

Postgraduate Students' Satisfaction with Library Services at the National Open University of Nigeria during Covid-19 Era

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Abstract

Library services have become the avenue through which the information needs of users are met. This study investigates users' satisfaction with library services at the National Open University of Nigeria during Covid-19 Pandemic. The study was guided with four research questions: how frequently do users visit the library, what purposes make users visit the library, what is the level of satisfaction with library resources by users. The descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. There are 478 registered postgraduate students in the Kastina study centre of the National Open University of Nigeria. The purposive sampling method was adopted in selecting 187 postgraduate students for this study. Data were collected from 187 postgraduate students using a structured questionnaire titled „Postgraduate Students' Satisfaction with Library Services at the National Open University. Collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that users visited the library daily, twice a week, once a week, once a month for reading and research purposes, consultation of books and journals, access internet, group discussion, inquire and consult electronic resources. Also, the study revealed that users' satisfaction with library resources and services were based on the number of books, journals, and magazines, reference materials, volume of theses/dissertations in their field of study, internet connectivity, and library opening hours, user education programme, and attitude of library staff among others. It was concluded that some conditions must be fulfilled for postgraduate students of open and distance learning education in Nigeria to fully appreciate and maximize the use of library resources and services. These conditions include but are not limited to the deployment of fast and effective internet infrastructure with which the library is to provide good resources and services.

Keywords: Users' satisfaction, library services, Covid 19 pandemic, National Open University of Nigeria.

Introduction

Users' are the main reason libraries are established and as such libraries must endeavour to acquire information resources in various formats to satisfy users' needs. However, it is important to note that the needs of users are changing dramatically due to the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution which has transformed almost all library services from manual or traditional to digital. The need for this transformation to take place not only in libraries of developed nations but also in libraries of developing nations like Nigeria is amplified by the outbreak of an infectious disease called COVID-19. This infectious disease which started in the city of Wuhan, China in December 2019 (Cao et al, 2020; Wang et al, 2020), has affected all facets of human endeavours. This new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spread from China to many countries of the world locking up billions of people (Sahu, 2020), and was declared a global pandemic by World Health Organization in March 2020 (WHO, 2020). The experience of COVID-19 by information professionals is making delivery of academic library services through online platforms not an option but a necessity. Today, the challenge is how academic libraries in Nigeria will make needed information available to users without them visiting the physical building of the library.

The mass amount of information resources over the internet has also brought about problems to library users as some of them may not be able to evaluate the resources on their own (Berti- Equille et al, 2011). Hence, their inability to evaluate and access the needed information resources may bring about discontent or dissatisfaction among users of the university library. Prominent among these users of the university library are postgraduate students. These are students who need timely, accurate, and comprehensive information for their research work. Ijiekhuemhen, Aghojare, and Omoskejimi (2015) affirmed that technology, databases, and innovative system for accessing information have made it even more difficult for users to easily identify and access information resources; all of which have also been attributed to dissatisfaction.

Postgraduate students' satisfaction is an assessment that determines whether or not library services meet the postgraduate students' needs and expectations. According to Ofordile, Agbanu, and Nwankwo (2019), users' satisfaction is a means through which the library users determine whether a product or service meets their needs or expectations. From this definition, users' satisfaction shows whether or not users have access to the needed information resources and services they desire. Since the main purpose of libraries is to meet users' needs, this aim is defeated if the users are not satisfied with the resources and services provided by the library.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is the country's largest tertiary institution in terms of students population (Federal Ministry of education, 2019). The University was established on 22nd July 1983 as a springboard for open and distance learning in Nigeria.

However, it was suspended on 25th April 1984, eight years after its closure due to convincing reasons that demanded the earlier establishment was still confronting the country. Some of the reasons include the need to fill the vacuum created by the profit-oriented outreach programmes of many conventional universities in the country, the need for economic funding of education, and the need to take advantage of emerging developments in the field of information communication technologies which have changed the modus operandi and methods of instructional deliveries in the distance learning mode.

