

CHALLENGES OF EFFECTIVE USE OF CIRCULATION SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to examine the challenges association with academic library in the use of circulation services in federal polytechnic libraries in North east Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to find out the services provided to users by the circulation, to ascertain whether the users are satisfied with the services, to determine the problems encounter in the use of circulation unit of the library. The study adopted survey research. The population of this study comprised all registered library users and staff of Federal Polytechnics in North- Eastern States of Nigeria. Out of the 5 Federal Polytechnics in North-Eastern States, Muhammad Wabi library Federal Polytechnic Bauchi was selected randomly based on the Morgan sampling table. Then, from 950 library users in Muhammad Wabi library Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, simple random sampling technic was used to select 95 library users and among the library staff, simple random sampling technique was used to 43 staff. Out of this sample, only 78 and 36 respondents returned the questionnaire respectively. Three research questions were used raised for the study. A survey research method was used for the study and Circulation Services Questionnaire (CSQ) of reliability coefficient of 0.78 was the instrument used for the collection. Data was analyzed using simple statistical methods (frequency and percentage). The major findings of the study revealed the most common services provided to the section is lending service, registration of the user, and inter-library loan and the service identified relevant to the need of users, inadequate funds are the major problem of the section, other problems are inadequate awareness, staffing, over population, lack of facilities and overdue cases. The strategy for improving the services in the section is library

management support. Majority of the respondent are satisfied with the services of the section and the results of the findings show that the services are helpful to the research and learning activities of the users also, the challenges encountered in the section are inadequate staffing, lack of awareness and absence of online circulation service. This research concludes that the most common services provided by the library under study are lending service, registration of users and inter-library loan and majority of the responses showed that these services as significant to the need of users. The study recommends that the more financial support is required to boost the activities of the section, there is a need to promote awareness the activities of the section among users, circulation staff needs to improve on their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills, to more with the emerging changes, circulation services and other library services need to be automated.

Keywords: Circulation Services, Academic Library, federal Polytechnics, North East Nigeria.

Introduction

Circulation is one of the four units (circulation /reserve, reference, documents and thesis) under readers services division of the library (Adeoti- Adekeye, W.B, etal (2013). It is one of the key departments of the library. Asogwa (2008), Oderindie (1999) in Nwengbu (2004) attributed impediments to library (circulation) services to increase in the information needs of users without corresponding increase or provision of modern facilities. Library circulation perform duty that has to do with registration new members, issues of borrower's cards and renew membership cards, issue and receipt of reading materials, to and from the members only, collects delay fines for overdue books, informs the members about reading material reservation, settles cases regarding the books lost or damage by the members, prepares defaulter list and sends them to the heads of the concerned teaching departments to detain their roll numbers till they clear their accounts with the library, issues the clearance certificate, check incoming and outgoing materials thoroughly, helps the library users in finding the required materials and guides them in the use of library catalogue, shelves the reading material on the racks that had been retuned by borrowers and taken from the shelves for reading, keeps statistics daily transaction and carries out annual stock taking and finalizes missing lists.

Furthermore, circulation section has introduced computerized system for proper record keeping. Now that computer facility is available library circulation has been automated to utilize the library cards with barcodes that uniquely identify an individual borrower and check items in or out against the library cards. Each item in the library also has a barcode that is scanned when it is check out or returned, eliminating the need to look up each borrower and item individually. According to living in the library world (2008) the history of circulation system reflects changes in technology over the past 100 years. While early circulation system where manually requiring library staff to record and file information by hand, later system began to take advantage of technologies such as photography and punch cards that automated some circulation functions. The advent of computer and more recently the microcomputer has meant that libraries could develop fully automated circulation systems. Circulation units deal with lending of reading material to library members for their use outside the library. Lending of books is one of the best-known functions of a library to promote the use of library collection. However, the number of books to be given on loan and period of retention of books depend on various factors including individual policy of the library.

