Public Servants' Use and Evaluation of Public Library Resources and services in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Public library is meant to serve the needs of all and sundry in the society without any bias. This study examined the use of public library by public servant in Ogun State. The main objective of this study was to find out the level at which the public servants use the public library in Ogun State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and simple random sampling techniques was used to select two thousand one hundred (2100) respondents (Public Servants) in Ogun State. The state has nineteen (19) ministry with staff strength of twenty one thousand (21000). Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, and Statistical Package in Social Science (SPSS) was used to compute the data gathered. Descriptive statistics with tables of frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that most of the public servants did not register with public library in the state. It was further revealed that the little percentage of the public servants that make use of the library are satisfied with most of their services, with the exception of internet access, computer and printing which services are relatively poor. It was recommended that orientation programs such as seminars and workshops on the usefulness of public library services should be organized to enlighten the public servants.

Keywords: Public Libraries, Public Servants, Library Service, Use, Evaluation

Introduction

Public libraries are libraries that are accessible by general public and are generally funded from public sources, such as taxes.' There are five fundamental characteristics shared public libraries. The first is that they are generally supported by taxes: they are governed by a board to serve the public interest; they are open to all and every community member can access the collection; they are entirely voluntary in that no one is every forced to use the services provided and; they provide basic services without charge. In the words of Olanlokun and Salisu (1993) public libraries set up to provide free but traditional "service to everyone". A public library serves the community and is generally referred to as a layman's library or

university. The library is a service-oriented institution with set goals to be achieved within the resources made available by the parent institution; usually the government. Public libraries are non-profit organizations, established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. In addition to the free services rendered by Public library it also provides educational, social and political information to people in a particular community. According to Parvathamma and Reddy (2009), public libraries have been noted to improve literacy through various information and education services they rendered. They are also well known to stimulate imaginative thoughts and expand personal horizons while making the empowerment of citizen, and provision of access to a common cultural heritage. People in all works of life use the public library resources, facilities and services. Such users are pupils, students, teachers, scholars, scientists, business executives and public servants. These categories of people turn to public libraries to satisfy their desire for knowledge or to obtain materials for some kind of leisure-time activities. A library may meet user's information needs by acquiring, organizing and making available relevant information resources that will satisfy the users' needs. Lawal and Udofia (1994) opined that, library meets the information needs of the users in the following four categories Education, Information, aesthetic and recreation.

The focus of this study is to investigate the use of library services by public servants in Ogun State. The significance of the study is hinged on the hope that the findings of this study will provide some insights to the librarians and information professionals about information environment of the public users and the necessary actions to be taken by the public library policy makers to improve the services that will promote the effective use of the public library by the public servants.

Statement of Problem

The Ogun State public library is meant to provide services to the people in the state, public servant inclusive. Using the library can be determined by many factors which may vary from the attitude of the users to attitude of the librarian, availability and accessibility of library resources that will satisfy user's quest for information. The patronage of public servant in use of the public library in Ogun State is not that encouraging going by the study of (Simisaye (2009). The study discovered that most of the registered members were secondary school students and primary school pupils. Ever since this study had been carried out there has not been any study on the improvement on usage of library services by the public servant

in Ogun State. Based on this fact, this study intends to fill this gap and bring out the factors hindering the use of the library by public servant in Ogun State.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the level at which the public servants use the public library in Ogun State.

The specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the purpose of using the library by the public servant
2. To find out the factor hindering the use of the library by public servant
3. To determine the factor that are likely to promote the use of the library by public servants

Research question

1. For which purpose does the public servant in Ogun State use the public library?
2. What are the factor hindering the use of public library by public servants?
3. What factors are likely to promote the use of library by public servants?

Literature Review

Public libraries play fundamental roles in providing public servants with free and open access to knowledge, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. They serve as conduits of timely information, equipping their users with lifelong learning and literacy skills such that are empowered to positively shape the future of their societies, (IFLA, 2003). Many scholars have in various ways described precisely the role of the public libraries. Muhammed, (2006) cited in Akinola, et al (2013) stated that the public library is concerned with the refreshment of man's spirit by the provision of books for relaxation and pleasure. He further stated that the public library, through various forms of activities such as indexing, abstracting and classification is able to group multiple and interdisciplinary nature of knowledge into logical arrangement so that communities use the materials without difficulties. Traditionally, libraries have been key providers of information. They are considered learned institutions, equipped with treasures of knowledge which are maintained, organized and managed by trained personnel top educate children, men and women continuously and to assist in their self-improvement through an effective and prompt dissemination of the information embodied in the resources, (Islam, 2004). Public libraries facilitate access to information by

all, serving people from all walks of life no matter who they are, and public servants are one of their most important patrons.