This renaissance has changed the focus to make education available to many people that have the ability and are willing to benefit from the quality education provided through flexible and qualitative distance learning (NOUN 2012). National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) aimed to widen access to education so that it can be available to all citizens that aspire to become educated and maintain the quality of education while keeping the cost of education as low as possible. This is articulated in the university's mission, which is to provide functional, cost-effective, flexible learning which adds life-long value to quality education for all who seek knowledge. The mission statements cannot be achieved without a library that will provide support services for distance learners. The university has its headquarters at Abuja and it has eighty-one (81) study centres across the thirty-six (36) states of the federation. The Main Library is located at the headquarters of the National Open University of Nigeria in Abuja, while there are other libraries across study centres. NOUN library has a large volume of print resources and a well-developed collection of online research databases, open access journals, e-books, and CD ROMs which can be accessed through the E-Library from the university's website. These electronic resources can be remotely accessed through different devices like mobile phones, laptops, iPads, and other electronic devices.

The library of the National Open University of Nigeria like that of other university libraries has the responsibility to provide information resources in large quantity and quality. The advancement of Information Communication Technology (ICTs) has made it easier for libraries to house both traditional or physical collection and electronic or digital resources to ensure the use of these library materials. Apart from providing information resources to meet users' needs, the library also render services to users and these services include search service, document delivery services, interlibrary loan services, circulation services, reference services, and reprographic services among others. Since the library is the nerve centre of the university, the satisfaction of postgraduate students should be their top priority. This is because failure to provide resources, services, and facilities to meet the information needs of the postgraduate student is synonymous with discouraging quality research in the university. On the other hand, postgraduate students' dissatisfaction may lead to low patronage because their satisfaction is dependent on the usage of information resources, services, and facilities provided by the library. Hence, the library needs to sensitize users (undergraduate, postgraduate, faculty members, and people from the surrounding community) of the available information resources and services as they need them for the learning and research process. Postgraduate students' academic success is dependent on how well they can evaluate and access the library's information resources and

services. Little wonder, Okwu, and Braide (2021), expressed the fact that the competence of postgraduate students is dependent on their awareness and knowledge of the services provided by the academic library, the available information resources in the library, and how accessible are this information resources and services. Previous studies have shown a continuing decline in the use of library and information services in Nigeria due to low visits of the library by users, reduction in the number of information resources borrowed, and low users' registration (Onifade, Ogbuyi & Omeluzor, 2013; Odu, 2016).

The National Open University of Nigeria has been building capacities in the areas of acquisition of library resources and training of library staff for good service provision. These library resources and services are important to the academic pursuit of postgraduate students who are expected to carry out high-quality research. A study of postgraduate students' satisfaction with library resources and services is therefore needed as part of the evaluation to determine if this capacity-building in the library is justifiable.

The Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess users' satisfaction with library and information services in the National Open University of Nigeria during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following are specific objectives of the study.

1. Determine the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students with the use of library resources.
2. Ascertain the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students with the use of library services.

Research Questions

The following are the research question answered by this study:

1. What is the level of satisfaction with library resources by postgraduate students?
2. What is the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students with library services?

Literature Review

The outbreak of coronavirus disease has been a game-changer in the way universities and by extension, their libraries conduct their teaching and learning. According to UNESCO (2020), between January and April 2020, universities had been closed in 188 countries. The percentage of registered students who were out of school as of August 2020 was over 90% globally; about 1.5 billion young people (Lee, 2020). Most university students faced the challenge of how to continue with academic activities. To continue with academic activities, some universities across the world moved to online teaching platforms (Murphy, 2020, Grubic et al, 2020).

Evaluation of users' satisfaction is crucial to the success of any library and information centre. Assessing users' satisfaction is a way of giving feedback to libraries on how well their resources, services, and facilities are meeting the needs of their users. It helps in assessing library's

performance and thereby helping libraries to know areas where they are doing well and areas where improvement is needed.

