

## LIBRARY USER'S VALUE-CHAIN: ASSESSING THE USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES BY UNDERGRADUATES IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

By

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### **Abstract**

*This study argues that in order to meet the value chain of library users and increase library patronage, there is the need to assess the use of library services by Undergraduate Students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria especially during the examination period when patronage is at the peak. The study had three objectives: To identify the purpose of use of Kashim Ibrahim Library by Undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria during examination. To identify the services Undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria use in Kashim Ibrahim Library during examination. To find out the challenges Undergraduate students face in the use of Kashim Ibrahim Library services during examination? A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted and questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The study revealed that undergraduate in Ahmadu Bello University, zaria use the Library to read their own books during examination, they also use the wireless Internet services and the wired Internet and the computer services of the MTN Net Library. The study also discovered that undergraduates basically use the library space and the Internet and Computer services of the Library. Finally, the study found that the major challenges undergraduates face with the use of library services during examination includes lack of space, inadequate number of computers, lack of comfortable seats, poor Internet services, inadequate power outlets for the students' laptops and lack of assistance from library staff. The study then recommended that Library management should constitute a section of the library for user needs elicitation. Library space should be well furnished and more space could be freed up in the Library if some of the old resources of the library are weeded and made into close-access. They will only be accessed if they are demanded for. The library management could also partition some of the available spaces to make way for areas for small group discussions. Library Management could embark on advocacy to Government parastatals that donate ICTs free of charge. Parastatals like NITDA, NCC and even Ministry of Communication. This will help them secure the additional ICTs for undergraduate use.*

### **Introduction**

The use of library services all over the world is reducing (Kiilu and Otike, 2016). This low-patronage of libraries is especially felt on academic libraries that have the mission of providing library services to the user community that is geared towards teaching, learning and research (Mohammed, 2017). Users no longer depend on the academic library as an essential part of their learning and research since they are no longer the only information providers. They now have to compete for customers with the internet, bookshops, online book dealers and demand for more efficient services and needs of users (Odone, 2011; Nwaohiri and Emezie, 2012). This competition has occasioned the decrease in the use of library services by the users.

In any competitive industry, however, organizations strive satisfy their customers' value chain. Porter (1985) described value chain as all value-adding activities embarked upon by organizations that focuses on satisfying the need of customers in order to achieve competitive advantage. Libraries being non-profit organizations are basically engaged in the production of

services rather than goods. These services must be tailored towards the value chain of library users if libraries are to stay relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One way libraries can satisfy its users is by conducting user studies that specifically target the needs of the user.

While several user studies have shown low library patronage by users in academic libraries (Subair, 2013; Odu, 2016; Potnis, Deosthali, Zhu and McCusker, 2018), studies like (Yusuf and Iwu, 2010; Adeyemi, 2017) have shown that there are seasonal periods when the use of library is at the peak. This is usually during examinations. Identifying the services library user use during this period will illuminate our understanding of the types of services on the library user's value chain.

Therefore, in order for academic libraries to remain relevant and to provide services that will satisfy the value chain of its users, there is the need to assess the use of library services especially during examination period when patronage is at the peak. This study will therefore assess the use of library services by undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Library patronage has been decreasing at an alarming rate all over the world for over a decade now (Whitchurch, 2011). This is occasioned by the proliferation of other information providers (Odein, 2011; Nwaohiri and Emezie, 2012) that provide tailored made information resources and services that fit the information needs of the users. These information providers have gone a step further by giving the user the power to fend for themselves on the information space. The competition to hold on to users have never been fierce as experienced in this decade even as libraries have stepped up their services by the provision of digital information resources and services.

However, even with the provision of these digital information resources and services, library patronage is dwindling in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Mohammed, 2017). The university spends the ever decreasing budget to subscribe to databases and purchase both print and electronic resources but all to no avail. User patronage has continued to decrease. The competition to keep users and fulfill their needs remains a means through which libraries can keep up with their competition. One way for libraries to achieve this feat is to have good understanding of library users' Value chain. In order words, there is the need for Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello to identify the information needs of their users.

Studies (Yusuf and Iwu, 2010; Adeyemi, 2017) have shown that at specific times in the course of the semester, users' patronage escalates. The Library can identify the specific services that users use during this period in order to improve on them.

This study will assess the information services that use during this period in order to identify the services that satisfies their value chain of these users in Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objectives of this study includes:

- i. To identify the purpose of use of Kashim Ibrahim Library by Undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria during examination.
- ii. To identify the services Undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria use in Kashim Ibrahim Library during examination.
- iii. To find out the challenges Undergraduate students face in the use of Kashim Ibrahim Library services during examination?

### **Literature Review**

Library users are very significant in the practice of librarianship. This is why all of Ranganathan's law of librarianship revolves around the users and the need for user satisfaction. The user is very critical to the services of a library. Library patronage by intended users is a vital measure of output of services provided by libraries. It is to this end that many user studies are geared towards patronage of libraries.

