



ACADEMIC STAFF ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN DONALD EKONG LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF PORT-HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the attitude of academic staff and their utilization of library resources and services in Donald Ekong Library of the University of Port Harcourt.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Descriptive survey research methodology was used, and the study population includes all university academics. The population number was 1,500 and the sample size was 500. Questionnaire and observation approaches were used as data collection instruments. Registered library users (academic staff) for academic sessions 2018-2019 were reported using observation process. The questionnaires were provided to academic staff and basic percentages (percent) were used to evaluate the collected data.

Findings: This work found out that University of Port Harcourt has adequate resources for use by the academic staff for their lecture preparation and self-development. Also from their attendance, academic staff laissez-faire attitude towards the use of library resources was discovered.

Implication: Owing to the fact that the academics make less use of library resources, more advocacies are therefore needed in the proper use of the library resources and services for knowledge promotion.

Originality/Value: It was recommended that the library resources be assessed to identify and correct areas of weaknesses. There should also be advocacy programmes to help the library users get back to business.

Key words: Academic staff, Library, its resources and services, attitude, utilization.

Paper type: Empirical research

Introduction

Academic staff is a group of workers in higher institutions of learning; who participate in research, teaching, learning, evaluation, and community development. They are lecturers who have the responsibility to train students to be up to date with their chosen carrier's competencies. Academic staff teach students on the basis of the appropriate curriculum in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and abilities needed to earn the degrees they require. In order for academic staff to be able to successfully do the above, they are required to possess the necessary subject knowledge, the capacity to influence that knowledge on students, and the search for new trends to their disciplines. Hard work is needed for new knowledge and approaches to teaching and learning through study and analysis of contemporary sources. It requires a good and fitted library to help the academia and students in the use of the library's many resources to meet their academic needs. This is in a bid to encourage them to be very well

prepared to communicate with their students and perform their duties. Academics are character molders, who ensure their students thread on good morals and paths of academic success. Such duty includes wholehearted efforts to acquire knowledge on the sides of their academic pursuits. This is to make them be up-to-date with contemporary realities in their areas of specialties, which in turn will position them properly to impact such knowledge to their posterity. The library is thus an ally to those who seek knowledge. The academics of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria are expected to make adequate use of the library's (Donald Ekong Library) various sources of information. Academics' attitude towards library use and its resources is dependent on how inevitably they view the library. Due to the fact that negative report on the attitude of academics towards using library has already been released, it becomes imperative to turn to advocacy and promotion of library resources and services as a way of bringing academics back into the community of daily library use. Academics are character

molders, who ensure their students tread on good morals and paths of academic success. Such duty includes wholehearted efforts to acquire knowledge on the sides of their academic pursuits. This is to make them be up-to-date with contemporary realities in their areas of specialties, which in turn will position them properly to impact such knowledge to their posterity. The library is thus an ally to those who seek knowledge. The academics of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria are expected to make adequate use of the library's (Donald Ekong Library) various sources of information. According to Chambers 2-in- 1 Dictionary Thesaurus (2008), attitude/ action is a way of thinking or acting. This demonstrates a person's viewpoint on something, thinking, attitude, mood, manner, outlook. It is the manifestation of peculiar characteristics in response to a question, an event or something. Attitude is derived from what the problem, occurrence or phenomenon perceives. Mchombu, (2007) sees the attitude of users towards the library as very critical for their successful use of the library services. Attitude vary from individual to individual, which could be based on their upbringing, experience, education, skill, level of exposure, government policies, organizational policies and others. Velnampy, (2008) defined attitudes as the feelings and beliefs that largely determine the perception of employees about their environment, commit themselves to intended actions, and ultimately act as accordingly as expected. Adesina et.al, (2013) supported the idea and postulated that attitudes are acquired by learning and can be changed through proper orientation. They are also of the opinion that attitudes once built would help to shape the experience an individual encounters with objects, subjects or persons. Therefore, attitudes can be dynamic and constantly changing. Thus, new attitudes are formed and old ones are modified when an individual or group of individuals are exposed to new experiences and ideas (Adesina, 2013).