A case study was carried out by Idiegbeyan-OseandEsse (2013) on *students' satisfaction with academic library resources and services in covenant university, Nigeria*. The results of their study showed that all (100.0%) respondents were satisfied with the number of databases available in their field of study, 96.8% were satisfied with the WebPAC for searching of materials, 96.4% were satisfied with the volume of books in their field of study, 91.3% were satisfied with the volume of reference books, respondents were also satisfied with the volume of journals, many computers in the e-library, seating capacity of the library and the temperature and lighting of the library. It was also revealed that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the user education programme they received, services from library staff, opening hours of the library, photocopying, bindery, printing, and reference services. The overall result showed that respondents were all satisfied with the resources, services and facilities of the library.

Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) conducted a study on Library resources and service utilization by postgraduate students in a Nigerian private university. It was found that the majority (47.4%) of the respondents used the library occasionally, 26.3% of respondents used the library weekly, 10.5% of the respondents used the library daily, and 9.2% used the library monthly. It also discovered that the majority (20%) of the respondents visited the library for consulting materials for research, 16% of the respondents used the library to prepare their seminar presentation, while (9%) of respondents visited the library to read newspapers. The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents made mostly used internet facilities than other resources such as textbooks, monographs, e-journals and e-books. As regard library services, respondents used mostly used bibliography and document delivery service, while consultancy service was the least used. Overall, the majority of the respondents were averagely satisfied with the services of the library. The study, therefore, suggested that the library still needs to improve on its services to satisfy users.

Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2014) investigated utilization and user satisfaction of public library service in South-west, Nigeria. The study showed that the majority of the respondents visited the library daily which shows that respondents use the library frequently and users were dissatisfied with library services due to lack of adequate facilities like internet, online services, irrelevant materials, and outdated information resources. Ijiekhuamhenet'al (2015) studied users' satisfaction with academic library performance in the federal university of petroleum resources, Delta state, Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that the majority (71%) of respondents visited the library daily for browsing, internet availability, and specific information and to access reference materials. The study also found out that students were highly satisfied with the services, infrastructure and collection of the library. They were satisfied with the available journals, staff attitude, reference service, internet service and books on the shelves. It was concluded that the library should extend its opening hours to improve service delivery

Tiemo and Ateboh (2016) assessed users' satisfaction with library resources and services in the college of health sciences library in Niger Delta University, Nigeria. The study found out that were dissatisfied with the reference resources in their subject because they are out-of-date, inadequate books on the library shelves, incomprehensive electronic resources, library bulletin, newsletters, and online databases, current awareness services, document delivery services, inquiry services, and library orientation among other services. However, users were satisfied with lending services, renewal of library materials, internet services, opening hours and printing of online resources. The authors concluded that a lot needs to be done to improve resources and service renders to users.

Veena and Kotari (2016) conducted a study on user satisfaction with library resources, services, and facilities in SDM College Library, Ujire. The study shows that the majority (59.0%) of respondents visited the library daily, 25.0% of students visited the library once in two days, 10.0% of students visited once a week, 6.0% of respondents rarely visited the library. The study discovered that (46.0%) of respondents visit the library for study purposes, followed by (41.3%) respondents who visit the library to borrow books, (6.0%) to locate information in books and journals, (5.7%) to read newspapers and magazines while (1.0%) of the respondents visited the library for leisure time. It was also found out that the majority (86.7%) of respondents are highly satisfied with the collection of general books, textbooks and reference books. 68.7% of the respondents rated OPAC Service/Web OPAC service as good, 53.3% of respondents indicated that circulation services were excellent, 4.3% rated OPAC Service/Web OPAC service as very poor while 6.3% rated poor, 56.0% of respondents indicated that reference/Information Service was excellent, 45.7% also rated Current Awareness Service as excellent, and only 3.3% rated it as very poor. It was therefore concluded that respondents were satisfied with overall respondents were found satisfied with the library's collection and services.

