Assessing service effectiveness and satisfaction with library services at Babcock University, Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the use, effectiveness and satisfaction with library services. The descriptive research design was used for this study. The population was made up of 5,847 undergraduate students at Babcock University, Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used in selecting 200 respondents to participate in the study. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and analyzed using frequency and percentage counts. Findings from the study revealed that photocopying and reference services were the most utilized library services. Photocopying, reference and circulation services were also considered as effective services. Majority of the respondents, however, indicated that they were satisfied with library services to a little extent. The study concluded by noting that the provision of service(s) is an essential part of libraries which should not be taken for granted. Based on the findings, recommendations were made.

Introduction

Service effectiveness is often associated with judgment on how well a service is performing by the direct users of that service. In the opinion of Harvey (2004), it is the extent to which an activity fulfils its intended purpose or function. The concept of service effectiveness is of utmost importance to university libraries because the effectiveness of the library as a whole can be inferred from its service provision. In the view of Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain. (1996), well-stocked and efficient libraries act as eyes or pathfinders for researchers and provide them the inspiration to venture into new areas of research. An ineffective library, on the other hand, may lead to low quality or duplication of research thus resulting in waste of financial, material and human resources.

According to Lancaster (1993), the overall criterion of effectiveness is the proportion of user demands that are satisfied. Satisfaction has however, been described as a sense of contentment that arises from an actual experience in relation to an expected experience (Hernon & Whitman 2001). It is a judgment that a service provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption. Satisfaction with library services is therefore, a feeling of fulfillment that is derived from the use of library services.

Assessing service effectiveness from undergraduates' perspective is of crucial importance to libraries as Buckland (1999) warns, that considering library services in the absence of the people who use them would have little meaning and less benefit. Being major users of the university library, it is, therefore, necessary for university libraries to understand how this user group views their services in order to aid the planning of future services.

Background to environment of study

Babcock University has its roots in the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA) established on September 17, 1959 by the first Adventist missionary in Nigeria with an initial intake of seven ministerial students (Babcock University, 2009). The university is fully owned and operated by the Seventh - Day Adventist (SDA) church, and registered under the laws of the federal republic of Nigeria to operate as a private university. According to Babcock University (2006), the vision of the University library is to be a first class provider of research, instructional and information materials in a user friendly environment. As a means of meeting up with this great challenge, Babcock University library has a current holding of 51,167 books (in print) materials, 223 current periodical titles (in print). The library has access to online journals, abstracts and full text online materials.

Babcock University Library is made up of four service points, known as the Main library, Education and Humanities library, Management and Social Sciences library and Science and Technology library.

Statement of the problem

The library has traditionally been seen and recognized as the academic heart of the university, with students relying mostly on it for their information needs. Although libraries strive hard to ensure that services are effective, it is not unlikely that users, especially undergraduates have a different view of library services. In order to reconcile the library's assessment of its own service effectiveness with that of the users, it therefore becomes necessary for libraries to carry out occasional assessment of service effectiveness and satisfaction with library services from the user perspective. It is in the light of the above summary that the present study investigates service effectiveness and satisfaction with library services at Babcock University.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:
1. determine the extent of use of library services by undergraduates at Babcock University
2. ascertain the perceived effectiveness of library services by undergraduates at Babcock University
3. determine the extent of undergraduates satisfaction with use of library services at Babcock University

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service effectiveness constitutes the baseline for modern library services (Ainoko, 1997). This is particularly so considering that libraries face competition from other information providers and as such can only distinguish themselves through effective service provision. According to Poll (2008), there are basic issues that apply to the overall quality of service delivery in libraries such as: accuracy and reliability; speed and currency of the services: accessibility; competence and helpfulness of staff and effectiveness and efficiency. In order words, for services to be effective, library staff should not only be competent and willing to help users but should also ensure that services provided are accurate and reliable. Fabunmi (2004) also affirms that effective library services should be timely in delivery, easy to understand, meet specific user needs, and delivered by courteous and knowledgeable staff.

