FACULTY AWARENESS AND USE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

S.O. Popoola
Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria
e-mail: drpopoolaso@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses faculty awareness and use of library information products and services in South-West Nigeria universities. Systematic random sampling method was used to select 446 faculty members from a population of 4,459 in the universities. A questionnaire formed the major instrument for data gathering. The response rate achieved was 89.7 percent and the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire used was 0.72. The study found that there was a significant difference in faculty awareness of available library information products and services. In addition, they did not have sufficient knowledge of those library products and services pertinent to their teaching and research activities. The survey also revealed that the level of knowledge of faculty staff had positive relationship with the frequency of use, consultation with the librarians, faculty status and membership of library related committees. User education programmes coupled with planned public relations were recommended to improve faculty awareness of library information products and services.

Keywords: Information sources and services; User awareness; Library usage; Academic libraries; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In realization of the significant role played by education in the economic re-engineering of a nation, the present public administration in Nigeria has decided to give much attention to the restoration of the education sector. Since the Nigerian economy is labour-intensive with low human development index, only sound education and training can ameliorate the problem. To produce highly skilled manpower for the economy, universities are set up to teach, research and offer community services. University administrators note that to achieve these major objectives, the establishment of libraries is unavoidable. It is through this that the information needs of the academic community specifically students, lecturers, administrators and other staff can be satisfactorily met. The management of university libraries in turn are aware that collection and organisation of printed and other forms of recorded knowledge would

enable them to satisfy the information needs of both present and future users. To this end, balanced collection development is aimed at facilitating the efficient and effective provision of information to the library clientele.

However, university libraries by their very nature are expected to acquire, process into retrievable form, and make available the much needed information to the academic community and the public at large who may require them for their various teaching and research activities. The accomplishment of this function depends on the available stock of information products in the university libraries. Such information products include textbooks, journals, indexes and abstracts, monographs, theses and dissertations, newspapers and magazines, government publications, research and technical reports, encyclopaedias, manuscripts, publications of international organisations, patents and standards as well as microforms.

Similarly, how well a university library is able to render effective information services such as lending, referral, microfilming, indexing and abstracting, current awareness, document delivery, photocopying, E-mail, facsimile, bindery, translation, consultancy, on-line database searching, user education, current contents listing, technical writing, selective dissemination of information and data processing has functional relation with the resources available at its disposal. Such library resources include the calibre of staff and their information handling skills, adequate finance, materials and availability of equipment for information acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination.

Nevertheless, information availability does not mean accessibility and utilisation. University libraries can stimulate primary demands for their products and services through functional library promotion programmes. The most popular promotion programmes adopted in African university libraries are study tours, orientation and user education. The inadequacy of these library promotion programmes in many African universities has been noted by some authors (Melum 1971; Ifidon 1988; Alema 1990; Zaki 1991). It is in the light of this that the researcher is interested in investigating faculty awareness and use of information products and services in South-West Nigerian universities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This study aims at achieving the following objectives:
   i)   To find out if there is any significant difference in faculty members' awareness of library information products and services;

ii)   To ascertain whether faculty status, membership of library committees, frequency of use of information products and services and frequency of consultations with the library personnel are independent of faculty awareness of library information products and services;

iii)   To determine sources used by faculty members to inform themselves about available information products and services in the library;

iv)   To find out the methods used by libraries in getting the faculty aware of the availability of information products and services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arif and Meadows (1994) reinterated that once users become aware of an information source, they tend to use it. The implication of this is that information sources which users are not aware of would be underutilised. Therefore, what is fundamental to library information provision is to create users' awareness. Hewin (1990) emphasized the need to design information provision mechanisms to increase usage. Belkin (1982) was of the opinion that users have a gap in their knowledge and so seek for information to bridge the gap. French (1990) observed that proliferation of information sources has made information provision a cumbersome task. He therefore advocated for speedy document delivery system and a greater need for partnership with users to shape collections for maximum satisfaction.