Gunasekera (2010) conducted a user survey to assess library user satisfaction with current information services and resources while identifying user needs in the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, Main library. A questionnaire based survey was used for data collection. The questionnaires were distributed among 800 undergraduates who visit the library. It was found that the undergraduates are overall satisfied with available library resources, services and facilities. But it further found that library resources and services are not being fully utilized by undergraduates.

The study by Nse and Okorafor (2011) surveyed the users' patronage of Nigerian academic libraries at two universities: Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) and Evan Enwerem University, Owerri (EEU). Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed by using tables and simple percentages. The results identified inadequate relevant current information material; a library environment not conducive to use; and inadequate reading accommodation as the major problems that hampered full patronage. The provision and acquisition of more current and relevant information materials and a comfortable and conducive reading environment would greatly improve the patronage of the libraries under study.

In another library patronage study, Ogbuiyi and Okpe (2013) evaluated the use of library materials and services in four private Universities in south west Nigeria: Babcock University, Covenant University, Lead City University, and Redeemer University to ascertain the level of library patronage. The data for this study was elucidated through the use of questionnaire, the questionnaire was administered to 255 registered users of the four universities' library and 200 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. The respondents were selected through random sampling of those using the library at that particular time. The study revealed that the level of patronage of users of the four libraries were below average.

In their study, Omotosho and Okiki (2015) investigated the frequency of library use by students and staff at four private universities in Southwest Nigeria. Data for this study was gathered using a self-constructed questionnaire. 245 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to both staff and students of four private universities in SouthWest Nigeria: Ajayi Crowther University, Caleb University, Mchpherson University, and Redeemers University. It was found that 66.5% of the respondents did not visit the library website and that 82.4% did not read library newsletter. On

the other hand, 71.5% were satisfied with the services provided by the library and that 72.2% were happy with library open hours.

Mohammed (2017) explored the reasons for the nonuse of DLRS by Faculty Members in ABU. A qualitative research method using a case study research design was used to have an in depth understanding of the situation at hand. Data were collected through Focus Group Discussion and in depth interview. Multiple variation sampling technique was used to select three faculties from three different campuses in ABU; Faculty of Administration, Congo Campus, Faculty of Social Science, Samaru Campus and Faculty of Medicine ABUTH Shika. Also, Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. However, twelve recorded voices were used for analysis at saturation stage. The analysis was done using qualitative content analysis. The findings amongst others were; the reason for nonuse of DLRS by Faculty Members in ABU were lack of communication of DLRS available and how it can be used and lack of hospitality on the part of the librarian. Relative advantage and trialability were the main constructs of PAIT that explained the experiences of Faculty Members in ABU on the nonuse of DLRS in KIL. The study therefore concluded that lack of return on investment caused by nonuse of DLRS by Faculty Members can be curbed by improving on both the human and capital resources for the full exploration and use of available DLRS in KIL.

The study by Adedokun, Magaji and Makinde (2018) on the other hand, investigated the correlation between Internet use and library patronage among students in selected senior secondary schools in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos state, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The findings showed a marginal preference for Internet use as complement to Library patronage. It was further revealed that the Internet use saved time, was more informative, and less expensive with more useful resources. The result showed no significant relationship between Internet use and library patronage. The study concluded that steps must be taken by relevant authorities to encourage library patronage. Therefore, the study recommended the provision of functional school libraries to further promote library patronage and enhance students' academic achievement.

Saibaakumo, Orewa, and Nwose (2019) on the other hand, examine levels of impact of some newly adoptable and available Customer Relation approaches that could possibly facilitate students' patronage in academic libraries in Nigeria in this technology age from the opinion of students. The descriptive survey design was adopted using 320 randomly selected student-users of academic library. A semi self-structured and interview-based constructed questionnaire was used. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to draw inferences, interpret data and discuss the perspectives of the students. The study found that time, space, lack of manpower and low levels of satisfactions were observed in the academic libraries to pose a threat to its patronage by students while the use of social media platform, creation of dynamic interactive websites, extension of library open hours, hybridization of the traditional library, e-library and internet, the use of rapid response feedback system and e-mailing services for student inquiry and queries can resolve the low patronage experienced by academic libraries in the technology age. There is the possibility of reaching out to a larger population of student patrons through the provision of a call centre, an interactive dynamic and remote access to library repository. Creating or increasing awareness on services offered in the libraries, marketing products and services can potentially attract more patronage from other users and co-operate bodies by 3%.