Satisfaction on the other hand has been described as a sense of contentment that arises from an actual experience in relation to an expected experience (Hernon & Whitman 2001). It is a judgment that a service provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption. Oliver as cited by Aga & Safakli (2007) asserts that satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption. D'Elia & Walsh (1983) define satisfaction as the degree to which the library is able to meet the demands of the user. Troll (2002) points out that satisfaction in libraries deals with a user's expectation of service and the perception of actual service received. Satisfaction is a therefore a feeling of fulfillment that is derived with the use of a library's service or facility. Library users should have a sense of fulfillment which arises as a result of what they have been able to achieve through library service. The importance of satisfaction in libraries is stressed by Wang & Shieh (2006) who maintain that libraries should be concerned with bringing satisfactory services when offering information and data to readers even though they are nonprofit organization. Aina (2004) buttressed this fact by adding that any library that ignores the satisfaction of its users, does so at its own peril. In the view of Bushing (1995) Library customers are not captives, they can go elsewhere if not satisfied. Belcastro (1998) sums up the need for satisfaction with library services by pointing out that a library or information centre is essential to its community of users based on how effectively it meets their needs.

Several studies have been carried out in the area of library service. Popoola, (2000) while studying the use of information products and services in social science research in Nigerian universities found out that academic social scientists in Nigerian universities utilize the following library information services: current awareness, photocopying, referencing, statistical data analysis, E-mail, selective dissemination of information and on-line database searching, in support of their research activities. In a similar study, Oyewusi.& Oyeboade (2009) in a study of accessibility and use of library resources by undergraduates in a Nigerian State University of Technology established that books 54.8% (χ=2.48), reprographic services 52.2% (χ= 2.42), reference services 44.3% (χ=2.33), journals 40.4% (χ=2.31) and newspapers 40.1% (χ=2.25) were highly used as library resources. Selective Dissemination of information (SDI) 19.8% (χ=1.99) was the least used. Udo-Anyanwu, Jeff-Okafor &

Mbagwu (2012) on the other hand, compared the use of library resources between students at Imo State University and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. They grouped library materials into three broad categories namely: oral information; printed information and digitized information. The study established that in both libraries, students utilised printed information more than digitised information and oral information was never used in any of the libraries.

Ezeala (2009) studied the effectiveness of library resources in Agricultural Research Institutes in Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that more than three quarters of the respondents find the libraries ineffective, as they indicated dissatisfaction with electronic resources and their library's collection. In a similar study Onuoha (2010) studied faculty assessment of library services at Babcock University, and findings revealed that circulation services, reference, photocopying and binding were considered by majority of the respondents to be effective. Compilation of bibliographies, indexing and interlibrary loan received the worst ratings.

Martin (2003) investigated the quality of service in health libraries, the study found out that users' were generally satisfied with library services but had specific concerns on areas such as: access to electronic library resources from work, comprehensive library catalogue and sufficient space for working. Biradar, Kumar and Mahesh (2009), investigated the use of information sources and services at the Agricultural Science College, Shimoga. The study found out that 54.79% of the respondents were satisfied with lending service while 57.50% were satisfied with reference services, however, services such as selective dissemination of information, inter library loan and CD rom search were hardly used.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was used for this study. The population of the study consists of 5,847 students registered for the first semester 2009/2010 academic session at Babcock University. Purposive sampling was used in selecting 200 respondents from six out of sixteen departments within the existing four faculties. Purposive sample technique was considered adequate for this study in order to ensure adequate representation from all four faculties in the university. Selected departments are: History and International Studies; Religious Studies; Nursing Science; Public and Allied Health; Law and Security Services; Public administration and Political science. A self constructed questionnaire was used for data collection.

Presentation of findings

Table 1: Analysis of response to questionnaire

N=200

		No.	%
Age group	15-19 years	59	29.5
	20-24 years	114	57.0
	25-29 years	19	9.5
	30 and above	8	4.0
Marital status	Married	9	4.5
	Single	188	94.0
	Separated	1	0.5
	Divorced	1	0.5
	Widowed	1	0.5
Course of study	Economics	49	24.5
	Political science	28	14.0
	Public administration	18	9.0
	Accounting	50	25.0
	Nursing	11	5.5
	Public health	44	22.0
Level of schooling	100	8	4.0
	200	56	28.0
	300	46	23.0
	400	83	41.5
	500	7	3.5

Table 1 presents a breakdown of respondents' age, marital status, course of study and level of schooling. Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 20-24(57.0%), and mostly single 188 (94.0%). Accounting

had the highest number of respondents of 50(25.0%), followed by Economics 49 (24.5%) while the least is nursing. Most of the respondents were in the final year of study as indicated by their level of schooling. 85 (41.5%) were in 400 level (final year) as well as 500 level 7 (3.5%) for those running a 5 five years programme.