Consequently, the university library system must ensure closer relationship with its clientele and even among the library clientele themselves. To achieve this laudable goal, library personnel should provide specialized information services for which students and lecturers as well as other university community members should make contacts with the library. The university library staff, specifically the librarians, must realize that faculty staff and students are no longer necessary captive audiences. They must therefore be convinced of the significance of library information products and services to their work. The library personnel must continuously demonstrate that the information products and services they offer to their users are fully utilised. If faculty staff and students are to make maximum use of library information products and services and derive greater benefits therefore they must be informed of their availability and how these may be useful to their teaching and research activities.

Drake (1982) suggested that more personalised and specialised information services which will combine with analysis, synthesis and delivery in usable form is a must for an

information system like the university library. Also, Knapp (1996) in her study of a Liberal Arts college library, found a complete absence of amicability among faculty members and librarians. Poor communication between both groups was also noted to be the basic factor responsible for this indifference. Mugyabus (1999) indicated that user education is a device by librarians to educate users on how to use the library resources effectively and efficiently.

Nigerian university libraries have not been taking user education programme very serious as a means of stimulating the use of library information products and services. In view of the fact that the library is one of the university educational resources and it is a sophisticated information system, faculty staff and students can derive maximum benefit from it only if they are taught how to sharpen their information handling skills. Neelameghan (1985) posited that the scenario in many libraries in developing countries is under-utilisation of information sources and services, partly due to inadequacies in relation to user needs and partly due to the lack of or poor information marketing and user education efforts.

Moreover, Schumacher (1996) analysed a small college information system and found that the faculty appeared to be generally unaware of current library holdings and services and how best to utilise them. The library was therefore considered as not fulfilling the information needs of the faculty members and this resulted in little regard for the librarians and the library as a whole. Lawson (1969) also studied faculty use of two libraries in America and found that the information demands on them were limited and the services were under-utilised. This was caused by lack of knowledge of the existing provisions of information services in the studied libraries.

Okiy (2000) reported that students and faculty staff in Delta State university, Abraka, Nigeria made use of the book materials (newspapers, journals, textbooks, magazines, projects, dictionaries, encyclopeadias and government documents). Popoola, (2000) found that academic social scientists in the Nigerian universities utilised 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.

Kemoni (2002) studied the utilisation of archival information by researchers in the University of Nairobi, Kenya and found that they utilised maps and atlases, gazettes, theses and dissertations newspapers, statistical abstracts, video films, political record

books, journals and conference papers. Ojedokun and Owolabi (2003) investigated Internet access competence and use of Internet for teaching and research activities by University of Botswana academic staff and reported that the respondents used Internet facilities for literature searching and to improve their teaching of students. Ojo-ade and Jagboro (2000) found that academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria used subject catalogue in the library to locate and retrieve their needed information materials. Similarly, Nelson (1973) surveyed the degree of information communication between the librarians and faculty members in six institutions made up of colleges and universities in California U.S.A. on the availability of various reference services. He reported that communication was less than adequate and that faculty members were unaware of more than 50 percent of the reference services that were available.

Steel (1986) noted that there was also very little appreciation among the faculty of the skills applied by librarians and the high level of responsibility the job entails in the academic branch libraries in New York. Roberts (1995) also studied faculty knowledge among university faculty members of the services their libraries provide. It is therefore imperative that university library personnel publicise their information products and services among the faculty member to arouse their interests in patronizing the library and use the resources therein.

METHODOLOGY
A descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. The study population comprised 4,459 faculty members in the 9 universities of South-West, Nigeria (Table 1). A systematic random sampling method was also used. Every 10th members was included in the samples. A total of 446 faculty members was randomly selected. Two hired and trained postgraduate students administered a self developed questionnaire on them. Out of this number, 400 responded giving a response rate of 89.7 percent. The reliability coefficient of the instrument used was (a = 0.72) based on the Cronbach alpha method.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Of the 400 respondents, 250 (62.59%) were males while the rest 150 (37.5%) were females. The overwhelming majority of them, that is 315 (78.8%) were between the age-group 35-54 years. In addition, their mean age was (X = 42.5, S.D. = 10.2) years. The

