LIBRARY SERVICES AND USER'S SATISFACTION IN DONALD EKONG LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.

Dr Bernadette C.N. Ukaegbu Email:
Bernadette.ukaegbu@gmail.com

and

Akubudike Amarachi Emmanuel

Email:

Amarachiamacha@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated library services and users' satisfaction in the Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The objectives were to identify the various library services rendered to users and to examine the challenges they face in utilizing these services. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a population of 328 undergraduate students from the Department of Library and Information Science for the 2021–2024 academic session. Using stratified random sampling, 164 respondents were selected, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire titled *Library Services and Users' Satisfaction Questionnaire (LSUSQ)*. Out of the 164 questionnaires distributed, 120 were duly completed and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the Donald Ekong library provides circulation services such as book borrowing, renewal, shelving, handbook lending services for effective services delivery. It also revealed that reference services are concerned with direct personal assistance to users seeking their area of interest. The study concludes that user satisfaction is a key indicator of effective library service delivery. It recommends improved funding and infrastructure development for the University of Port Harcourt for effective services delivery.

Keywords: Library services, Users' satisfaction, Academic libraries, Circulation services.

Introduction

A well-housed and effectively managed library forms the foundation of a modern educational structure. To keep pace with the ever-expanding field of knowledge, libraries must be regularly updated. They serve as intellectual storehouses of the collective memory of humankind and function as agencies for acquiring, organizing, assembling, and preserving information in various recorded formats. According to Adeniran (2020), academic libraries are institutions attached to higher education establishments that cater to the teaching, learning, and research needs of students and staff. Similarly, Anyanwu (2016) asserts that academic libraries exist in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other tertiary institutions. Library services are regarded as essential social services that stimulate reading habits within society, particularly in academic environments. Bua and Yawe (2024) describe library services as having remarkable variety, playing vital roles in the educational, economic, cultural, and recreational lives of th

population. For a library to be functional, the services it provides must align with the needs of its users, since users are the reason for the library's existence. When library services are effectively utilized, they contribute significantly to user satisfaction and institutional growth

According to Anyanwu, E. U. (2016), a university library that satisfies user requests is one that provides the specific information and services required to meet users' needs. The degree of satisfaction directly influences how often and how effectively library services are used. He further noted that Modern university libraries typically provide two major categories of services: technical services, which include acquisition, cataloguing, classification, indexing, and material storage; and reader services, which involve processes directed at satisfying users' information needs. A university library achieves its objectives when patrons are satisfied with the services provided. User satisfaction, as defined by Ngozi et al. (2023), refers to the extent to which users perceive that a product or service meets their needs and expectations. Conversely, when these expectations are unmet, users are considered dissatisfied.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries exist to provide information resources and services that meet users' diverse information needs. These services include reference services, user education, internet and web services, database access, reprographic and binding services, cataloguing and classification, current awareness services (CAS), and selective dissemination of information (SDI). However, according to Norliya and Khasian (2016), university libraries are increasingly challenged by e-learning platforms and multimedia information providers, which threaten traditional library patronage. As users rely more on online information sources, university libraries must urgently adopt modern and innovative services to remain relevant particularly in the context of the Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. Adapting the emerging trends will help the library maintain its position as a custodian of knowledge in the fifth industrial information age. Thus, library services are an essential management tool for determining how effectively and

efficiently a library meets user needs.

The objectives of this research are to:

1. To examine the extent to which users utilize circulation services in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt

1. To assess the level of user satisfaction with reference services provided by Donald Ekong Library.

Research question

1. To what extent do users utilize circulation services in Donald Ekong Library?

2. What is the level of user satisfaction with the reference services offered by Donald Ekong Library?

Literature Review

Circulation and reference services remain essential components of library operations. Recent studies show that user satisfaction in libraries is strongly linked to how effectively these services are delivered. Scholars

agree that lending services, access to information resources, and interpersonal support from librarians significantly influence how users perceive the quality of library services. Circulation services such as book borrowing, renewal, shelving, and loan policies are often the most frequently used library functions. Kaishe-Mulungu, Lwehabura, and Angello (2024) found that circulation services were among the top three most utilized library services in Tanzanian university libraries. Their study further revealed a significant positive relationship between the quality-of-service provision and user satisfaction, indicating that improved circulation processes lead to better user experiences.

Similarly, Ilori et al. (2021) examined user satisfaction at Lagos State University and found high satisfaction levels with circulation services. They argued that efficient lending, prompt book returns, and courteous staff interactions play crucial roles in shaping positive user perceptions. Their findings highlight that smooth circulation operations help strengthen users' trust in the library.

