10
6	Frequent computer breakdown	77 38.5%	62 31.0%	40 20.0%	21 10.5%	2.02	1.00

On whether the library provides training on the use of OPAC or not, Table 5 showed that 119(59.5%) of the respondents indicated yes while 81(40.5%) indicated no. Therefore, it is explicit that the library provides training on the use of OPAC since about 60% of the respondents were in agreement with this.

The degree of users' satisfaction with the online public access catalogue was gauged by a 4 point Likert's scale of 1-4, in which 1 = dissatisfied and 4 = extremely satisfied. Approximately 97% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied or relatively satisfied with the online public access catalogue. Table 6 showed that 64(32.0%) of the respondents were extremely satisfied, 76(38.0%) were very satisfied, 54(27.0%) were slightly satisfied while 6(3.0%) were dissatisfied; It is interesting to note that approximately 97% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied or relatively satisfied with the OPAC services. This may be as a consequence of the easy to use interface of the OPAC and the library instruction training. Here it is worthwhile mentioning the important relationship between ease of use and satisfaction with the results obtained. Hildreth's research (2001) clearly demonstrates the positive correlation that exists between both factors, since

users tend to consider a system to be easy to use when they feel the results of their queries to be adequate.

The result of statistics on the challenges faced while using OPAC revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents agreed that 'access restricted to library only' 109(54.5%) and 'inadequate IT infrastructure e.g. computer systems' 108(54%) are the major challenges encountered pertaining to OPAC use. However, a large proportion of the respondents disagreed that 'erratic power supply' 106 (53%), 'low internet speed' 118(59%), 'lack of ICT skills of library staff' 123(61.5%) and 'frequent computer breakdown' 139(69.5%) are challenges confronted while using OPAC.

Conclusion

The study focused on evaluating users' satisfaction with Landmark University online public access catalogue (OPAC). The library OPAC was developed as a tool to locate those information resources that had been acquired and stored by the library itself. However, with the results from analysis we can conclude that the undergraduates are highly satisfied with the performance of the

OPAC, which can be interpreted to mean that Landmark University Library (Centre for Learning Resources) is rendering effective library services. Also notable in the study was that the “use of library study skills and information communication technology course” created the necessary awareness on OPAC among majority of the respondents. Additionally, more than half of the respondents 54.0% made use of OPAC to conduct research. It is however worrisome to note that 66.0% of the respondents did not use OPAC to search materials for thesis/project and 64.0% did not search OPAC for course materials. This may mean that they were using other means to access the resources the library holds or the users lack the required IT skills to interface with the system. It may also be traced to the respondents’ lack of knowledge of the subject headings or maybe the materials covered by OPAC are not in-depth in their course of study or a combination of factors. Anyway, it should be an area that should be considered in future research.

Further, findings revealed an overall high knowledge level of OPAC use. In addition, the results of statistics made it explicit that the library provided training on the use of OPAC since about 60% of the respondents were in agreement with this. Consequently, the overall high knowledge of OPAC use may be traced to the effectiveness of the library instruction programme. With a high mean score for all the eight items, we tend to conclude that Landmark University OPAC is very useful to the respondents. The respondents indicated two major challenges to OPAC exploitation, which are inadequate ICT infrastructure and lack of remote access to OPAC. The former is a stubborn challenge in academic libraries in Nigeria, which has been traced to paucity of funds and inadequate public-private partnership, whereas, the later could be as a result of the respondents not using the available information appropriately, because the OPAC can be accessed remotely. With the results of this study, we tend to offer that the user looks to the physical space of the library for consultation, and to the nearby presence of the library personnel in order to assist when in doubt, hence supporting previous research. If the library is the place where users, immersed in a world of digital resources, feel most comfortable in making queries, we should bear this in mind in conceiving new directions for the library as an institution, and adapt computerized tools and techniques accordingly.

Recommendations

Since academic libraries aim is to provide more dynamic and versatile services, revitalizing library OPAC should be considered a top priority. Consequently, the following recommendations may be considered:

1. The library management may need to improve on its promotion policy of the services and resources available in the library, which may increase the knowledge of the users on functions and benefits of the OPAC, and in turn increase the use.
2. The librarians may need to form a synergy with faculty members to ensure the students’ assignment includes searching materials for course assignment in the OPAC, since it is an essential tool for providing access to quality information, and thus increase the students’ access to quality information.
3. The library may need to integrate into the OPAC some other type of digital resources in order to capture the attention of those groups that scarcely use library services.
4. Online circulation and new arrivals of the library resources can be displayed on the OPAC to arouse the users’ curiosity in exploring the OPAC
5. Training and re-training on the use of OPAC should be carried out regularly in order to heighten the awareness of the user in regard to search techniques, which may help the users in developing sophisticated searching and retrieval skills or techniques.

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