Library is a collection, organization and storing of information resources in print, non-print and online formats for the purpose of disseminating such information and using these resources. A library contains and stores

information sources for use in its physical and electronic formats in all disciplines and fields of interests within the user community. This is achievable in the library through knowledge literacy skills designed to teach information seekers how to interpret information on their own in the library. The library is a reliable ally for academic staff in their search for information for research purposes and for reviewing their expertise and planning for their students. The emphasis is on providing relevant information resources in different formats, while access, use and user satisfaction with these resources and services is the main goal of Library and Information Science practitioners (Odu, and Edam-Agbor, 2018). In order to achieve this goal, academic library programmes and facilities need to be established that are focused on a clear understanding of the needs of the users and how to address such. Resource and operation evaluation should be made simple and easy to understand. The tools and facilities the clientele need and require rely on the understanding and implementation abilities of the users and the library. Library resources include books, in print and electronic formats; journals, studies, official documents, reference materials, magazines, atlases, maps, monographs, theses, dissertations, etcetera. The library offers services such as rendering services, reprographic / photocopying services, reference services, current knowledge services, non-use training services and resource-sharing services with the above listed tools. It could be of great benefit to academic staff and other library users if these resources are properly controlled while the degree to which library facilities and services are used is highly dependent on their disposition and understanding of library and its resources.

Donald Ekong Library, which is the subject of this review, was established in 1976, the same year its mother, the University of Port Harcourt was established. The institution was intended to support the teaching, studying, and community service of the university. The University has 14 faculties, and a School of Postgraduate Studies. The library holds a stock of about 25,637 volumes of books, 2 serial titles; including current subscriptions and

rapidly growing collections of electronic resources. The library moved from its old campus site located at Choba into the current Abuja campus site in 2009. It has a very wide, square-shaped building of two to three storey buildings. It has a wide collection of books, magazines, journals, reference materials, research reports, internet connectivity etc. The large building has a sitting capacity of 1,304 spread across: the Readers Services Unit comprising 47 seating capacity belonging to Humanities, Social Sciences and Education- 418 seats, Technology, Basic Health Science, Engineering and Agriculture- 110 seats, Reference Unit -105 seats, Research - Unit 47seats, Knowledge common 24 and the Elsevier Information Communication Unit with 33 seating capacity with computers and also a reserved place for lecturers having 33 seats. The Information Communication Technology (ICT) unit has converted to an online library as a result of user information needs; to supplement the existing library and tackle the digital library challenges. This unit has 33 seats for catalogers with working computer systems and cataloging room which is full of computers (as a workroom).

Evidence has it that there is a declining trend in library use around the globe that has led to an increase in non-use of the library. Increasing the use of network or electronic information services could be due because many users see library as a location opposed to being an information tool (Toner, 2008). This growth is also a consequence of the alternative knowledge resource available. Kim and Sin (2007) used a survey approach to research on “users’ understanding and preference for different types of services” and found that library users utilize sources of information such as search engines, blogs, e-journals and online databases. Lamidi, Shehu, and Akuzintah, (2017) studied the “use of library by academic staff” and discovered that only few academics use the libraries in their research and publishing and most of them do not patronize and utilize library resources despite their rich information sources. This has been adduced to be due to lack of knowledge, energy, skills involved in using library services, having personal books, accessing the internet from

home and borrowing from other libraries (Odu and Afukidang in O'Dell and Preston, 2013).

Looking at the attitude of staff towards library use, Unwana and Men (2017) discovered that library usage was influenced by the attitude of staff and academic profile. Khaola and Mabilikoane (2015), Yusuf and Iwu (2011), Oriogu, Chukwuemeka and Oriogu-Ogbuiyis’ (2018) studies revealed that the respondents perceived low library service quality, some lecturers hardly visited the library to access information services, and most academics had a positive perception of the library and its facilities.

Problem of the Study

It was observed that paradigm shifts occurred in the way things are done in various sectors in Nigeria. Libraries are not exceptions in their manner of managing and rendering their services to fulfill their mandate. Despite the relative abundance of physical and internet support sources and services provided by Donald Ekong library, which is expected to attract academic staff and other library users, the opposite appears to be the case. Donald Ekong Library's preliminary evaluation of the activities in El-sevier room (which is a double room filled with tabletop computers with internet connectivity intended for academic staff and research by postgraduate students) indicates a state of apathy towards the use of library resources and services. This research was formulated against this backdrop in order to find out the potential cause of academics' negative library usage patterns. This reveals the academics ' mindset towards using library resources and services in the University of Port Harcourt's Donald Ekong Library. This therefore takes us to the issue of this study which is the lack of proper use of library resources and services by academic staff at the University of Port Harcourt's Donald Ekong library.

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated to guide the study:

1. What is the academic attitude towards the use of library resources, looking at their attendance in Donald Ekong library?
2. What is the purpose of the use of library resources by Academic Staff of University of Port Harcourt?

3. Are the Academic staff registered library users?
4. What is the extent of use of the library resources by the Academic staff?