 The circulation unit provides services such as issuing of books, renewing and reserving items, charging and discharging of books. Whong and Zakari (2014) list these functions as key to circulation services. Adebowale et al. (2013) add that circulation services include lending materials to library users, checking them in when they return them, monitoring them for damage, troubleshooting circulation technology (software, scanners, printers) and collecting statistics on patron transactions. These services are critical in ensuring that users are satisfied with their information needs and that resources are appropriately used. Affording users Internet access has become an intrinsic part of modern academic libraries, as libraries must be seen as essential centers in the university environment (Elizabeth, Opene & Adeleke, 2024). Library websites allow users to search library resources via Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) from anywhere and at any time, reserve books, suggest purchases, access union catalogues of libraries and renew materials online. Social media networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger, Twitter, LinkedIn create virtual reality for libraries, enabling them to interact, share, exchange ideas and deliver effective circulation services (Awojobi, Adeyemi & Osisanwo, 2014). However, some researchers note that challenges within circulation services can reduce satisfaction. Tella and Tella (2022) found that although users in a Nigerian college were generally satisfied with circulation services, problems such as poor arrangement of materials on shelves and inadequate electronic resources affected their overall satisfaction. This indicates that circulation services interact closely with other service components, and weaknesses in any part can influence users' general impressions of the library.

Reference services are concerned with direct personal assistance to users seeking information. According to Philip (2018), reference services offer information services to various categories of users to promote reading, learning, and research activities. Reference services may also be delivered online, through telephone conversation, video conference, email, and online interaction and communications. A study by Otonekwu, Saliu & Oyedokun (2019) found a significant relationship between reference service delivery and users' satisfaction in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. Hussien and Mokhtar (2018) identified four major factors that shape user satisfaction with reference services: accessibility, responsiveness, quality of answers, and communication style. Their study demonstrated that these factors collectively influence satisfaction, suggesting that reference services must be both timely and accurate to meet users' needs. Further evidence comes from Onyeisi, Ajisafe, and Toyese (2019), who studied reference services in federal university libraries in southeastern Nigeria. They found that although users were largely satisfied with the help they received, awareness of certain reference services such as translation

and advanced bibliographic support was low. The authors suggested that increased promotion of reference services could improve usage and satisfaction.

More recently, Adewara et al. (2023) reported that students expressed moderate satisfaction with reference and readers' services but highlighted concerns about outdated technology and insufficient staff training. Their findings indicate that modern reference services require up-to-date digital tools and well-trained personnel to maintain high satisfaction levels. Again, user satisfaction depends on a blend of traditional service quality, digital service effectiveness, and organizational responsiveness. Evaluating satisfaction levels in Donald Ekong Library is therefore crucial for identifying service gaps and guiding strategic improvements that align the library with contemporary academic expectations.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate library services and user satisfaction among undergraduate students of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Port Harcourt, during the 2021/2024 academic session. The population comprised 328 students, from which 164 (50%) were selected using a stratified sampling technique to ensure fair representation. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled *Library Services and User Satisfaction Questionnaires (LSUSQ)*, consisting of two sections: Section A covered respondents' bio-data, while Section B contained items on library services and user satisfaction. The instrument's validity was confirmed by experts in library science and measurement, and its reliability established through a pilot test yielding a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.82. A total of 120 questionnaires were duly completed and returned, representing a 90.4% response rate. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, with 2.50 set as the criterion decision mean for interpretation.

Results

Question 1: To what extent are users satisfied with circulation services in Donald Ekong Library?

Table 1 circulation services

Circulation services	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Not very satisfied	M	SD	Decision
User Registration services	80	40	25	19	3.4	2.2	Agreed
Lending services	60	60	14	29	3.1	2.2	Agreed
Online public access catalogue {OPAC} services	50	70	30	14	3.4	1.5	Agreed

Commented [1]: Everything about the results and discussion did not address the issue of user satisfaction which is a major variable construct of the study.

Online renewal services	40	80	30	24	3.2	2..5	Agreed.
Shelive reading	90	20	30	24	3.4	3..2	Agreed

Table 1 present the data collected on research question 1

The results from the table showed that circulation services on user's registration services score the mean of 3.4 which indicate that users are properly registered to utilize information resources of Donald Ekong Library at the University of Port Harcourt. with a relatively high standard deviation ($\pm$2..2), indicating diverse experiences among users. Online Public Access Catalogue services [OPAC] of the circulation services, score a mean of 3.4, which suggests strong agreement among users that their information needs are met as they utilized Donand Ekong Library.