Umoh and Agwunobi (2020) assessed users' satisfaction with the facilities of university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that respondents were satisfied with the reprographic facility, high-quality lighting system, high-level ventilation in the library, good quality seats and tables as well as the structure of the library. However, respondents find it difficult to access information resources due to overcrowded books on the shelves. It was therefore recommended that good shelves and cabinets should be provided to allow users to access resources easily.

Methodology

In this study, the descriptive survey research design was employed. The descriptive survey research design was used in this study because it helped to describe the nature of users' satisfaction concerning the services which the library at the National Open University of Nigeria offered. The services were meant for researchers exploring postgraduate students' satisfaction based on library and information services at the National Open University of Nigeria, Kastina study centre. There were 478 postgraduate students in the Kaduna study centre. This was

obtained from the centre's registration list of 2021. A total of 187 postgraduate students was purposively taken from that population and this represents the sample for the study. Permission was sought from the appropriate quarters for the administration of the questionnaire in line with ethical clearance rules of research practices. All the 187 respondents that were administered copies of the questionnaire returned their copies filled and good for data analysis. The results obtained are presented as follows.

Results

Table 1: Frequency of library visits

Item	Frequency	Percentages
Daily	37	21%
Twice a week	48	26%
Once a week	29	16%
Once in two weeks	33	18%
Once a month	16	9%
Rarely	09	6%
Never	05	4%
Total	187	100

Table 1 indicates the frequency of library visits by postgraduate students. It was noticed that 21% of the respondents visited the library daily, 26% visited once a week, 18% visited the library twice in two weeks while 4% of the respondents never visited the library. From the findings obtained, it is believed that the frequency of visits by users depends on individual basis and time of preference, to attend to their information needs of the assignment, classwork, and project. There are no rules governing when users must visit the library, rather it is about choice, availability, and need.

Table 2: Purpose of library visits

Purpose	Frequency	Percentages
Reading and research	67	35%
Consultation of books	33	17%
Consultation of journals	17	9%
Internet access	18	10%
Group discussions	16	9%
Access to electronic resources	11	6%
Inquiries	05	3%
Consultation of thesis/dissertations	20	11%
Total	187	100

Result in Table 2 indicate that, the purpose of library visits by users of postgraduate students differ from one individual to another. 35% of respondents visited the library for reading and research practices, 17% of respondents visit the library to consult books, 9% of the respondents visit the library to consult journals and other periodicals, 10% of the respondents visit the library for the internet access while 11% of the respondents visit the library to consult thesis/dissertations.

Table 3: Users' satisfaction with library resources

		MEAN				
1.	I am satisfied with the number of books in my field of study	2.05	0.02	0.26	2.00	Satisfied
2.	I am satisfied with the number of reference sources in my field of study	2.08	0.03	0.29	2.00	Satisfied
3.	I am satisfied with the number of journals and magazines in my field of study	2.44	0.05	0.16	2.00	Satisfied
4.	I am satisfied with the number of computers in the electronic library	1.23	0.07	0.55	2.00	Dissatisfied
5.	I am satisfied with the electronic information resources in the library	0.89	0.11	0.46	2.00	Dissatisfied
6.	I am satisfied with the volume of theses/dissertations in the library	2.10	0.03	0.28	2.00	Satisfied
7.	I am satisfied with the volume of CDs/DVDs in the library	0.85	0.13	0.65	2.00	Dissatisfied
8.	I am satisfied with the library's online public access catalogue (OPAC)	2.19	0.02	0.26	2.00	Satisfied
9.	I am satisfied with the library's internet connectivity	0.95	0.09	0.64	2.00	Dissatisfied
10.	I am satisfied with the currency of the library's books on the shelves	2.17	0.03	0.26	2.00	Satisfied

Table 3 above showed the postgraduate level of satisfaction with the library resources. The analysis showed that the respondents are satisfied with the resources with a mean above 2.00 (decision mean). These resources include the number of books in their field of study, the number of reference materials, the number of journals, the volume of thesis/dissertations, online public access and currency of books in the library. The data also showed that postgraduate students are dissatisfied with the following resources (mean below 2.00); the number of computers in the

library, electronic information resources, volumes of CDs/DVDs, and library's internet connectivity.

