

**Availability and Utilisation of Library Services by Undergraduates in Lagos state  
University, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*This study examines availability and utilisation of library services by undergraduate students at the Lagos State University, Lagos. The study adopted a descriptive design which involves the use of questionnaire for data collection. The population of the study consists of three hundred and ninety (390) students from eleven faculties in the university. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from the levels 200 -500 students in the university. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, means, and standard deviation. Results revealed that there are various services available to users in Lagos State University Library, such as reference services, circulation services, and online services. The study also revealed the most accessible library service as the reference service. The study further revealed that undergraduate students' main purpose for using the university library is based on the conduciveness of the library for reading and research activities. The study recommends the need for the library management to improve on existing services to ensure the better use of the library and the need for the library to equip the reference section with more relevant materials.*

**Keywords:** utilization of library services, library services, undergraduates

**Introduction**

The library plays an important role in educational development. It serves as a source of information for users. There are various functions of the library which include the need to provide timely and accurate information to the users. Libraries primarily aim to improve the quality of life by providing opportunities for self-learning and self-education for their users. This implies that encouraging learning and getting educated are the dual and independent values of the library. It is in line with this that the library needs to have adequate knowledge of users' need because, without this, it would be very difficult to provide effective services to the users. Traditionally, libraries' activity must be designed to develop a system that will be based on a string service to be provided for users' satisfaction.

The University library is the key element in the central dissemination of information acquisition, particularly in the university environment. There are various information seekers in the university environment. These include academic staff, students, researchers, and other users. The university library provides various services that need to motivate users to have value for visiting the library and simultaneously meeting the information needs of users.

Tella and Ojo (2012) state that university libraries need to assist the parents' institutions in the dissemination of information for them to achieve their missions and visions. This indicates that the university library needs to provide services that will encourage users to fulfill their academic potentials. This is in line with the submission of Kulkami and Deshpande (2012) that effective and efficient learning activities can only take place in the university library that organises service accordingly. Aregbesola and Oguntayo (2014) note that utilization of library services particularly in the university environment assists users to have access to huge amounts of resources that will assist them in their research and academic activities.

Universities students need various kinds of library services for research, self-development, and better performances in their studies. It is in line with this, that Ugah (2008) maintains that access and use of library services by undergraduate students in universities will surely provide relevant and accurate information for them in their studies

Utilisation of relevant library services among university library users will assist students in achieving their academic desires and at the same time support the university in increasing student retention and bringing down the rate of dropout (Becker, Hartle, and Mhlauli, 2017). A critical examination of the basic law of librarianship by Raganathan (1931) maintains that the library resources are primarily for use. He goes further to say that library collections are for users. The implication of this is that a library needs to make its service available and accessible in order to promote usage.

Extant literature identifies various services that university libraries can provide which include library orientation, bibliography services, indexing and abstracting services, reference service, current awareness services, indexing and abstracting, selecting dissemination of information, and a host of others. Hossain and Munshi (2015) classified various services in the library into two: The first classification is the facilities access which includes cataloguing services, classification, indexing and abstracting, and so on. The second classification is called quick retrieval of information services; these include current awareness services, selective dissemination services, open-source databases, and online public access catalog (OPAC) services, and so on. These services help the library to support and contribute to effective learning activities, promote research, and improve teaching. Based on this, the study intends to examine the extent of utilisation of library service among undergraduate students in the Lagos state university, Lagos.

### **Statement of the problem**

The university provides substantial funds for the library yearly, to render services to its users (Ubogu & Okly, 2011). Extant literature reveals that there is poor usage of library services, particularly in university libraries, even though these libraries were established to support parent institutions. Poopola (2008) and Adams (2017) indicate that many undergraduate students in developing countries are not interested in using library services compared with what is obtainable in the developed countries. A preliminary visit to the library revealed that library

services are under-utilized in the university library. Based on this, the researchers intend to find out the reasons for poor utilisation of library services in the university.

Besides, various studies have been done on utilisation of library services in many university libraries- (Akpan-Atata and Enyene, 2014; Becker, Hartle, and Mhlauli, 2017). However, there is a paucity of literature on the availability and utilisation of library services among undergraduate students in Lagos state university.

**The objectives of the study are to:**

1. identify the types of library services available to undergraduate students in the university library in Lagos State
2. Identify various library services accessed by the undergraduate students in Lagos State university
3. Investigate the purposes for which undergraduate students utilize library services in Lagos State university

**Literature review**

Attama and Ezema (2014) opined that university libraries support educational development with resources such as books, periodicals, journals, encyclopedia, and government publications. Adam (2017) reveals various services and functions of university libraries which include providing access to information resources that enhance lifelong learning. Oudua (2015) argues that university library must identify and meet both the internal and external needs of users. The external needs can be met through inter-library loan. Chakrabarti and Pramanik (2014) identified various services rendered by university libraries, these include reference service through phone calls, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Online Public Access (OPAC), Current Awareness Service (CAS), inter-library loan, attending to reference queries, access to national and international databases through the Internet or another network, fax, personal contact and attending to users at the Circulation unit, among others.