study found that their mean length of service in the university to be (X = 15.8. S.D. = 4.5) years. This implies that this crop of university teaching staff are experienced teachers, having more active years to spend in the service of their respective universities. Also, their academic qualifications ranged between masters degree to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). To determine if there is any significant difference in the faculty awareness of the 14 identifiable information products and 18 information services that are peculiar to library work in any university system, the analysis of variance technique was used. It is a method for splitting the total variation of the observed data into meaningful components that measure different sources of variation. It is also used to test for the equality of several means simultaneously. In this regard, the respondents were asked to rate the awareness of their library information products and services on a 5-point Likert scale 5 = sufficiently aware and 1 = not sufficiently aware.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by University of work

University	Population	Sample size	Number that Responded
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	1,137	113	110
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	1,327	132	117
University of Lagos, Lagos	675	68	60
Federal University of Technology, Akure	184	18	18
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	156	16	16
Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye	269	27	25
Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti	226	23	23
Lagos State University, Ojoo, Lagos	278	28	20
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso	207	21	21
Total	**4,459**	**446**	**400**

From the analysis in Table 2, it was found that there was a significance difference in the faculty awareness of library information products (F = 11.763, df = 13; 125, P < 0.05) and services (F = 8.544, df = 17; 144, P < 0.05) in the South-West universities in Nigeria. Further investigation was done by using the multiple pairwise comparison test to find out those information products and services available in the libraries that faculty members had more knowledge of. These include textbooks, photocopying, microfilming, bindery, government publications, newspapers/magazines, reference,

lending, on-line database searching, E-mail services, user education, technical writing, encyclopedias, and publications of international organisations. One can then deduce that faculty members in the south-west Nigeria universities do not have sufficient knowledge of library information products and services that are pertinent to their teaching and research activities. Such information products and services are journals, monographs, research and technical reports, indexes and abstracts, theses and dissertations and patents and standards; current awareness, selective dissemination of information, current contents listings translations, indexing and abstracting, documents delivery and data processing.

Table 2: ANOVA(one-way) showing faculty awareness of library information product and services in the studied universities

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F-Ratio	Sig. P
Between Information Products	13	9,556	735.077	11.763	0.028
Error	112	6,999	62.491		
Total	**125**	**16,555**			
Between Information Services	17	7,248	426.353	8.544	0.017
Error	144	5,689	49.904		
Total	**161**	**12,937**			

Table 3 depicts the rank order of means awareness scores of respondents by faculty status. One could notice an upward trend in the mean awareness scores of the respondents as they move across the faculty ranks. Using the Minimum Variance Unbiased Estimate Criterion (MVUE) which is based on the concept of best statistics, and since those on the Professorship, Readership and Senior Lectureship grades had highest mean awareness scores with minimum variance scores. This shows that they are sufficiently aware of the library available information products and services. The survey also revealed that of the 275 respondents on the grades of Lecturer I, Lecturer II and Assistant Lecturer, 77 (28%) of them were sufficiently aware of the information products and services available in their university libraries. This is perhaps, due to their interaction with the library on regularly basis. Therefore, the library management in the studied university should embark on outreach programmes targeting junior faculty members. It is sad to find that some written correspondences meant to get the faculty members aware of the library information products and services were sent through the heads of department, who happen to be among the senior faculty members

(Professors, Readers and Senior Lecturers). In fact, they are the ones more likely to have full knowledge of the library information products and services.

Table 3: Rank order of mean awareness scores of information products and services of respondents by faculty status

Status	N	X	SD	S^2
Professor	25	4.96	0.44	0.194
Reader	40	4.88	0.68	0.462
Senior Lecturer	60	4.80	9.96	0.922
Lecturer I	93	3.95	1.25	1.563
Lecturer II	115	2.78	1.18	1.392
Assistant Lecturer	67	2.45	1.13	1.277
Overall	**400**	**3.97**	**1.05**	**1.103**

Nevertheless, faculty members serving on library-related committees had a mean awareness score (x = 4.98, S.D. = 0.13) while the non-serving members had a mean awareness (X = 1.93, S.D. = 0.08). This implies that faculty's interaction with library personnel, specifically with the librarians, has positively influenced their level of awareness of the information products and services available in the libraries. Library management in Nigerian universities should capitalize on this and promote this kind of interaction so as to market their information products and services.