Table 4: Users' satisfaction with library services

s/n	Library Services	Satisfied N=187	Undecided N=187	Dissatisfied N=187	Decision mean = 2.00	Decision
		MEAN				
1.	I am satisfied with the opening hours of the library	2.28	0.05	0.21	2.00	Satisfied
2.	I am satisfied with the user education programme	2.41	0.32	0.18	2.00	Satisfied
3.	I am satisfied with the library's orientation programme	2.39	0.02	0.19	2.00	Satisfied
4.	I am satisfied with the friendly attitude of the library staff	2.41	0.04	0.18	2.00	Satisfied
5.	I am satisfied with the library's photocopying and printing services	2.50	0.03	0.15	2.00	Satisfied
6.	I am satisfied with the library's reference services	2.11	0.10	0.24	2.00	Satisfied
7.	I am satisfied with the attitude of library staff	2.44	0.06	0.16	2.00	Satisfied
8.	I am satisfied with the library's environment	2.31	0.11	0.17	2.00	Satisfied
9.	I am satisfied with the library's lending services	1.06	0.17	0.56	2.00	Dissatisfied
10.	I am satisfied with the library's collections both electronic and printed	2.12	0.13	0.23	2.00	Satisfied

The result in Table 4 shows that respondents' level of satisfaction with the library services varies based on their information needs. All the ten items, except item nine, have a mean above 2.0 (decision mean) and this indicates that the respondents are satisfied with the nine services in the instrument. However, the respondents are dissatisfied with the lending services of the library (mean below 2.00).

Discussion

The findings to research question one showed that postgraduate students frequently use the library, 63% of postgraduate students used the library at least once a week. This is expected because, at the postgraduate level, students are expected to be deliberate about the sources of information that would help their research activities. This result is consistent with the finding of Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013), who conducted a study on Library resources and service utilization by postgraduate students in a Nigerian private university and found out that postgraduate students frequently use the library.

The results of data analysis on research question two showed that the major purpose for which postgraduate students visit the library is reading and research. This agrees with the assertion of Bangani, Moyo and Mashiyane (2019), in their study of the utilization of library spaces by postgraduate students in an African country, that postgraduate students devote more time to sourcing for information that would meet their research needs than any other information need. On the level of satisfaction of postgraduate students with library resources, the result shows that they are satisfied with most of the resources in the library. Their dissatisfaction with electronic information resources and internet connectivity could be an indication that most academic libraries in developing countries have not been able to make a vast amount of electronic information resources available to users through fast internet connectivity. This agrees with the findings of Haliso and Ogungbeni (2014) that internet connectivity in most university libraries in Africa is poor.

The results from research question three show that postgraduate students are satisfied with the services rendered by the library of the National Open University of Nigeria. This result is expected because according to Ofodu and Agim (2017), the library of an open and distant university should render prompt and efficient services to her patrons. This is to enable the patrons to take maximum advantage of the resources of the library.

Conclusion

This research investigated the satisfaction of postgraduate students with the library services at the National Open University of Nigeria. Based on the results obtained from this study's data analysis, it is apparent that some conditions must be fulfilled for postgraduate students of open and distance learning education in Nigeria to fully appreciate and maximize the use of library resources and services. These conditions include but are not limited to deployment of fast and effective internet infrastructure with which the library is to provide good resources and services.

Recommendations

The outbreak of covid-19 has amplified the need for efficient and effective e-resources and services for postgraduate students who are continuously yawning for information resources to carry out research. It is time for academic libraries, most especially the ones saddled with the responsibility of providing information services for students of open and distance learning

institutions, to focus more on electronic resources. Budgets of academic libraries should be skewed towards the provision of electronic resources. There is also a need to continuously train library staff on information services providers in this dynamic knowledge age.

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