The major role of academic library is to provide quickly the resources users need for teaching learning, recreation and research. For that mission, the readers/public services division in federal polytechnics in North east Nigerian academic libraries is the maker's image maker and the public relations outfit of the libraries. It is a place where staff and the patrons have direct or face-face interactions. As the hallmark of library services, circulation desk is the point where search, borrowing return and renewal of the books; photocopy, overdue penalty, user's clearance and much more functions are carried out at the circulation desk. Various studies found that lack of skills in the use of library among fresh men constitute obstacles to their effective use of library (circulation).

Harris & Bunden- Ellis (2013) acknowledge that the reason why users are not aware of available resources and services in the library was not only that they did not care about acquiring knowledge of the use of library, but also because they do not obtain adequate information on the services and resources available. For that reason, they believed that it may be services difficult to ascertain the level of users' satisfaction with the services they obtained in the circulation section.

Library Circulation or library lending comprises the activities around the lending of the library books and other material to user of a lending library. A circulation lending department is one of the key departments of the library. (Mittal, 2007) circulation department comprises the activities around the lending of the library books and then material to users of a lending library.

According to Oguntoke (2015), a library circulation system is a database management system programmed that is used in a library for an easy use of addition of books, borrowers, issue date, returned date, fine payment. it is done through database programmed so, to gives a good interface to the operative user and safe database for the storage of data like books and borrowers.

The main public services the circulation desk or loan desk, usually found near the main entrance of a library. It provides lending services and facilities for returned or loan items. Renewal of materials and payments of fines are also handled at the circulation desk. Circulation staffs are expected to provide basic search and reference services. Through more in-dept. Questions are usually referred to reference librarian at the library reference desk. it is of a paramount that circulation section is one of the backbones of the library. Thousands of lecturers and students of federal polytechnics in North east Nigerian library every year come here for enlighten, this means that this section has a unique role for providing the latest information to readers. Hence it has been easy to send defaulter/miscellaneous correspondence well in time which even dentally will improve in the long run. Library circulation perform duty that has to do with registration new members, issues of

borrower's cards and renew membership cards, issue and receipt of reading materials, to and from the members only, collects delay fines for overdue books, informs the members about reading material reservation, settles cases regarding the books lost or damage by the members, prepares defaulter list and sends them to the heads of the concerned teaching departments to detain their roll numbers till they clear their accounts with the library, issues the clearance certificate, check incoming and outgoing materials thoroughly, helps the library users in finding the required materials and guides them in the use of library catalogue, shelves the readig material on the racks that had been retuned by borrowers and taken from the shelves for reading, keeps statistics daily transaction and carries out annual stock taking and finalizes missing lists.

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to be given on loan and period of retention of books depend on various factors including individual policy of the library. Epginlibnet (2021)

Academic libraries are said to be forefront of providing information services to their respective communities which comprises of students, lecturers and researchers in order to support their teaching, learning and research needs, scholars have emphasized on crucial role of academic libraries in research and Scholarship in institutions of higher of learning. Many a times Academic libraries are referred to as heart or nerve of centers of institutions of higher learning where all academic activities revolved and the circulation section is the heart of academic library.

Academic libraries are libraries established in tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics and higher colleges, with sole purpose of providing resources to support teaching, research and learning including preservation and access to knowledge and information, alongside supporting the objectives of their parent institutions. However, they can do more than supporting teaching and learning, and even foster research, teaching and learning (Hart,2011)

