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H. M. David

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Association of Nigeria (PATTEAN)***

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**ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABILITY AND USE OF INFORMATION
RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONS
LIBRARY AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY ZARIA.**

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Abstract

This study was an assessment of information resources and service of the Institute of Education Library Ahmadu Bello University Zaria was a case study and questionnaire and observation were use to collect data. The data collected were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages. Based on the findings of the study, the Human Resources of the library are quite adequate. Materials resources are not very current except for newspapers. There is an ICT centre and E-library though not fully used by staff due to lack of computer literacy. Equipment such as photocopying machine thought essential are not available in the library. The services rendered include E-researching, consultancy, training, current awareness and referral/advisory services. It was recommended that funds should be made available for subscription of current journals and books. There should be also training for staff to equip them with the knowledge of how to use the ICT centre and E-Library. It was equally recommended that photocopying machine should be provided so as to salvage the library resources from mutilation

Introduction

Every organization that believes in the role of libraries in development will ensure that a functional library is established for its benefits. Libraries according Ozioko (2008) exist to provide information resources and services to their users. The success of a library service is not based on its size but on the quality of its resources and how well it functions and meets the information needs of its teaming users. The library as an institution has passed through series and levels of development which requires its

nomenclature to change from time to time due to the role it plays at a particular point in time. From a simple definition of the library being a store house of knowledge, it has become a resource centre where a collection of books, periodicals, teaching aids and electronic resources are housed for teaching, learning and research purposes by teachers, students, researchers and also for recreational purposes (Edoka, 2000; Elatturoti, 2001 & Daudu, 2002). To further articulate the role of the library in the ICT era, it could simply be referred to as an information centre where resources are consulted on-line. In such a library, books are not necessarily found in their hard form, yet readers can still have access to the resources they need and acquire the knowledge they require. However, not many institutions have embraced the idea of "bookless library" as Maduekwe and Ifeanyi (2011) observed that ICT materials are not adequately used in some schools in Lagos state, Nigeria.

The Library should be an agent of change and should affect its users positively whether it is a resource centre, an information centre or just a traditional library. This will go a long way to assist in achieving the aim for which the library was established in an institution, some of which according to Nwalo (2003) are to acquire, organize, store and make accessible to users, within the quickest possible time all forms of information materials which they require. In summary, up the requirements needed for satisfying users of any library are information resources and information services. It is in the light of this that this research was conducted to assess the resources and services of the Institute of Education Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

The Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was established as a semi autonomous service unit under statute 14 of Ahmadu Bello University law in 1965 to perform advisory and consultative roles in all matters relating to the development of education in general and quality control in teacher education in particular. In order to fulfill this role, the institute was expected to perform some fundamental functions one of the which is "to advise on the establishment and maintenance of professional library services in the states." (Director Annual Report 2008:12). The Institute library was charged with this responsibility.

The Institute of Education Library is classified as a special library in the sense that it is quite small in size with a carrying capacity of seventy two (72) readers at a time, and its resources and services are tailored towards a particular subject, i.e. Education and related areas. Most resources in this

library are meant to serve Institute of Education staff and students. The library is basically a reference library which opens to its users between 8: am to 9: pm from Mondays to Fridays and 9:am to 6:pm on Saturdays. While there are 2567 registered users the size of the library limits the number of users to only 72 at a time, hence, the need to elongate the opening hours to enable as many users as possible have access to the resources available.

Though a small library. Its services include:

- Reference service
- Indexing service
- Referral and Advisory service
- Current Awareness service
- Consultancy services
- E-Searching

The Problem

The guidelines for special libraries specify that the special library should be regarded as a management unit within the organization. That there should be adequate and qualified staff whose head should be responsible for the financial management of the library which should include preparation of budget and management of expenditure. Lack of compliance to these guidelines could be a hindrance to the proper functioning of the special library while compliance will empower the library to acquire core information resources and provide appreciable service.

The guidelines for special Libraries are universal in nature because every special library was established to support its parent organization, yet not every special library operates based on these guidelines. What actually make special libraries special are their resources and services but not many libraries pay attention to provision of resources and services to their users.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the types of resources available in the Institute of Education Library?
2. Which of the resources available do users use most?
3. What are the services rendered in the Institute of Education Library and which ones were used most?