From Table 4, it can be obviously seen that 100 (25%), 90 (33.5%) and 210(52.5%) of the respondents most frequently, occasionally and rarely used their library information products and services respectively. The 190 (47.5%) respondents who had rarely used the library information products and services were not aware of it. Those who were fully aware but occasionally used it claimed that the libraries lacked current materials and good customer relations. This response points to the need for library management to constantly update their collections and weed it. It is equally important that they improve their customer relations, acquire new materials and offer services that are relevant to the needs of the faculty staff as well as students. Thus, the study confirmed a statistically significant relationship between the level of use and faculty awareness of the library products and services (X^2 = 215.364, df = 2, P < 0.05). It is therefore imperative on the library management surveyed to increase the level of use of their information products and services. Library exhibitions seminars and workshops, user club, user awards night, documentary programmes on the television and radio and

users counseling could be adopted to improve the faculty awareness and use of the library products and services.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by level of awareness and frequency of use of library information products and services

Level of Awareness	Level of Awareness		Total	%
Level of Use	Fully Aware	Not Aware		
Most frequently	90(13.3)	10(68.18)	100	25.0
Occasionally	15(28.1)	75(61.8)	90	33.5
Rarely	20(65.6)	190(144.4)	210	52.5
Total	**125**	**275**	**400**	**100**

The study also found that the mean awareness score of faculty members on library available information products and services increased with their frequency of consultations with the librarians. Those faculty members who had consulted the librarians at the minimal rate of 15-25 times per academic year had a mean awareness score (X = 4.98, S.D. = 0.17). In contrast, those who had never consulted with a librarian had a mean score (X = 1.25, S.D. = 0.42). This finding has a significant implication for the library management because it shows the importance of communication links between librarians and the users. To increase the frequency of use of library available information products and services by faculty staff, librarians should endeavour to make personal contact with them and provide useful information to them about the library. Library authorities can create primary demand for their products and services through the adoption of this method.

The four commonly suggested methods by which the library could get the faculty members informed of its products and services in the studied universities were Bulletin/Newsletters (80%), user education programme (75%), meetings/social interactions (68.8%), and contacts/public relations 67.5% (Table 5). This means that apart from Bulletin/Newsletters, the respondents had a strong preference for oral sources of information for their awareness of library information products and services. This finding is contrary to that of Roberts (1995) who reported that faculty members at the University of West Indies favoured the written and traditional sources of information as means of getting them informed about library information products and services.

Table 5: Rank order distribution of respondents by suggested methods of libraries informing them about their products and services

Methods Suggested	Frequency	%
Bulletin/Newsletter	320	80.0
User education programme	300	75.0
Meetings/Social interactions	275	68.8
Contracts/public relations	270	67.5
Displayed list of products/services	180	45.0
Annual brochure/report	100	25.0
Online access to library database	65	16.3
Telephone	50	12.5

Respondents were also asked to indicate the sources of information they used to get informed about available information products and services in their university libraries. The results obtained were presented in Table 6. Colleagues, personal experiences, signs/notice in the library, library correspondence and librarians were the major sources used by the faculty members to inform themselves about the availability of library information products and services in the studied universities.

Table 6: Rank order of distribution of respondents by sources used to inform themselves about the library information products and services

Sources used	Frequency	%
Colleagues	380	95
Personal experiences	340	85
Signs/notices in the library	320	80
Library correspondence	300	75
Librarians	240	60
Displayed list of products/services	200	50
Library handbook	180	45
Annual library report	160	40
Library committee	120	30
Library orientation	100	25

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping balanced collection development has been the major headache of the library management in Nigerian universities due to low budget allocation, as well as high inflation and currency exchange rate. It is equally important that library management matches the needs of users, specifically faculty staff and students to the available

information products and services. How can the university library achieve its goal of information provision for teaching and research without raising awareness of the faculty staff about it products and services?