The major role of academic library is to provide quickly the resources users need for teaching learning, recreation and research. For that mission, the readers/public services division in Nigerian academic libraries is the maker's image maker and the public relations outfit of the libraries. It is a place where staff and the patrons have direct or face- face interactions. As the hallmark of library services, circulation desk is the point where search, borrowing return and renewal of the books; photocopy, overdue penalty, user's clearance and much more functions are carried out at the circulation desk. Various studies found that lack of skills in the use of library among fresh men constitute obstacles to their effective use of library (circulation). With regard to the aforementioned the researcher investigate the users of academic library in federal polytechnics in North east Nigerian on the use of circulation services and understood the lack of patronage, less seriousness on the use of circulation services in this particular library.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the management and services provided by the circulation department would to a large extent present what the patrons perceive the whole library services. In the process of providing such services to client, libraries encountered some problems that have to do with inadequate working tools, such as book cards, book pockets, borrower's tickets, inadequate power supply and lack of staff. Poor funding coupled with poor shelving and shelf reading which makes it difficult to users for use to locate information resources on the shelves, ignorance of the use of library and inadequate knowledge of information about book in question by library users are also obstacles to effective use of circulation services in many libraries, today. Enrolment of students and their keen interest to make use of the library as a result of high cost of information materials and absence of e-circulation services or online automated circulation system in some academic library constitute a serious challenge for effective circulation service. These constraints and many more make the researcher to carry out a study on challenges of effective use of circulation services in academic libraries in federal polytechnic libraries in north east Nigeri The effectiveness and efficiency of the management and services provided by the department would to a large extent present what the patrons perceive the whole library services. In the process of providing such services to client, libraries encountered some problems that have to do with inadequate working tools, such as book cards, book pockets, borrower's tickets, inadequate power supply and lack of staff. Poor funding coupled with poor shelving and shelf reading which makes it difficult to users for use to locate information resources on the shelves, ignorance of the use of library and inadequate knowledge of information about book in question by library users are also an abstacles to effective use of circulation services in many libraries, today.

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Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges of effective use circulation services in academic libraries in federal polytechnic libraries in north east Nigeria. The objectives of the study are:-

1. To find out the services provided to users at in the circulation unit of library in federal polytechnic libraries in north east Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the users' level of satisfaction with the services obtain from the staff of the circulation unit of the library in federal polytechnic libraries in north east Nigeria.
3. Determine the problems facing effective utilization of circulation resources in the library of federal polytechnics libraries in north east Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study.

1. What are the services provided to users in circulation section of the library?
2. What is the level of user's satisfaction on the services obtained in the circulation section?
3. What are the problems to effective use of circulation resources?

Significance of the Study

The study would be of immense benefit to the management of the polytechnic library as it will make them to know the challenges facing effective utilization of circulation resources in the library and how to overcome the challenges. The study would be of great importance to the library users as it will help them to know the various services provided to users at in the circulation unit of library. The study would also help the staff of the library to know the users' level of satisfaction with the services they obtain from the circulation unit of the library.

The study is going to bring out all the areas offering solution as to how best to

eliminate problems hindering the effective usage of the circulation section not only in federal polytechnic libraries in North east Nigeria but many libraries in the country particularly the academic ones. It is also going to benefit students, especially library and information science students and library managers to improve on the use of circulation section.

Research Methodology

The survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised all registered library users and staff of Federal Polytechnics in North- Eastern States of Nigeria. Out of the 5 Federal Polytechnics in North- Eastern States, Muhammad Wabi library Federal Polytechnic Bauchi was selected randomly based on the Morgan sampling table. Then, from 950 library users in Muhammad Wabi library Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, simple random sampling technic was used to select 95 users and among the library staff, simple random sampling technique was used to 43 staff. Out of this sample, only 78 and 36 respondents returned the questionnaire respectively. Circulation Services Questionnaire (CSQ) of reliability coefficient of 0.78 was the instrument used for the collection. The questionnaire was distributed to various registered users and library staff of the Muhammadu Wabi Library federal polytechnic Bauchi on the use of circulation services in academic library. The method of data analysis that was used for this study was based on descriptive statistics. Using descriptive statistics, the researcher was able to summarized and organized data in effective and meaningful ways.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Finding

This chapter discusses the data analysis and findings from questionnaires completed by the respondents from the library under study.

4.1Response Rate

This chapter present the response rate of distributed questionnaire to the respondents.

Table 4.1 response rate of Library staff

Response rate	Number	Percentage
Return questionnaires	36	84
Un returned questionnaire	7	16
Total	43	100

Table 4.1 shows the rate of responses to the questionnaires distributed to the library staff (respondents). A total number of 43 questionnaires were distributed out of which 36 copies are filed and returned constituting 84%, 7 questionnaires, representing 16% were not returned. This rate of response is suitable for quantification of the data received.