Methodology

The study is a case study because it is an in-depth study of the Institute of Education Library. According to Sambo (2005) almost all data collection methods can be used in the case study research for that reason, this study made use of questionnaire and observation as instruments for data collection. Two sets of questionnaire were used, one for the library staff and the other for the library users. The library staff questionnaire was designed to find out the number and qualification of staff and the professional services rendered which will make it easy for users to be served with information without much delay. The user's questionnaire was to assess their satisfaction of the resources available and services rendered. While the library staff questionnaire was administered to all the members of staff who were seventeen (17) in number, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 479 samples from a population of 958 users comprising of lecturers and students of the Institute in 2010/2011 academic session to respond to the user's questionnaire. Likert scale was used to elicit responses about user's satisfaction of the resources and services. A check list from the standard of special libraries quoted by Ozioko (2008) was adapted and modified for use to determine the availability and quantity of resources in the Institute of Education Library. The content validity of the instrument was done by three Library Science specialists from the rank of senior lecturer and above in the Library and Information Science Department of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Their observations and inputs were used to modify the questionnaire items. The internal consistency that was tested using Kuder Richardson (K-R) formula was found to be 0.75. The data generated were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages to arrive at a decision.

Presentation of Results

Response Rate

The response rate of questionnaire administered was 100%. This is due to the fact that the researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaire. And since the study was conducted within the researcher's area of work, it was not difficult to follow respondents one by one to ensure that the questionnaire was completed and returned.

Types of Resources

Research question one: What are the types of resources available in the Institute of Education library?

In answering this research question, the standard for special libraries was used to assist the researcher look at the resources in the library of study in the light of the universal standard of resources in special libraries and to find out if the library is of good standard or not. Table 1 is the findings on the types of resources available in the Institute library.

Table 1: Types of Resources Available and Quantity

Resources	Minimum Standard	Availability in Institute of Education Library
<u>Human Resources</u>		
- Professional	2	7
- Para Professional	1	4
- Assistant library Officer	X	4
- Library Assistant	21	2
- Library Attendants	3	X
<u>Materials Resources</u>		
Books and journals	5000 and above	11,975
- Newspapers	✓	✓
- Indexes to Newspapers	X	✓
<u>Equipment</u>		
- Seats and tables	50 and above	72
- Shelves and stack	5 each and above	15
- Photocopying machine	2	X
- Computers	To be functionally available	ICT centre and E-Library
<u>Organizational tools</u>		
- Library of Congress	Standard tools ✓	✓

Classification		✓	✓
- Dewey	Decimal	✓	✓
Classification		✓	✓
- Library of Congress			
Subject Heading			
- Sears List of subject			
Heading			

Key:

✓ = Available but no specific number

X = Not Available

The result in Table 1 reveals resource categorizations into human resources, material resources, equipment and organizational tools. Under Human resources in the Institute of Education Library, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, there are 7 members of professional staff as against 2 and 4 Para-professionals as against 1 in the standard for special libraries. In the area of material resources, the number of books and journals available in the Institute of Education Library were 11,900 volumes and 57 titles respectively in contrast to the 5000 volumes of books and journals put together in the minimum standard. In addition to newspapers and magazines in the minimum standard, the Institute of Education Library had indexes to newspaper articles. The library lacked photocopying machine but had a human model which is not part of the recommendation in the minimum standard. In place of computer in the minimum standard, the library had an ICT centre and E-library. Organizational tools were available and very current.

Use of Resources

Research question two: Which of the resources available do users use most?

The data collected to answer this question is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The most used resources in the Institute Library.

S/N	Resources	Frequency of use	percentage
1	Books and Journals	350	73.06
2	E-Resources	85	17.74
3	Newspapers	390	81.41
4	Indexes to Newspapers articles	95	19.83
5	Human Models	50	10.43

The result in table 2 revealed that newspapers were the most used resources with 390 (81.41%) followed by books and journals 350 (73.06%). The least used resources as revealed in the study were indexes to newspapers articles 95 (19.83%) respondents, E-Resources with 85 (17.74%) respondents and Human Model with 50 (10.43%) respondents in that order.

Services in Institute of Education Library

Research Question Three: What are the services rendered in the Institute of Education Library and which ones were used most?

The information services rendered by the Institute Library was not limited to the staff and students of the Institute alone, but for the sake of this study, it is only staff and students of the Institute that were used based on the interest of the researcher. Table 3 shows the services available in the Institute of Education Library and the level of use by users.

Table 3: Services Available in the Institute of Education Library

Services	Status	Frequencies of used services	Percentage
Reference Service	✓	268	55.94
Indexing Services	✓	80	16.70
Current Awareness Service (CAS)	✓	50	10.43
Referral/Advisory services	✓	150	31.31
Referral/Advisory services	✓	10	NIL
Consultancy services	✓	30	6.26
E-Searching	✓	150	31.31
Inter-Library Loan	X	NIL	NIL
Photocopying	X	NIL	NIL
Lending	✓	450	93.94
Recreational Service	✓	20	4.17
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	✓	2636	NIL
Training			

Key

- ✓ = Available
- X = Not Available
- Nil = Not Measurable

Table 3 listed all the services that are rendered in special libraries and identified the ones rendered specifically in the Institute of Education Library. The highest service used was recreational service having 450 (93.95%) users benefiting from it. This was followed by reference service with 268 (55.94%) respondents then current awareness service (CAS) with 150 (31.31%) and Inter-library loan with 150 (31.31%) respondents as well. The table revealed that E-searching and selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) were the least utilized services with 30 (6.26%) and 20 (4.17%) respondents respectively. Indexing service meant to provide indexes to newspapers articles on Education and related areas was not highly used. Only 95 (19.83) respondents say they make use of that service. Consultancy services and training service were part of the services available in the Institute of Education. The frequencies of these services were listed by the number of times consultancy service were rendered and the number of students that were trained.