Literature Review

Information is the most powerful tool in learning endeavour and libraries are collections of information in organized ways for easy accessibility by the targeted audience. The major challenge is the underutilization of library resources by patrons in many institutions of learning. The purpose of the study is to determine the lecturers' attitude to the use of the resources. Recent trends and advancements in technology have led to the modernization of library services, including the development of vast online databases with a wealth of information to guide learning and research (Delaney, & Bates 2015). The importance of libraries to education generally lies in their ability to provide necessary information to lecturers, students, researchers and community services. Lecturers require different kinds of information resources for their teaching and research, so as to be able to impact the knowledge gained to their students and for their self-development. For learning to be effective, lecturers and their learners must have access; use the necessary and adequate information resources which are made available in print and non-print formats. The academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of educational institutions in producing high quality graduates into the labour market depend largely on the quality of information resources available in their libraries (Ugboma & Edewor, 2012).

A survey carried out by Sharma (2009), to analyze the dependency of teachers and research scholars on e-resources, and its perceived impact on the academic efficiency and problems faced by them while using the e-resources, identified e-resources to include journals, data archives, manuscripts, maps, books, magazines, theses, newspapers, e-mails, research reports and bibliographic databases. The results showed that e-resources use was common among teachers and research scholars in India. It also indicated that majority the Indian teachers and researchers were

dependent on e-resources to get the desired and relevant information.

Some advances in Information Communication Technology (ICT), and scholarly use of information services has changed how lecturers utilize library resources for research practices, and teaching methods. Hence, Housewright and Schonfeld, (2010) observed that since the year 2000, faculty members have shifted their reliance on network-level electronic resources, instead of having major interest in using locally provided tools for books, journals, and other materials discovery. The study concluded that in as much as print journal may continue to play a limited role for faculty with specific needs that are poorly met; digital versions are clearly the medium of choice for most faculty members. According to Osaghale (2008), in Abdullahi, Ahmad & Ahmed (2019), the library services should create a balance between specific research and information needs and a usable collection of information materials to meet the needs of institution's academic programmes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame for this work was the theory of human attitude. This was developed by Allport and O'Connell (1958) and it stipulates that attitudes are psychological "predispositions" because they cause someone or some people to think/ behave/ act in a manner towards the object of the attitude. The attitude comes before behaviour and is capable of affecting the way the person will act. This theory seems appropriate for this study because library usage by academic staff (lecturers) is greatly affected by the way they see that thing(s). The feeling and corresponding actions of the academic staff are dependent on what they know about a particular object or subject. What is known about a particular subject is very important because it affects behaviour or actions towards it. Academic staff (lecturers) feelings and actions towards the use of library resources would be evaluated based on their interests and availability of the resources.

Research Methods

In this article, descriptive survey research design was used to ascertain the attitude of

academic staff towards the use of library resources and services in Donald Ekong Library. One thousand five hundred (1500) Academic staff made up the total population, but only 500 were used as the sample size by the use of Taro Yemen formular. Direct observation was used in 2018-2019 academic sessions to study the record of registered library users amongst them. Questionnaires were administered directly by the researcher in their offices. Data collected were analyzed using simple

percentages (%) in tables and Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) was used for the analyses, while mean scores were used in data analyses.

Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Research question 1: What is the attitude of academic staff towards the utilization of library resources and services in Donald Ekong Library?

Table 1: Academic Staff (Lecturers) Attitude towards the Use of Library Resources, from their Attendance in Donald Ekong Library

Items	Respondents
I use the library every day.	10(2%)
I use the library once a week.	80(16%)
I use the library 2-3 times a week.	80(16%)
I use the library once a month.	130(26%)
I use the library 2-5 times every three month.	160(32%)
I have not used the library for a year now.	40(8%)
TOTAL	500(100%)

table above shows that ten (10) academic staff representing 2% of the sample size use the library every day, while 80 academic staff representing 16% of the sample size use the library once a week. Also 80 academic staff representing 16% of the sample size use the library 2-3 times a week. 130 Academic staff representing 26% of the sample size use the library once a month while 160 academic staff representing 32% of the sample size use the library 2-5 times every three months. Also 40 academic staff representing 8% of the sample size has not used the library for a period of one

year. The result from this survey concurs with the findings of Lamidi, Shehu and AkuZintah, (2017) that only a hand full of academics uses the library in their research and publishing works. Also, some writers hold the view that lecturers were much aware of the resources and its easy access in their library, however, the frequency of usage was low in comparism with the level of its awareness.

Research question 2. What is the purpose of the use of library by academic staff of University of Port Harcourt?