Table 4.2 Response Rate of Library Users

Response rate	Number	Percentage
Return questionnaires	78	82
Un returned questionnaire	17	18
Total	95	100

Table 4.2 shows the rate of responses to the questionnaire distributed to the library users. 95 questionnaires were distributed to the users out of which 78 copies were filed and returned constituting 82%, 17 questionnaires, representing 18% were not returned. This rate of response is also suitable for quantification of the data received.

Analysis of Library Staff Response

4.2 Kind of Services Provided to Users in Circulation Section and Level of Satisfaction Obtained by Users.

Table 4.2.1 Awareness of kind of Services Being Provided to Users in the Circulation Section of Muhammad Wabi Library.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Lending services	15	41.7
Inter- library loan	7	19.4
Registration of users	8	22.2
User education	4	11.1
Photocopy service	2	5.6
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.1 above shows that 15 (41.7%) of the respondents, indicated that they were aware of lending service, as part of activities carried out at the circulation unit. While 7 (19.4%), 8 (22.2%) and 4 (11.1%) of the respondents indicated that they were aware that inter-library loan, registration of users and user education programmed are some of the services provided by the circulation section. Only 2 (5.6%) respondents indicated that the photocopy service is provided by the section.

Table 4.2.2 Relevance of the Services to User Needs

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Relevant	26	72.2
Irrelevant	4	11.1
Undecided	6	16.7
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.2 revealed that 26 (72.2%) of the respondents identified that the services provided by the circulation section are relevant to the need of the users. A total number of 4 (11.1%) of the respondents indicated that the services are irrelevant to the need of the users, while 6 (16.7%) of the respondents are undecided.

4.2.3 Problems of Effective use of Circulation

Table 4.2.3: Problem to Effective Circulation services

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of fund	8	22.2
Lack of awareness	5	13.9
Staffing	6	16.7
Over population	4	11.1
Poor storage facilities	4	11.1
Overdue cases	6	16.7
Loss of books	3	8.3
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.3 above shows that 8 (22.2%), 5 (13.9%) and 6 (16.7%) of the respondents believed that the problems of effective circulation service are lack of fund, lack of awareness and staffing respectively while 4 (11.1%), 4 (11.1%), 6 (16.7%) and 3 (8.3%) of the respondents believed that over population, poor storage facilities, overdue cases and loss of books are the problems to effective circulation services respectively.

Table 4.2.4: Adequacy of Working Materials in the Circulation Section

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	72.2
No	10	27.8
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.4 above indicates that 26 (72.2%) of the respondents, representing the total number of respondents indicated that there is adequate working materials in the circulation section, while 10 (27.8%) of the respondents indicated that there is inadequate working tools in the section.

4.2.5 Strategies for Effective Service Delivery in the Circulation Section

Table 4.2.5: Strategies for Effective Service Delivery in the Circulation Section

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Library management support	22	61.1
More awareness programmes on the dos and daunts of the library.	9	25
Upward review of circulation sections budget	5	13.9
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.5 shows that 22 (61.1%), 9 (25%) and 5 (13.9%) of the respondents agreed that library management support, more awareness programmes on the dos and aunts of the library, upward review of circulation section budget are the strategies for improving circulation services.

Table 4.2.6: The Strategies to Effective Circulation Services.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	26	72.2
Infective	4	11.1
Undecided	6	16.7
Total	36	100

Table 4.2.6 indicated that 26 (72.2%) believed that the strategies are effective on the circulation service while 4 (11.1%) of the respondent believed that their strategies are ineffective on circulation services and 6 (16.7) of the respondents were undecided.

Analysis of Library Users Responses

4.2.7 Level of Satisfaction with the Services Provided by the Circulation Section.

Table 4.2.7: Level of Satisfaction with the Services

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Highly satisfied	16	20.5
Very satisfied	18	23
Satisfied	30	38.5
Unsatisfied	14	19

Total	78	100
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Table 4. above shows that 16 or 20.5% of the respondent were highly satisfied with the services provided by the circulation section. While 18 or 23% and 30 or 38.5% were very satisfied and satisfied. 14 or 18% of the respondents were unsatisfied with the service s provided by the section.