Akpan-Atata and Enyene (2014) opined that library services comprise all packaged activities which the library renders to the users to enhance and attain the missions of the parent institution. Effective and efficient learning activities in the library can be attributed to well organized library services (Kulkarni, and Deshpande, 2012). Kekana (2016) maintains that libraries must put mechanisms in place to find out the attitude of users toward library services. This indicates that users need to be satisfied with library services to encourage better use. Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2014) noted that apart from effective library services, a university library must have suitable learning resources, provide conducive environment and competent staff. These will permit users to have confidence in library activities.

It is important for libraries to always provide effective service to adhere to policies of high standards of provision of information and information services delivery, as advocated by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions IFLA ( 2013) which states that effective library services will promote users satisfaction.

**Methodology**

The study employed the use of a positivist paradigm which is based on descriptive survey, to deal with the research problem. The sample for the study was drawn from 200-500 levels. The population of the study is 390 and proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents across all the faculties. Out of three hundred and ninety copies of questionnaire that were administered (390). Two hundred and eighty-eight (288) copies were returned which account for a 73.85% return rate. The sample frame for the study was the list of registered students in the university. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The mean was calculated as an average of each respondent per question and each response was added and divided by the numbers of total respondents. The study also used the International Business Machine Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBMSPPSS) to analyse the data.

**Result analysis**

The types of library services available to undergraduates users in the university library in Lagos State are defined by 10 components with a scale of 2 items (available =2, not available =1). Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data collected and the result is presented in Table 1 below;

**Table 1: Library services available in public university libraries in Lagos State**

S/N	Library services	Available (%)	%	Not Available	%	Mean	S.D
1	Reference	269	43.0	19	3.4	1.42	.311
2	Circulation	242	43.2	30	5.4	1.40	.344
3	Online service	224	40.0	48	8.6	1.37	.360
4	Orientation services	214	38.2	58	10.3	1.26	.508
5	User education services	212	37.9	60	10.7	1.25	.550
6	Selective dissemination of information services	179	32.0	98	17.5	1.18	.504
7	Current Awareness services	158	28.2	114	20.3	1.17	.430
8	Reprographics services	150	26.8	122	21.8	1.14	.436
9	Room Reservations.	135	24.1	137	24.1	1.10	.548
10	Inter library loan services	118	21.0	158	27.7	1.04	.553

Source: Field Survey 2019

The research finding in Table 1 established that there are various services available to users at the Lagos State University library, such as reference services, circulation service, online services, reprographic services, current awareness service among others. The finding however revealed that reference services ( $\bar{x} = 1.42$ ) were the most available as indicated by the respondents. This was closely followed by circulation services ( $\bar{x} = 1.40$ ) and online services ( $\bar{x} = 1.36$ ).

### **Library services accessed by the undergraduates in Lagos State University**

Library services accessed by the undergraduates in Lagos State University is defined by 10 components with a scale of 2 items (accessed =2, not accessed =1). Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data collected and the result is presented in Table 2 below;

**Table 2: Types of Library services accessed by undergraduate users in the library**

S/N	Library services	Accessed	Not Accessed	Mean	S.D
1	Reference	269(93.4)	19(6.6)	1.48	.40068
2	Circulation	260(90.2)	28(9.7)	1.45	.44357
3	Online service	254(88.2)	34(11.8)	1.38	.43698
4	Orientation services	230(79.9)	58(20.1)	1.35	.53457
5	User education services	227(78.8)	11(3.8)	1.34	.55414
6	Current Awareness services	224(77.8)	64(22.2)	1.26	.52961
7	Selective dissemination of information services	204(70.8)	84(29.2)	1.25	.48017
8	Reprographics services	167(58.0)	121(42.0)	1.23	.47851
9.	Room Reservations	151(52.4)	137(47.6)	1.22	.61608
10	Inter library loan services	138(47.9)	150(52.1)	1.21	.62775

Source: Field survey 2019

In Table 2 above the finding revealed that the library service mostly accessed by undergraduates is the reference services as submitted by the majority 269 (93.2%) of the respondents, followed by circulation services which were accessed by 90.1% of respondents. Also, 254(88.2%) of the respondents claimed to have access to online services. However, interlibrary loans have the least access as indicated by 47.9% respondents.