Similarly, lending services score a mean score of 3.1, indicating that information materials of Donald Ekong Library are being lent to users to meet and satisfy their information needs, with a relatively high standard deviation ($\pm$2.2), indicating diverse experiences among users. The provision of book renewal services also receives a mean score of 3.2, reflecting users' agreement that the users of Donald Ekong library, utilize the circulation services. However, the notably high standard deviation ($\pm$2..5) implies that while most users find the service satisfactory, there are significant differences in individual experiences, suggesting some variability in the quality-of-service delivery. Shelf reading circulation services has a mean score of 3.4, which supports the user in locating and using information resources in Donald Ekong Library, exhibit a relatively higher variation in responses ($\pm$3.5.), indicating that users generally utilize the Donald Ekong library

Question 2: What is the level of user satisfaction with the reference services offered by Donald Ekong Library?

Table 2: Reference services and user satisfaction.

SN	Users are satisfied with	SA	A	D	SD	m	SD	Decision
1	Answering queries of the users	70	24	50	20	2.2	3.2	Disagree
2	Citation tools to support the users	80	20	44	20	2.5	2.5.	Agree
3	Online Public Access Catalog {opac} .	60	50	23	21	3.3	3.2	Agree
4	Personalized information provision .	70	43	30	21	3.2	2.1	Agree
5	New publications, updates.	80	50a	24	10	2.2	2.5	Agree

Table 2 shows all reference services provided by Donald Ekong Library that satisfied users' information needs. Assisting users in answering queries score the mean of 2.2 indicating that users are to a higher extent satisfied with reference services, with a relatively high standard deviation (#3.2), indicating diverse experiences among users. This means that reference services are as a very significant library services that meet and satisfy users information needs. On the other hand, assisting the users in using citation tools received a mean score of 2.5, which suggests that users feel satisfied about reference services in Donald Ekong Library by meeting and satisfied their information needs, with a relatively high standard deviation (2..5), indicating diverse experiences among user reference services provide guidance assistance to users with the score of 3.3. which suggest that Donald Ekong reference services satisfied users information needs. Similarly, providing personalized assistances to users received a mean score of 3.2 indicating that Reference services provide a personalized services to users which score a mean of 3.2 indicating that reference services met and satisfying users in information needs in Donald Ekong Library Uniport, with a relatively high standard deviation (±2.2), indicating diverse experiences among user

Keeping user informed about new publication update score a mean of 3.2, indicating that users are satisfied with the reference services, provided in Donald Ekong library, with a relatively high standard deviation (±9.2), indicating diverse experiences among user

Discussion of findings.
The findings of the study on research question one, revealed that circulation services such as book borrowing, renewal, shelving, and loan policies are often the most frequent services that users utilize which meet and satisfy the users information needs in Donald Ekong library, This finding is in line with the finding of Adebowale et al. (2013) which add that circulation services include lending materials to library users, checking them in when they return them, monitoring them for damage, troubleshooting circulation technology (software, scanners, printers) and collecting statistics on patron transactions. These services are critical in ensuring that users are satisfied with their information needs and that resources are appropriately used. Similarly, Ilori et al. (2021) examined user satisfaction at Lagos State University and found high satisfaction levels with circulation services. They argued that efficient lending, prompt book returns, and courteous staff interactions play crucial roles in shaping positive user perceptions. Their findings highlight that smooth circulation operations help strengthen users' trust in the library.

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reference services such as translation and advanced bibliographic support was low. The authors suggested that increased promotion of reference services could improve usage and satisfaction.

Conclusion

Circulation and reference services remain essential components of library operations. Recent studies show that user satisfaction in libraries is strongly linked to how effectively these services are delivered. Circulation services such as book borrowing, renewal, shelving, and loan policies are often the most frequently used library functions. According to Philip (2018), reference services offer information services to various categories of users to promote reading, learning, and research activities. Reference services may also be delivered online, through telephone conversation, video conference, email, and online interaction and communications and user satisfaction, indicating that improved circulation processes lead to better user experiences. Again, user satisfaction depends on a blend of traditional service quality, digital service effectiveness, and organizational responsiveness. Evaluating satisfaction levels in Donald Ekong Library is therefore crucial for identifying service gaps and guiding strategic improvements that align the library with contemporary academic expectations.

Recommendation.
1. Library Services should be enhanced through ICT Integration: The University of Port Harcourt should invest in modern information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve service delivery in the Donald Ekong Library. This includes expanding internet access, upgrading electronic databases, and maintaining an interactive online public access catalogue (OPAC). Such digital innovations will enhance users' satisfaction and ensure that the library remains relevant in the 5th Industrial Information Age.
2. Reference librarians should be trained and retrained on effective communication skill, Information communication skill, and subject specialization to promote reading, learning, and research activities which are the effective services delivery in Donald Ekong Library.

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