The study of Obinyan, et al (2011) revealed that the majority of the people using the public libraries in rural areas are mostly male students and youths. The use of reading room and references service takes the lead among the resources and services. The study also revealed that retirees and government workers use the libraries mainly to read newspaper and magazines. Saleh and Lasisi, (2011) in their study of Assessment of Public Library Services in north Eastern Nigeria found out that some basic public library services such as bibliographic services, indexing and abstracting, adult and continuing education are not provided by majority of the Libraries. Out of the seven services recommended by the IFLA/UNESCO (2001), only three are offered by the libraries. For public libraries to be relevant in the 21st century, they must provide a range of services to satisfy their user's needs as the provision of adequate services will increase the users' usage of the public library. Access to information resources and services within the larger society cannot be achieved without involving public libraries because they "are one of the building blocks of the local information and knowledge infrastructure" (Tise, 2000). In order to promote the use of library by public servant, Simisaye, (2009) studied Materials acquisition and use in Simeon Adebo Public Library, Abeokuta, Ogun State and recommends that there is need for library to step up reading awareness campaign for stimulation of reading and library usage among the general public in Abeokuta and its environs. This campaign should be taken to schools; primary and secondary schools; civil servants, market places and higher institutions in the areas the library serves.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has an important role to place in the services provided in public library to promote users patronage. To this end many research work have been conducted on the availability of ICT facilities in public library. .a survey was conducted by Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (n.d.) where it was revealed that there are 316 Public Libraries in Nigeria with 596 qualified Librarians. In general many of the Libraries lack the necessary ICT facilities to provide quality service delivery in the information society. The Councils recommends that Librarians in Public Libraries be adequately trained to use ICT facilities. This will increase traffic in Public Libraries which is the "people's university". Lack of ICT infrastructure development and poor funding have been identified as problems, followed by poor ICT skills among staff (Oduwole, 2005; Adedoyin 2005), and followed by poor ICT skills among staff. According to Nwokocha (2010), lack of funds is one of the biggest problems libraries face and this hinders

the development of public libraries. Ajibero (2000) attributes this to economic conditions, government attitude, and inadequate information infrastructure.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted.' This is because the study involves gathering the views of several public servants in Ogun State Ministries. This enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data on how often the public servant visit the library, make use of library resources and services provided for their use, the level to which the users are satisfied with the resources, and factors hindering their library patronage. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was self-developed and it has five sections. It contained questions on purpose, importance, the availability of resources and services and their reason for not using the library. Copies of the questionnaire used for data collection were randomly administered on the respondent at the Ogun State Public service secretariat. The administration of the questionnaire was made solely by the researcher. A total of 2100 questionnaire were administered while 2016 questionnaires were retrieved and were found usable. The respondents were assured that their responses will be treated as confidential and used for academic purposes only. Data collected was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Finding and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

		Gender	Age	Marital Status	Academic Qualification	Grade Level	Working Experience
N	Valid	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

Gender Distribution of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	672	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Female	1344	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

The total of respondents were 672 male which represent 33.3% of the sample frame and 1344 female which represent 66.7% of the sample frame.

Age range of the Respondents		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	21 – 40	840	41.7	41.7	41.7
	41 – 60	1176	58.3	58.3	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

The Numbers of respondents between the age range of 21 to 40 years and 41 to 60 years were 840 (41/7%) and 1176 (58.3%) respectively.

Distribution of the Respondents by Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Married	1848	91.7	91.7	91.7
	Single	168	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

1848 of the respondents were married while 168 were single; that is 91.7% and 8.3% of the respondents respectively.

Academic Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	OND/NCE	420	20.8	20.8	40.8
	BSc.	1596	79.2	79.2	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

420 (20%) of the respondents had OND/NCE certificate, and 1596 (79.2%) had BSc certificate. This implies that most of the respondents were elite. That can make rational decision.

Respondents Salary Grade Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Grade 4 – 7	336	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Grade 8 – 10	1176	58.3	58.3	75.0
	12 and above	504	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

366 of the respondents were on grade level 4 to 7, which is 16.7%, of the sample frame, 1176 were on grade level 8 to 10, which is 58.3% of the sample frame and 504 on grade level 12 and above which represent 25% of the sample frame.