## Methodology

A Cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. Cross-sectional surveys are observational surveys, conducted in situations where the researcher intends to collect data from a sample of the target population at a given point in time. Researchers can evaluate various variables at a particular time. This design falls under the quantitative research methodology. Survey designs are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a sample that is representative of the population in order to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2012). A sample of 384 students were randomly selected for the study in accordance with the sample size table proposed by Gill, Johnson and Clark (2010) at 50% variability and 95% confidence level. The total population of students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria stands at approximately 48,000 (MIS, 2019). Questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. 318 questionnaires were dully filled and used for analysis. The response rate of 82.8% was achieved as students were reading for the first semester examination 2018/2019 session and the research assistant used for the study is a staff of the library. Data collected for this study were analysed using descriptive statistics; Frequency counts and percentages.

## Results

### Purpose of use of the Library during examination period

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Read books (Library books)	23	7.21
Read my own books	128	40.25
Meet friends for group discussions	12	3.8
Use the Internet Services	92	28.93
Watch News on DSTV	34	10.69
Do my Assignments	14	4.40
Read Newspapers and Journals	8	2.52
Borrow books	7	2.20
Total	318	100%

From the table above, it could be deduced that undergraduates basically visit the libraries during examination period to read their books as indicated by their responses 128(40.25%), they also visit the library to use the Internet services 92(28.93%). It is surprising however, that they do not visit the library to read the books in the Library. This implies that library resources are not collected in line with the users' needs. This finding is in line with Oliviera (2017) who advocate that information resources development in academic libraries should be "student driven": this is the trend in libraries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century where opinions and views of library users are collected and are used to determine what changes to make, what service to introduce or what service to emphasize more on, as the students recommend. Regarding this, Childs, Mathew and Walton (2012) assert that any library that does not involve its users in planning will risk remaining in the trap of non-use and low patronage of library services.

### Library Services Used by Undergraduates during exams

Library Services	Frequency	Percentage
Wireless Internet Services	85	26.7

Serial Services	11	3.5
Space	114	35.8
Borrowing/Lending Services	10	3.2
Reference Services	16	5
MTN Library Wired Internet/Computers Services	82	25.8
Learning Commons		
People with Special Needs		
<b>Total</b>		

The table above shows the library services that undergraduates use during examination in Kashim Ibrahim Library. It could be seen from the table that students mainly use Library Space 114(35.8%) as indicated by their responses and as shown on the table, they also use the Wireless Internet services 85 (26.7%) and the MTN Library Wired Internet/Computer services 82(25.8%). It is surprising that they hardly borrow books from the library 10(3.2%). This implies that undergraduates mainly use the library space. This is corroborated by scholars like Walton (2006), Zichur, Raine & Purcell (2013), Wells, Imhof & Johnston (2018) who all identified library space as the most dominant inviting force in the library in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is based on the notion that learning takes place not only in the classroom settings, but wherever learners have access to information resources and use them for solving problems or construct new meaning (Juceviciene & Tautbiciene, 2011).

#### **Challenges associated with the use of Library Services during exams**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency and Percentage</b>
Lack of space	284 (89%)
Inadequate Computers	274(87%)
Lack of Comfortable Seats	139(44%)
Poor Internet Service	205(64%)
Inadequate Power outlets for laptops	196(62%)
No assistance is rendered by Library Staff	243(76%)

The table above shows the challenges undergraduates face with the use of library services during examination period. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to tick as many as possible among the options provided. It could be inferred from the table that lack of space, inadequate number of computers, lack of comfortable seats, poor Internet services, inadequate power outlets for the students' laptops and lack of assistance from library staff are all challenges they face with the use of library services during examination period. This is not surprising as this could be attributed to the patronage being at the peak during this period. More so, the findings from this table also allude to the fact that undergraduates are more attuned to the use of information and communication technologies for learning than print resources in the Library. This finding is in line with Childs, Mathews and Walton (2013) who opined that most library users are more engaged with information technologies available in the library than the books present there in.

## Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the study concludes that undergraduate in Ahmadu Bello University, zaria use the Library to read their own books during examination, they also use the wireless Internet services and the wired Internet and the computer services of the MTN Net Library. The study also concludes that undergraduates basically use the library space and the Internet and Computer services of the Library. Finally, the study concludes that the major challenges undergraduates face with the use of library services during examination includes lack of space, inadequate number of computers, lack of comfortable seats, poor Internet services, inadequate power outlets for the students' laptops and lack of assistance from library staff. These challenges are basically those of library space and issues related to ICTs.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Library management should constitute a section of the library for user needs elicitation. This could be achieved by deputizing library staff to conduct surveys of departmental needs of both faculty members and students in terms of resources for teaching and learning.
2. Library space should be well furnished and more space could be freed up in the Library if some of the old resources of the library are weeded and made into close-access. They will only be accessed if they are demanded for. The library management could also partition some of the available spaces to make way for areas for small group discussions.
3. Library Management could embark on advocacy to Government parastatals that donate ICTs free of charge. Parastatals like NITDA, NCC and even Ministry of Communication. This will help them secure the additional ICTs for undergraduate use.

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