Discussion of Results

Human resources in the Institute of Education Library, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria were above the minimum standard of special libraries due to the fact that more professional staff were required to perform certain functions that are peculiar to that service i.e indexing and training of middle level man power for school and private libraries in northern part of Nigeria which required professional staff to do that. Training of middle level man power is a special mandate assigned to the Institute of Education Library, so the quality of staff to accomplish that duty cannot be compromised. However, the library is short of library attendants who are expected to complement the efforts of the professionals. The presence of this category of staff can demonstrate the value added nature of their contributions in the world of work (Bender 1998).

Material resources in terms of books were quite adequate and users acknowledged that this library holds the most up-to-date books on education compared to what they use in other libraries. On the status of journals, respondents complaint that they were not current. For meaningful research to take place, special libraries in general and Institute of Education Library in particular should make it a policy that they subscribe to current journals in their various specialized fields. Since journals were not very current, it is expected that e-resources will provide up-to-date resources to users just as Maritin (2011) opined that the knowledge and use of ICT enhances teaching and learning especially the use of mobile technology. It is in this light that the Institute of Education invested in the provision of E-library but not many users use it. The few respondents that indicated that they used such resources and services were mostly students. The library staff that provides this service confirmed that staff did not visit the ICT centre as much as students due to the fact that most staff were not ICT or computer literate.

Though a high number of users indicated that they used newspapers, not many used indexes. Indexing service had been a unique service of the Institute library. Daily newspapers and weekly magazines are being indexed and the indexes are arranged alphabetically by subject. Hitherto, it was only articles that were related to education that were being indexed, but currently, other issues of national interests have been added to the educational issues. This service should be of interest to lecturers in the Institute but it is not because most staff were new to the system. There is need for them to be educated on the availability and usefulness of newspapers indexes.

Provision of newspapers as recreation for the library users is a very welcomed idea to the library users as newspapers and magazines are provided in a relaxed atmosphere for them. This is in line with what takes place in libraries all over the world for instance. Pinellas Park Library provides a wide variety of recreational resources and services for their users. Besides recreation, newspaper reading provides users with current news of what is happening around them. People are interested in news of current happenings in the nation especially as a result of the security threat in the world in general and Nigeria in particular.

The availability of all organizational tools in this library is due to the use of those tools for teaching purposes since the library and information science training programme of the Institute is housed in the Institute library in fulfillment for the mandate of the library (Director's Annual Report 2008). A human model in the library could be used for practical lessons by both science lecturers and students but this resource is not adequately used. Photocopying machine was not found in the Institute of Education Library yet, the library is a reference library. According to Nwalo (2003) Eze (2005). Provision of photocopying machines in libraries is to enforce security of the resources and prevent mutilation. Most of the library resources have been exposed to the danger of theft and mutilation due to the absence of photocopying machine.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the availability and use of information resources and services of the Institute of Education Library. The Institute of Education Library is a special library with education as the core resources and services provision. In addition to the resources and services available in the Institute of Education Library, the study found out that unique services such as indexing of newspaper articles on specialized topics as well as training of middle level manpower for library services are also available. The library has a human model which could be used for teaching human parts and their functions. This is a unique resource that can only be found in medical schools. It was also found that some resources that are available are outdated but are being used because according to the respondents, they didn't have options. For the resources that are not being used, the users are not aware of their availability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. As it is important for special libraries, photocopying machines are needed in the Institute Library and so it is recommended that a photocopying machine can be a source of income for the library as well as a means of saving the library resources from mutilation and theft.
2. Training should be provided for academic staff on the use of library resources using the Institute of Education E-Library.
3. The usefulness of indexes to newspaper articles and models in the library should be made known to all users through library bulletins and handbills advertising every set of index produced.
4. Pigeon holes should be provided for staff and the library should encourage them to provide current information about new arrivals in the library and any other information of value to staff and other library users.
5. There should always be orientation of newly recruited staff to the library. They will be informed of the services and facilities of the Institute including the library. By so doing, they will not be ignorant of the resources and service available in the library.

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