Table 4.2.8 Are the Circulation Services Helpful to your Research and Learning Activities.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	82
No	14	18
Total	78	100

Table 4.2.8 indicates that a majority of users, 64 (82%) of the respondents indicated that the circulation services are helpful to their research and learning activities. While 14 ((18%) of the respondents indicated that the services are not helpful.

Table 4.2.9: Level of satisfaction with lending period.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	68	87.2
No	10	12.8
Total	78	100

Table 4.2.9 indicates that the highest number of respondents 68 constituting

87.2% of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with time allowed for borrowed books to stay with them. While 10 constituting 12.8% of the respondents indicated that they are not satisfied.

Table 4.2.10: Time users allowed to stay with borrowed book.

Items	Frequency	Percentage
One week	-	-
Two week	50	64.1
One moth	28	35.9
Total	78	100

Table 4.2.10 shows that 50 (64.1%) of the respondents indicated that the time allowed for borrowed books to stay with them is two weeks, while 28 (35.9%) of the respondents indicated one month and no response for one week.

Table 4.3 problems encountered by users in the circulation section of the library

Problems encountered in the circulation	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of awareness about the activities of the section	26	33.3
Inadequate staff	36	46.2
Absence of online circulation service	16	20.5
Total	78	100

Table 4.3 shows that problems encountered by users in the circulation section of the library. The data shows that 26 respondents, representing 33.3% of the respondents believed that lack of awareness about the activities of the section while 36 (46.2%) and 16 (20.5%) of the respondents believed that the problem encountered in the section is Absence online circulation service.

Discussion of Major Findings

The finding of the research study revealed that the most common service provided by the circulation section of the library under study is lending service, while the second service provided by the section is registration of users, followed by inter-library loan, user-education and photocopying service. The finding also showed that the majority of the response identified the services as relevant to their needs, few responses shows that the services are irrelevant while the least are undecided. Lack of fund is also identified as the major problems on the usage of circulation followed by lack of awareness, staffing, over population, poor storage facilities, overdue cases and loss of books.

The research finding further revealed that the highest number of respondents believed that there is adequate working tool in the section while few respondents believed that there are inadequate working tools in the section. The majority of the responses also shows that the strategies for improving circulation services library management support, followed by awareness and upward reviewing of circulation budget. The findings also showed that the strategies are effective on the circulation service with highest number of responses followed by ineffective with least number as well as undecided.

The result of the finding s also shows that the majority of the respondents are satisfied, very satisfied and highly satisfied with the services of the section, while few respondents are not satisfied. Also, the large number of responses shows that the services are helpful to research and learning activities of users while the least shows that they are not helpful. The finding further show that the high number of respondents identified that the time allowed for them to

stay with borrowed book is two weeks while others identified one month. It also revealed that the problem encountered in the circulation section are inadequate staffing which have the highest number of response followed by lack of awareness and absence of online circulation service.

Conclusion

This research concludes that the most common services provided by the library under study are lending service, registration of users and inter-library loan and majority of the responses showed that these services as significant to the need of users. Also, the major problem of the section is inadequate funding followed by lack of awareness, staffing, over population, poor storage facilities and loss of books. Although there are also adequate working tools in the section, but the still operate manually not that automatic that are used in these days the strategies for improving circulation service are library management support, awareness programs on dos and daunts, upward review of circulation section budget and strategies are effective on the circulation service.

The respondents are satisfied, very satisfied and highly satisfied with the services of the section and the services are helpful to research and learning activities of the users.

The times allowed for borrowed book to remain with users are two weeks and one month. The problems encountered in the circulation section of the library by users are inadequate staffing, lack of awareness about the activities of the section and absence of online circulation services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study however, the following recommendation has been drawn:-

1. More finance support is needed to boost the activities of the circulation section through provision of basic facilities and services.
2. There is need to promote awareness on the activities of the circulation section among users for effective and efficient service delivery.

3. There is need for additional and well-trained manpower. In that move with emerging changes, circulation staff must improve on their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.
4. Security is needed because when facilities are put in place, they may be stolen by the criminal minded individuals.
5. The libraries should try its possible best to ensure that the circulation seminars along other services provided by the library are automated like the use of barcode should be employed for easy borrowing and tracing of library resources.

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