Working Experience of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0 – 5 years	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	6 – 10 years	1344	66.7	66.7	75
	11 – 15 years	420	20.8	20.8	95.8
	16 – 20 years	84	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

The working experiences were 168 respondents for 0 to 5 years which is 8.3% of the sample frame, 1344 for 6 to 10 years which is 66.7% of the sample frame, 420 respondents for 11 to 15 years which is 20.8% of the sample frame and 84 respondents for 16 to 20 years representing 4.2 of the sample frame.

Do you have a Library Membership Card?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	924	45.8	45.8	45.8
	No	1092	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

924 of the respondents had library membership card this represent 45.5% of the sample frame while 1092 did not have library membership card and it represent 54.2 of the sampling frame.

How often do you visit Public Library?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Daily	420	20.8	20.8	20.8
	Weekly	1092	54.2	54.2	75.0
	None of the above	508	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

420 of the respondents visited the public library daily, which represent 20.8% of the sampling frame, 1092 respondents visited the library weekly, which represent 54.2% of the sampling frame and 508 which is 25% of the respondents choose none of the above.

Respondents' reason for using the Library?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	To relax	672	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Use Internet	84	4.2	4.2	37.5
	To access and print materials that will aid job efficiency	168	8.3	8.3	45.8
	To seek Reference Librarian assistance on job performance	84	4.2	4.2	50.0
	To read books in the library	840	41.7	41.7	91.7
	To borrow books in the library	168	8.3	8.3	100.00
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

33.3% of the respondents visited the library to relax, 4.2% visited the library to use the internet, 8.3% visited to access print materials for their job performance, 41.7% visited the library to read books in the library, while 8.3% visited the library to borrow books.

Current Awareness Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		84	4.2	4.2	4.2
	0	168	8.3	8.3	12.5
	Very Important	336	16.7	16.7	29.2
	Important	1260	62.5	62.5	91.7
	Somewhat Important	168	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Note 0 (zero) implies missing value

Current awareness services is found to be important as it carries 62.5% of the respondent's opinion on how to improve the library services.

Rating of the Library Collections by the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	84	4.2	4.2	4.2
	Excellent	672	33.3	33.3	37.5
	Good	1008	50.0	50.0	87.5
	Fair	168	8.3	8.3	95.8
	Not Applicable	84	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

It was discovered that the library collection is good as it carried 50% of the respondents' opinion.

Rating of the Reference Services in the Library

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Excellent	588	29.2	29.2	37.5
	Good	924	45.8	45.8	83.3
	Fair	336	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Reference services of the public library were found to be effective, as there is 29.2% excellent and 45.8% good response from the respondents. This carries 75% of the opinion of the respondents.

Internet Access

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Excellent	252	12.5	12.5	20.8
	Good	672	13.3	13.3	54.1
	Fair	336	16.7	16.7	70.8
	Poor	336	16.7	16.7	87.5
	Not Applicable	252	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Internet access to the public library was not up to average to satisfy the users' need as it carries 33.3% good response of the respondents.

Computer and Printing Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Excellent	84	4.2	4.2	12.5
	Good	840	41.7	41.7	54.2
	Fair	504	25.0	25.0	79.2
	Poor	168	8.3	8.3	87.5
	Not Applicable	252	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Computer and printing services covers 41.7% good response, which is not up to average.

Photocopies Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Excellent	588	29.2	29.2	37.5
	Good	504	425.0	425.0	62.5
	Fair	420	20.8	20.8	83.3
	Poor	84	4.2	4.2	87.5
	Not Applicable	252	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Photocopies services had 29% excellent, 25% good and 20.8% fair. Since the addition of excellent and good result is more than average of the respondent, it implies that the photocopies services of the public library were effective.

Newspaper

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	252	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Excellent	588	29.2	29.2	41.7
	Good	924	45.8	45.8	87.5
	Fair	84	4.2	4.2	91.7
	Not Applicable	168	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Newspaper services had 45.8% good of the respondent and 29.2% excellent; the addition of these is 75% which indicated that the newspaper services are good.

Hours of Operation/Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	252	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Excellent	420	20.8	20.8	33.3
	Good	840	41.7	41.7	75.0
	Fair	252	12.5	12.5	87.5
	Not Applicable	252	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Hours of operation, have 41.7% good and 20.8% excellent, it implies that the hours of operation was good.