### **The purpose for the Use of Library Services**

The purposes for which undergraduates utilized library services in Lagos State University is defined by 10 components measured with a scale of 4 scale items (Strongly Agree=4, Agree =3, Disagree =2, Strongly Disagree =1). Descriptive statistics was used to calculate the data collected and the results are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Purpose for the Use of Library Services**

S/N	Purpose of using the library services	S.A	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1	I use the library for my research because it is a convenient and conducive environment for learning	184	63.9	93	32.3	8	2.8	3	1.0
2	I use the library to study for my assignments and exams I use the library so that	166	57.6	102	35.4	14	3.9	6	2.0
3	I can access online reference materials	139	48.3	129	44.8	12	4.2	8	2.7
4	I use the library because I can easily connect to the internet and database	127	44.1	113	39.2	32	11.1	21	7.3
5	I use the library to have access to current journals in my field of study	108	37.5	123	37.8	47	16.3	10	3.5
6	I use the library to get quick access to my information needs	108	37.5	123	37.8	46	16.0	11	3.8
7	I use the library to have access to computers which will enable me quick access to information.	108	37.5	123	37.8	47	16.3	10	3.5
8	I use the library for the purpose of making cheap photocopy	101	35.0	124	43.1	50	17.4	13	4.5
9	I use the library so that I can read daily newspapers	94	32.6	95	33.0	79	27.4	20	6.9
10	I use the library because the staff are friendly and ready to assist me in my research and assignment	93	32.3	128	44.4	57	19.8	20	6.9

Source: Field survey 2019

Table 3 above revealed that the majority of the respondents 184 (63.9%) claimed that they used library because of the conducive nature of the environment for learning, followed by 166 (57.6%) respondents who submitted that they use the library purposely to study for their assignments and exams, and 139 (48.6%) respondents claimed they used the library to have access to online reference materials.

### **Discussion of the findings**

The result of this study established that there are various library services available to users at Lagos State University library such as reference services, circulation services, and online services. The result of this finding supported Ishola and Olurotimi (2014) in a similar study in selected universities in South west Nigeria which revealed that reference services, circulation services, and online services were the most available library services rendered to the users in most universities in the South west, Nigeria. Also, the finding of the study supported the finding of Motiang, Wallis, and Karodia (2014) in a similar study at the University of Limpopo, South Africa, the study indicated that reference services, circulation services, and online services were rated as the most available services in the library to the university undergraduate students. In the same view, the finding of the study corroborated the finding of Bhattacharjee (2014) at Tripura University, India on the availability of library services. The finding indicates that reference services, circulation, and e-resources were the most available library services rendered in the university library.

The finding revealed that reference services are the most accessed library services. This supported the findings of Deng (2014) who indicated that many universities in India patronize university libraries mostly because of the quality of the reference materials in the reference section of the library. Similarly, Abdullahi and Mamza (2014) in a study in Nigeria indicated that reference services were the most accessible library services among students of the College of Agriculture, Maiduguri, and Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri, Nigeria. Sobel (2008) also affirmed that reference services were the most accessible services among undergraduates of the University of Colorado, Denver in the United States. This finding also supported the submission of Mairaj and Naseer (2013) that, library users at Punjab Institute of Cardiology, India used reference service mostly.

Another finding of the study revealed that the conducive nature of the library for effective teaching and learning is the main reason for using the library services in the university. This finding corroborated the findings of Tella and Ojo (2012) that many undergraduates use university libraries in Nigeria due to the conducive nature of the library particularly with the availability of various e-resources and internet services. The finding is also in consonance with Sriram and Rajev, (2014), who investigated the impact of academic library services on user satisfaction at Sur University, Oman, the result revealed that students used the university library because the library is very conducive for learning which encouraged them to engage in research activities.

**Conclusion** Primarily, this study revealed that there are various library services rendered in the university library such as reference services, circulation services, and online services. The library service that is mostly accessed in the library is the reference services. The major purpose of using library service is due to the conducive nature of the library for learning and research activities.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings the followings recommendations were made. The university management needs to provide more services for the library and the existing library services should be more useful by the students. More reference materials should be bought for the university library.

Also, more facilities should be put in the library such as air conditioners, reading tables and chairs, and a host of other facilities that will motivate more users to the library. The university management needs to make funds available for buying the necessary facilities that will make learning and research conducive for the users in the library.

The study contributes to knowledge by providing fresh data about the utilisation of library services in the university library. Based on the research knowledge it seems this study is the first of its kind that will examine the use of library particularly in the Lagos state university Lagos. The study also joined in the discussion on users' education.

The limitation of the study lies in the fact that the findings should not be generalized to other universities because of the limited of the population of the study. However, the study can be replicated in other universities in the country.

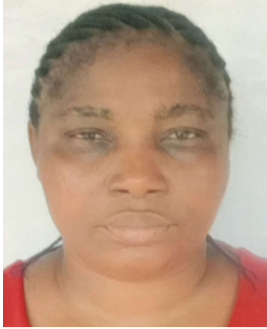
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