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USERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN AKWAIBOM STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated users' attitudes towards utilization of library services in Akwa Ibom State University. There were five specific purposes of the study, this: to determine the extent of users' attitudes towards utilization of lending services, reference services photocopying services, internet services, and user education in the library. The research design adopted for this study was the survey. The area of the study was Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden. The population of the study as at 2012/2013 academic session was 1236 registered users, according to the University library records. Stratified random sampling was used to select 413 registered library users for the study. A 30 item, four-point Likert type questionnaire on users' attitude towards utilization of library services was the main instrument for data collection. The data collected were collated and analyzed using population t-test statistical tool. Each of the null hypotheses was tested at .05 alpha level. The findings of the study were as follows: Users' attitude towards utilization of lending services in Akwa Ibom State University library is significantly positive. On the basis of these findings, it was concluded that users' of Akwa Ibom State University library generally have positive disposition towards utilization of library services – lending services, reference services, photocopying services, internet services, and user education services. In the view of the researcher, users' attitude towards utilization of the five library services identified herein is positive (favourable).

Key Words: Attitude, Utilization, Library Services

Introduction

Universities are important agents in the development of human resources of any nation. The major role of the universities in Nigeria as defined in the National Policy of Education (NPE) includes the provision of high-level manpower for national development and this role is achieved through its programmes of teaching, learning and research. These roles of the universities cannot be achieved without the presence of a vibrant university library (Aguolu, 2003). University libraries assist the universities in the discharge of their functions by acquiring all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning, research and the public service functions of their universities. The extent to which university libraries are able to perform these functions will depend on a number of factors, which includes excellent library services. The library is regarded as the "heart" of any academic institution, particularly, the university (Aguolu, 2003).

Abegunde (2000) remarked that university libraries serve as centres of communication ensuring practical means of acquiring knowledge leading to understanding the minds of individuals and groups. University libraries set up their services to enhance the teaching and research missions of the institutions, particularly for users. Hence, to a large extent, the quality of a university is measured by the services provided by the library because of its unique contributions in the achievement of over-all goals of the university. For a university to perform its myriad of functions, quality and efficient library services are a prerequisite.

Library services are a sum total of professional services or assistance given to library users in a bid to satisfy their information needs and that quality and efficient library services greatly enhance students' successful completion of their academic programmes. Library services constitute one of the instruments needed for the improvement of educational standard. Library service is a privilege extended to those who recognize that the collections are resources to be shared with current and future users and who observe the regulations and procedures established to make materials accessible to all. These services can only be achieved through the availability of library collection. The services provided in the academic libraries are to help the institutions achieve its aims and objectives. These services include: lending, reservation, reference, current awareness, exhibition and display, user education! library use instruction skills, on-line access to resources, inter-library loan and document delivery, co-operating in networking and standard and reading and study facilities.

The services provided to users of libraries depend on the objectives of the parent organization. The services provided in a library differ from one library to another but there are certain services that are common to all libraries. In the 21st century, library services have shifted from the traditional and routine activities to a livelier, dynamic, and challenging system to more practical and user-friendly services such as lending, photocopying, user education, shelving and reference services. Students are increasingly expected to use these services while at university, however, how students feel about various issues surrounding library services is dependent upon their attitudes.

Attitudes are "inclinations and feelings, prejudices or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears and convictions about any specific topic" Attitudes represent the conceptual value of these services in the minds of the users, not the values of the services themselves. According to Lyle (2004), positive attitudes are fundamental in utilization of services. Some users may perceive library services negatively whereas others may attach positive attributes to them. It is necessary to observe the users more closely to determine their attitude towards services offered by university libraries.

However little is known about student attitudes towards library services and without a better understanding, it is difficult for service providers to know if they are meeting the needs of students effectively in the provision of library services to their users, therefore it becomes very necessary to investigate users' attitude towards utilization of library services. This study will survey users' attitudes toward utilization of library services in Akwalbom State University.

Statement of the problem

The library is the 'heart' of any institution upon which its academic activities beat. This is supported by the fact that the library is usually one of the departments to be visited to ascertain the quality of its services whenever an accreditation team visits the institution, without a functional library, qualitative education is impossible. The worth of any library is dependent on how well its services are utilized and to justify expenditure in the acquisition of these resources. University libraries are continuously used by a large number of different classes of users for varied academic pursuits. The libraries, within available funds are stocked and basic services and facilities are provided to users. One of the aspirations of the academic libraries is to satisfy the information needs of the users by offering quality services.

The mission statement of any library should be the provision of excellent services to its users, therefore libraries should strive at all times to ensure that the users are satisfied with their services, hence a library can only be adjudged to have achieved its mandate when its users are satisfied with the services offered to them. However, in spite of these important functions of the libraries, it does appear that users do not make adequate use of the library services. It therefore becomes imperative to take a closer look at those attitudes, which have an effect on how users make use of the services and will in turn affect the overall success of the library's service programme.

In Nigeria many studies have been carried out on attitude of library users Ottong and Ntui (2010), and Iyoro (2004) found that Nigerian university libraries do not meet user expectations. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature about users' attitude towards library services, in Akwalbom State not much is known about the attitudes of users' in university libraries. Obviously, it is very clear to what extent how the users' attitude influences the use of library services so provided therein by the university library. The study therefore, will look at users' attitude towards utilization of library services in Akwalbom State University.