The Library Staff are not friendly

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	168	8.3	8.3	8.3
	Strongly Agree	420	20.8	20.8	29.1
	Agree	84	4.2	4.2	33.3
	Strongly Disagree	252	12.5	12.5	45.8
	Disagree	840	41.7	41.7	87.5
	Undecided	252	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

Only 20.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that the library staff were not friendly, while 12.5% strongly disagree and 41.7% disagree. This is an indication that the library staff somehow contributed to public servant unwillingness to visiting the library.

The Library is not Conducive for Reading

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	252	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Strongly Agree	168	8.3	8.3	20.8
	Agree	420	20.8	20.8	41.6
	Strongly Disagree	84	4.2	4.2	45.8
	Disagree	1092	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

The library was found to be conducive for reading as 54.2% of the respondents disagreed with the library not conducive for reading.

I am always distracted when reading in the Library

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	0	336	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	252	12.5	12.5	29.2
	Strongly Disagree	252	12.5	12.5	41.7
	Disagree	1176	58.3	58.3	100.0
	Total	2016	100.0	100.0	

58.3% of the respondents disagreed with the claim of being distracted when reading in the library.

Discussion

The respondents consist of 2016 public servant in Ogun State Ministry. .distribution of the respondents by gender revealed that female has the highest population. Majority of the respondents were between the age ranges of 41 to 60 years. Larger percentage of the respondents was married. Majority of the respondents had BSc. Certificate. This implies that most of the respondents were elite and they can make rational decision. Respondents on

grade level 8 to 10 had the highest percentage. Most of the respondents had 6 to 10 years working experience. It was revealed that majority of the respondents do not register with the library, those that registered with the library visited the library weekly.

Based on the findings of this study it was discovered that the population of the public servants that used the library services had not improved as this go in line with the study of Simisaye (2009) on Materials Acquisition and Use in Simeon Adebo Public Library, Abeokuta, Ogun State. It was discovered that the patronage of Public servants using the public library in Ogun State is not that encouraging, that most of the registered members were secondary school students and primary school pupils. It was also revealed that even the public servants from the education sector who needs the services of the public library are not really patronizing the library for their job performance. They merely visit the library basically to read newspapers and magazines. This was in line with the study of Obinyan et al (2011) which submitted that government workers use the libraries mainly to read newspapers and magazines.

The study also revealed that the public servants that use the public library are satisfied with the services of the public library which include provisions of books, reference services among others. This finding contradicted the study of Uddin, Quaddus and Islam (2006) in Bangledesh public libraries which submitted that users were not satisfied with the reference services, community information and recreation services of the public libraries. Furthermore, Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) conducted a study on public library information resources, facilities, and services: user satisfaction with the Edo State Central Library, Benin-City, Nigeria. The study revealed that the absence of relevant information resources such as textbooks, fiction and non-fiction, references books, audio-visual information resources among others have negative effect on the user's satisfaction.

Muhammed, 92006) cited in Akinola et el. (2013) that the public library is concerned the refreshment of man's spirit by the provision of books for relaxation and pleasure. It was revealed that current awareness services are important to improve the library services. The library collection is averagely rated by the respondents. Furthermore, it was revealed that reference services of the public library are found to be very effective. While it was also revealed in the study that internet access, computer and printing services of the public library were poor. Though there was a functional and effective photocopies service. It was revealed that the library staffs are less friendly, this is an indication that the library staff rarely contributed to public servants willingness to visiting the library. This finding is in line with Awana (2007) who opined that the friendly disposition of public library staff, their

willingness to assist users to get needed materials will enhance the users' satisfaction with library services which will definitely encourage and increase users' patronage though the library environment was conducive for reading.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Libraries have been key providers of information. The public libraries are established in order to support the community's educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs. It is a service-oriented institution with set goals to be achieved within the resources made available by the parent institution usually the government. By so doing it will amount to wastage if these resources provided are not adequately utilized, especially by the public servants. This calls for necessary action to be taken by stakeholders in public sectors and public library to advocate the usefulness of public libraries services among the public servants. As this will not only contribute to their job performance but till also keep them abreast of current information that may likely promote the development of their immediate environment, the State and Country as a whole.

Going by the findings of the study it was discovered that majority of the public servants are not registered members of the public library, with this reason:

1. Enlightenment programs such as seminars and workshops on the usefulness of public library services should be organized to enlighten the public servants on the various benefits they could derive by using the public library services.

2. The internet, computer and printing services of the public library should be improved in other to promote the use of public library service among the public servants.

3. Necessary actions that will advocate the usefulness of library services by the public servants should be taken by stakeholders both in public libraries and public sector.

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