Figure 1:   Distribution of respondents by gender
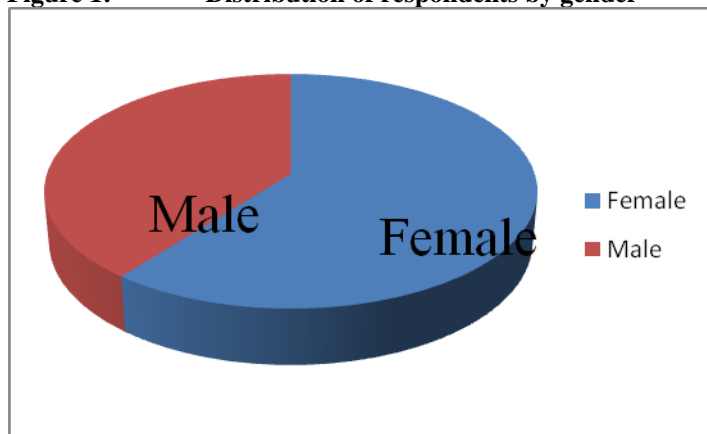
Majority (60.5%) were females and males (39.5%).

Table 2:   Extent of use of library services

Library services	A great extent	Little extent	Very little extent	No response
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Photocopying	90 (45.0)	36 (18.0)	37 (18.5)	37 (18.5)
Reference service	49 (24.5)	44 (22.0)	34 (17.0)	73 (36.5)
Circulation services	31 (15.5)	39 (19.5)	48 (24.0)	82 (41.0)
Binding service	23 (11.5)	35 (17.5)	28 (14.0)	114 (57.0)
Audiovisual services	15 (7.5)	21 (10.5)	25 (12.5)	139 (69.5)

Table 2 highlights the extent of use of services provided by the University library. Overall, few respondents used the library services to a great extent. Photocopying (45.5%) and reference service (24.5%) topped the list. What this implies is that most undergraduates who use the library do so mainly to photocopy library materials and to use the reference services. Audiovisual services 139 (69.5%), and binding services 114 (57.0%) can be said to be among the least used services taking into consideration the number of respondents who did not respond to them.

**Table 3:   Effectiveness of Library Services**

N=200

library services	effectiveness				
	very effective	effective	ineffective	very ineffective	do not know
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
photocopying	95 (47.5)	68 (34.0)	7 (3.5)	6 (3.0)	24 (12.0)
reference service	30 (15.0)	87 (43.5)	24 (12.0)	11 (5.5)	48 (24.0)
circulation services	24 (12.0)	82 (41.0)	23 (11.5)	13 (6.5)	58 (29.0)
binding service	19 (9.5)	68 (34.0)	12 (6.0)	10 (5.0)	91 (45.0)
audiovisual services	9 (4.5)	43 (21.5)	32 (16.0)	20 (10.0)	96 (48.0)

The respondents were requested to appraise the effectiveness of the services provided at the library. The results are shown in table 3. Very few respondents perceived the services to be "very effective" with photocopying

services (47.5%) topping the list. Reference service and circulation were also considered as effective by 87(43.5%) and (41.0%) respectively. Although 91 (45.0%) do not know about binding service in the library, the service was rated very effective by 19 (9.5%) and effective by 68 (34.0%) what this implies is that while many of the respondents do not know about the service, the service is rated well by those who use it.