This study found that there is significant difference in faculty awareness of the library information products and services in the surveyed universities. There was an upward trend in the mean awareness scores of the respondents using the information services and products and membership of library related committees and significant positive relationship with faculty awareness of available library information products and services. It is therefore recommended that library management in Nigerian universities, specifically the south-west zone, to create faculty awareness about the available information products and services. This could be done through planned public relations programmes, library weeks, study tours, user education programmes, library exhibitions, organisation of seminars, symposia and workshops, library awards night, librarian making contact with the faculty staff and improve communication links with the latter. The library must constantly update and weed its outdated and non-useful collections.

References

Alema, A.A. 1990. User education University Academic Libraries in Ghana. *Education Libraries Journal,* Vol. 33, no.1: 40-47.

Arif, M. and Meadows. A.K.J. 1994. The Provision of Information to industry: A comparative Study of Saudi Arabia and U.K. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science.* Vol. 26, no. 1: 29-34.

Belkin. N.J. 1984. Cognitive Models and Information Transfer. *Social Science Information Studies,* Vol. 4, no. 2 & 3: 111-129.

Drake, M.A. 1982. Information Management and Special Librarianship. *Special Libraries*, Vol. 73, no. 4: 225-237.

French, B.A. 1990. User needs and Library Services in Agricultural Science. *Library Trends*. Vol. 38, no. 3: 415-441;

Ifidon, S.E. 1988. Measuring Use and None-use of Bibliographic Resources in Libraries. Paper presented at the *Annual Seminar of the Academic Research Libraries Section of the Nigerian Library Association*, University of Jos. 31 Oct-Nov., p. 38

Kemoni, H.N. 2002. The utilization of Archival information by researchers in Kenya: A case study of the university of Nairobi. *African Journal of Library, Archives and information Science*, Vol. 12, no. 21: 69-80.

Knapp, P.A. 1966. *The Monteith College Library Experiment*. Scarecrow. New York, NY, p. 30-32

Lawson, A.V. 1969. *Reference Service in University Libraries: Two case studies*, Dissertation. University of Columbia, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, p.293

Melum, V.V. 1971. Library Orientation in the College and University. *Wilson Library Bulletin,* Vol. 46, no. 1: 29-38

Mugyabus. J.F.L. 1999. User Education and Information Skills. A Need for a Systematic Programme in African University Libraries. *African journal of Library Archives and Information Science,* Vol. 9, no.2: 129-141

Neelameghan, A. 1985. User Orientation in Library and Information Studies Curriculum: Some Aspects with Special Reference to Developing Countries. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science*, Vol. 10, no.1: 53-65

Nelson, J. 1973. Faculty awareness and attitudes toward academic library reference services: a measure of communication. *College and Research Libraries*, Vol. 34, no. 5: 271

Ojo-ade, C.O. and Jagboro, K.O. 2000. Subject catalogue use at the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. *African Journal of library, Archives and Information Sciences*, Vol. 10, no.2: 177-186.

Ojedokun, A.A. and Owolabi, A.A. 2003. Internet Access competence and the use of internet for teaching and research activities by university of Botswana academic staff. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science,* Vol. 13, no.1: 43-53

Okiy, R.B. 2000. Assessing students and faculty use of academic libraries: The case of Delta State University Library, Abraka. *Nigerian Journal of Library and Information Service*, Vol. 4: 52-60.

Popoola, S.O. 2000. The use of information products and services in social science research in Nigerian universities. *African Journal for the Psychological study of Social Issues*, Vol. 5, no.2: 296-308.

Roberts, J.M. 1995. Faculty Knowledge About Library Services at the University of West Indies. New *Library World*, Vol. 96, no.119: 14-23

Schumacher, A. 1996. *A Small College Information System: An Analysis and Recommendations*. Hamline University St. Paul, MN, p. 111-112;

Steel, R.A. 1996. Academic Branch Libraries Relations with Local Faculty, In Simonton, W. (ed). *Advances in Librarianship*. Vol. 14, Academic Press. New York. NY

Zaki, N. 1991.User Education in Nigerian Universities: The need for New Approaches. *International Library Movement*, Vol. 13, no. 1: 27-43.