Table 2. Mean Responses on Purpose of Academic staff Use of Library Resources.

Purpose	VA	A	FA	NA	X	Decision
To prepare lecture notes	100	-	60	20	3.85	Accepted
To consult reference sources	70	60	25	-	3.10	Accepted
For research purposes	100	80	12	-	3.40	Accepted
To consult physical journal articles	30	14	-	102	2.00	Rejected
To check for newly received materials	107	-	-	130	2.00	Rejected

Key= VA= Very Appropriate, A= Appropriate, FA= Fairly Appropriate, NA= Not Appropriate. The mean were interpreted as: Above 2.5 is positive and accepted while Below 2.5 is rejected and not accepted (source: Field data, 2019).

The data in Table 2 shows that majority of the academic staff had a mean scores rate of 3.10 to 3.85, which in effect were considered positive and accepted. Two responses recorded mean scores rate below 2.5 and is regarded as negative. This means that all academic staff in University of Port Harcourt do consult the

library resources to prepare lecture notes, consult reference sources and for research purposes except for the consultation of physical journals and to check for newly received materials.

Research question 3: Are Academics Staff (Lecturers) registered library users in Donald Ekong Library?

The findings of the above question are presented in table 3 below:

Faculties	No of Academic staff	No. Registered users	%
Faculty of Agriculture	50	30	60%
Faculty of Education	70	60	86%
Faculty of Engineering	54	50	93%
Faculty of Humanities	46	40	87%
College of Health Sciences	70	60	86%
Faculty of Science	80	74	93%
Faculty of Management Science	60	56	93%
Faculty of Social Sciences	70	50	72%
TOTAL	500	420	84%

As can be seen in table 3 above, 30 out of 50 academic staff, representing 60% were registered library users in Faculty of Agriculture. 60 out of 70 staff representing 86% were the registered library users in Faculty of Education. 50 out of 54 academic staff, representing 93% were registered library users in Faculty of Engineering. 40 out of 46 academic staff, representing 87% were registered library users in Faculty of Humanities. 60 out of 70 academic staff representing 86% were registered library users in the College of Health Sciences. 74 out of 80 academic staff representing 93% were registered library users in Faculty of Science

while 56 out of 60 academic staff representing 93% were registered library users in the Faculty of Management Science. A total of 50 out of 70 academic staff representing 72% was registered in Faculty of Social Sciences. In all, a total of 420 out of 500 sampled academic staff representing 84% were registered users of the library. This result showed that the enrolment rate of academic staff in the library was quite high but their usage of the library was not in parity with their rate of registration.

Question 4: What is the extent of use of library resources by academic staff in University of Port Harcourt?

Table 4 Showing Mean Responses on the Extent of Use of Library Resources by Academic Staff.

Purpose	VHE	HE	ME	LE	X	Decision
Books	90	94	10	-	3.95	Accepted
Journals	30	45	40	5	2.90	Accepted
Electronic resources	80	70	16	-	3.30	Accepted
Newspapers	-	-	-	120	2.25	Rejected
Research monographs, abstracts or indexes	20	20	45	45	2.00	Rejected
Research report	70	80	40	-	3.20	Accepted

Key= VHE= Very High Extent, HE = High Extent, ME = Moderate Extent, LE = Low Extent. The mean scores were interpreted as follows: Where above 2.5 is regarded as positive and accepted while below 2.5 is regarded as negative and rejected(Source: Field survey data, 2019).

The data on table 4 shows that all library resources have a mean score of 2.90 and upward, except for newspapers and research monographs abstracts or indexes that have 2.25 and 2.00 respectively. This implies that majority of the listed library materials are rated positively and accepted while two materials are negative and rejected. From the findings,

majority of academic staff use books more frequently than other information sources. This could be because the academic staff depend so much on books to prepare their lecture notes which is line with Awojobi, (2004) who recommended that academic staff should make use of as many information sources as possible.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The results of the study showed the availability of adequate library resources for use by academic staff in Donald Ekong Library, of the University of Port Harcourt. It was concluded that the academics major purposes of using the library are for preparing their lecture notes for teaching, personal studies and research and not for reading newspapers or searching for monographs, abstract or indexes. This could be as a result of the availability of their laptops which they could use for reading newspapers through the internet. It was also discovered that the enrolment rate of academics in the library was quite high but their usage of the library resources was not in parity with their registration. Academics' attitude towards the use of library resources is dependent on how inevitable they see the library. Although, there have been negative report on the attitude of academics towards using the library, it becomes imperative to turn to advocacy and promotion of library resources and services as a way of bringing academics back into the community of daily library use.

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