Figure 2: Level of satisfaction with library services of Babcock University library
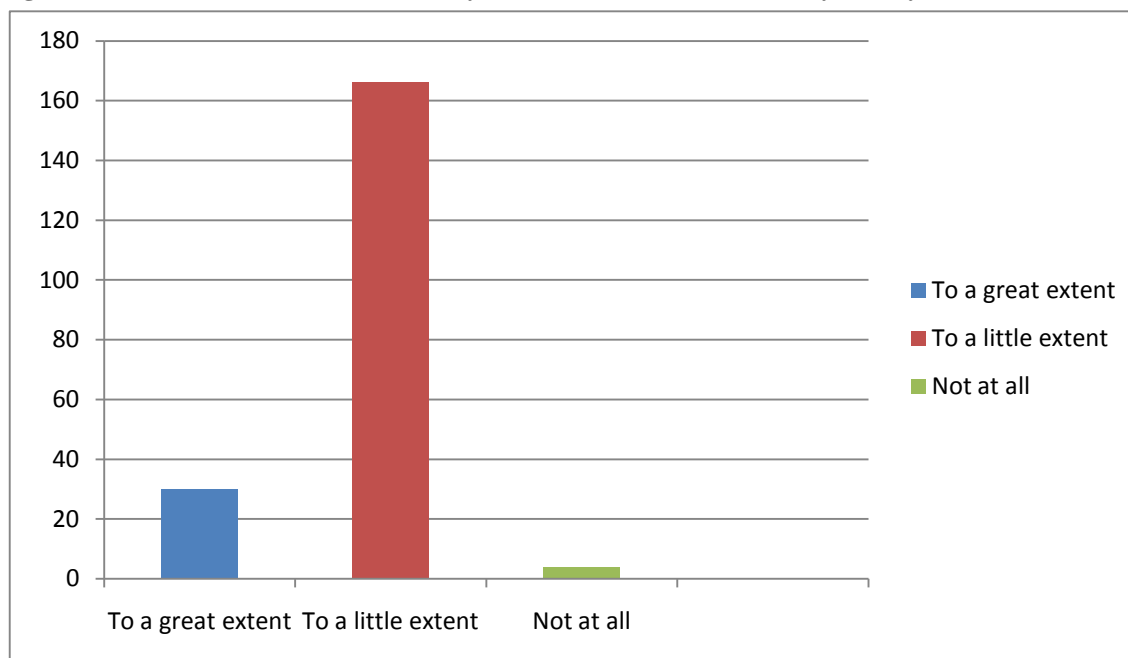
Findings from Figure 2 indicates that a majority, (83.0%) of the respondents were satisfied with the library services to a little extent. Only 15.0% of the respondents claimed to be satisfied with the library services to a great extent. Two percent of the respondents could not express the extent of satisfaction with the library services.

Discussion of findings

Findings from the study revealed that photocopying, reference service and circulation are the most utilized services in the library while binding and audiovisual services constitute the least used services. The finding is in partial agreement with Popoola (2000) who also found photocopying, reference and circulation services to be among the most used services in social science research in Nigerian universities. It is also in partial agreement with the findings of Oyewusi & Oyeboade (2009) whose study revealed that undergraduates highly utilize photocopying and reference service. The low use of audiovisual services is supported by the findings of Udo-Anyawu, Jeff-Okafor & Mbagwu (2012). The disparity in findings could also be attributed to the difference in the list of library services assessed in all studies. However, the level of agreement in the use of photocopying and reference service does indicate that those services are important in university libraries. The poor level of use of audiovisual resources may also be as a result of lack of awareness of the existence of those resources in the library or lack of space to utilize them as users are not allowed to use sound devices in the general reading area.

In the area of effectiveness, photocopying service was rated the most effective followed by reference and circulation services. The finding is in agreement with that of Onuoha (2010) who examined faculty assessment of library services at Babcock University and found circulation, reference and photocopying services to be the most effective. The agreement in findings supports the validity of the claims being that both user groups make use of the same services.

Overall, most of the respondents expressed little satisfaction with library services. The finding in this case is in partial agreement with the finding of Martin (2003) whose finding from the investigation of service quality in health libraries revealed that users were generally satisfied with library services despite having specific concerns on some aspects of library services. The findings in both studies, however, support the fact that users are yet to derive maximum satisfaction with all of library services.

Conclusion

The provision of service(s) is an essential part of libraries which should not be taken for granted. Libraries, most especially university libraries have to ensure that the services provided are effective and satisfying to users as a means of maintaining patronage especially in an electronic age when information can be acquired from various sources independent of the university library.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings from this study:

1. Babcock university library and indeed other university libraries should endeavour to host public enlightenment programs to improve students' level of awareness of services provided. This is necessary the high level of no response rate in the use of library services such as audiovisuals and binding.
2. Considering the fact that the low usage for audiovisuals could also be attributed to lack of space for accessing such materials within the library, Babcock University library should, therefore, make provision to accommodate the utilization of audiovisuals within the library.
3. The level of satisfaction with library services was also found to be low, which calls for improvement in general service provision and delivery in order to increase the level of user's satisfaction.

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