Hypotheses

1. Users' attitude towards utilization of lending services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive;
2. Users' attitude towards utilization of reference services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive;
3. Users' attitude towards utilization of photocopying services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive;
4. Users' attitude towards utilization of internet services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive and
5. Users' attitudes towards utilization of user education service in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive.

Research Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The area of study was Akwalbom State University. The target population of this study comprised all students who have registered in Akwalbom State University Library as at 2012/2013 academic session. A multi-stage non probability sampling technique involving the purposive and accidental sampling was adopted for this study. The sample of this study was made up of 371 students. The main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire designed by the researchers. The validity and reliability of the instrument were properly ascertained by three educational research experts.

Results and findings

TABLE 1
General description of data (N=413)

Variable	No of items	X	SD
Attitude towards utilization of lending services	6	18.75	1.42
Attitude towards utilization of reference services	6	18.40	1.31
Attitude towards utilization of photocopying services	6	16.53	2.17
Attitude towards utilization of internet services	6	18.73	1.30
Attitude towards utilization of user education	6	18.38	1.52

Hypothesis one

User's attitude towards utilization of lending services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive. There is only one variable involved in this hypothesis: users' attitude towards utilization of lending services, population t-test (or t-test of one sample mean) analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 2
Population t-test analysis of users of attitude towards utilization of lending services (N=413)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	SEM
Lending services	413	18.75	1.42	269.23*	.07

Critical $t=1.96$, $df = 412$ *Significant at .05 alpha level

The results of the analysis presented in Table 1 shows that the calculated table of 269.23 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level with 412 degrees of freedom. With these results, the null hypothesis one was rejected. This implies that users' attitudes towards utilization of lending services in Akwalbom State university library are significantly positive.

Hypothesis two

Users' attitude towards utilization of reference services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive.

There is only one variable in this hypothesis, that is, users' attitude towards utilization of reference services. Population t-test analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Population t-test analysis of users attitude towards utilization of reference services (N=413)

Variable	N	X	SD	value t-	SEM
Reference services	413	18.40	1.31	284.63*	.065

Critical t = 1.96; df = 412 *Significant at .05 alpha level

The result of the analysis presented in Table 3 show that the calculated t-value of 284.63 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level with 412 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that users' attitude towards utilization of reference services in Akwalbom State library is significantly positive.

Hypothesis three

Users' attitude towards utilization of photocopying services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive. There is only one variable in this hypothesis, that is, users' attitude towards utilization of photocopying services. Population t-test analysis was employed to test hypothesis three at .05 alpha level. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Population t-test analysis of users' attitude towards utilization of photocopying services (N=413)

Variable	N	X	SD	t-value	SEM
Photocopying services	413	16.53	2.17	154.72*	.11

Critical t = 1.96; df = 412 *Significant at .05 alpha level

The result of the analysis presented in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 154.72 is far greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level with 412 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis three was rejected. This implies that users' attitude towards utilization of photocopying services in Akwalbom State University library is significantly positive.

Hypothesis four

Users' attitude towards utilization of internet services in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive. There is only one variable in this hypothesis, that is, users' attitudes towards utilization of internet services. Population t-test analysis was employed to test hypothesis four at .05 alpha level. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Population t-test analysis of users' attitude towards utilization of Internet services (N=413)

Variable	N	X	SD	t-value	SEM
Photocopying services	413	18.73	1.30	280.02*	.061

The result of the analysis presented in Table 4.6 shows that the calculated t-value of 280.02 is far greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 412 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis four was rejected. This implies that users' attitudes towards utilization of Internet services in Akwalbom State University library are significantly positive.

Hypothesis five

Users' attitude towards utilization of user education in Akwalbom State University library is not significantly positive. There is only one variable in this hypothesis, that is, users' attitude towards utilization of user education. Population t-test analysis was employed to test this hypothesis at 0.5 alpha level. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Population t-test analysis of users' attitudes towards utilization of user education (N=41 3)

Variable	N	X	SD	valuet-	SEM
Photocopying services	413	18.38	1.52	271.33*	.054

Critical t = 1.96; df = 412 *Significant at .05 alpha level

The result of the analysis presented in Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 271.33 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 alpha level with 412 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis five was rejected. This implies that users' attitudes towards utilization of user education in Akwalbom State University library is significantly positive.

Conclusion

On the basis of these findings, it was concluded that users' of Akwalbom State University library generally have positive disposition towards utilization of library services — lending services, reference services, photocopying services, internet services, and user education services. In the view of the researchers, users' attitude towards utilization of the five library services identified herein is positive (favorable). With this favorable disposition of users' attitude towards use of library services. If the patronage of users of the university library is rated low or below average, then something other than users attitude may be responsible for such low patronage of services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Library use education should be integrated with teaching programmes in the institution within the various academic subjects.
2. Libraries should be encouraged to use and borrow books and other learning materials from the library.
3. Both academic staff and library staff should have the same goals and objectives in the instructions of students in the use of the library.
4. To encourage easy access to library information by users for effective use, librarians should provide bibliographic accessibility, which is, providing an effective means of identifying needed materials and then locating their existence.
5. Reference services, such as current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI), and inter-library loan should be provided to users.
6. Library authorities should create easy access points, educate users on how to exploit these access points to encourage them to visit the library frequently, stay longer reach materials in the library more easily and increase their rate of library use.

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