Factors mitigating the utilization of information resources and services in the Nigeria French Language Village Library, Badagry

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The study focused on the factors mitigating the utilization of information resources and services in the Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV), library, Badagry. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study is 2,258 which comprised ten (10) library staff, thirty (30) lecturers and two thousand, two hundred and eighteen (2218) undergraduates of Nigerian universities and colleges of education who come from the six geo-political zones of the country to NFLV which is the area of study for their language immersion programmes. A sample of 226 respondents was obtained for this study through stratified random sampling and proportionate technique. Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire alongside the observation method. Therefore, findings showed that, the factors affecting the utilization of information resources and services are as follows: epileptic power supply, lack of ICT facilities in the library, poor reading culture among undergraduates on language immersion programme and lack of modern facilities in the library. Based on the findings, the study finally recommended that the library should procure its own generator so that it could power the library when there is power outage/failure from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). However, more staffs should be employed so that it could withstand pressure from library users' requests. Library staff should be trained on ways of handling or dealing with library clientele as this will encourage patronage of the library.

Key words: Factors, utilization, information resources and services, Nigeria French language village library.

INTRODUCTION

The primary function of any institution of higher learning is to develop human resources through the process of education which includes learning, teaching and research. This function would enhance knowledge and thereby improve the lots of human beings in their various areas of endeavours. These views are expressed by the National Policy on Education of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) which is saddled with the responsibility of spelling out specific functions of tertiary education in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.
Mbachu and Ekeke (2013) posited that higher education strongly responds to the core function of teaching, research and community engagement. This is corroborated by Okoro (2014) in the sense that, apart from serving as a depository of books and other types of documentation, the library in its concept, is an organized place where people are known to come and acquire/gather information for their recreational and inspirational needs. It acquires, preserves and also makes available books and scholarly materials in an organized way in order to promote the dissemination of knowledge. Libraries are assessed on how they align with the objectives of their parent institutions. This could be viewed in the area of their activities that support the overall academic programme of any institution.

The Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) as an inter-university centre for French studies was established in 1991 by the Federal Government under the ambit of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to cater primarily for the teaching of French language in Nigeria, in place of the mandatory French Year-Abroad immersion programme hitherto undertaken by Nigerian undergraduates of French in Francophone countries of Africa and Europe (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1978). The collapse of the Nigerian currency (naira) in the 80s made parents and government incapable of training their wards in the Year-Abroad programme in France and Francophone African countries. The French language immersion programme is a statutory requirement for the award of certificate and degrees in universities and colleges of education. It is a vital practical exposure for the mastery of French by undergraduates.

The mission and vision of Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) (2010) were to develop an outstanding centre of excellence for the study, research and development of French in Nigeria using skilled and innovative personnel, and applying appropriate modern technology and teaching methodology to foster a culture of transnational bilingualism for nation building, regional integration as well as international cooperation and understanding; and to empower all persons, irrespective of age, culture, creed or sex, with appropriate communication skills in the effective use of French language at both professional and inter-personal levels.

After the successful establishment of NFLV, the NFLV library came into existence in 1992 to support the academic content of the Language Immersion (LIP) Programme. Initially French government through its embassy in Nigeria and some French speaking countries whose embassies were in Nigeria, supported the library with lots of learning and teaching resources for the effective take off of the programme. Normal library services such as lending of books, placing books on reserve, library orientation and others as done in tertiary institutions are replicated in the NFLV library. These services aid learning, teaching and research. Proper academic activities revolve around functional and qualitative library resources that are available for use by staff, students and researchers.

The NFLV library’s holdings are made up of information resources that are utilized by students and lecturers as supportive resources which enhanced better understanding of activities in the French language immersion programme thus making the library to be relevant to users’ information needs (which includes students on French language immersion programme, lecturers and researchers). Despite the provision of these information resources and services, most library users face different challenges to utilize these resources and services. Although, it has been observed that challenges facing library users vary from one library to another, in order to address the challenges affecting the utilization of information resources and services of a particular library, there is a need to deeply investigate the challenges mitigating the utilization of information resources and services in this specific library. This therefore prompt the need for this study.

Statement of the problem

From the preliminary observation of this study, the researcher observed that despite the information resources in the NFLV’s library, majority of the library users made little or no use of the information resources and services provided. Specifically, it seems that library clients are having challenges with the use of the available information resources and services owing to factors such as epileptic power supply, non availability of IT gadgets in the library, poor reading culture, insufficient resources, inadequate library staff and attitudinal behaviour of library staff, outdated resources, noisy and conducive learning environment and poor library resources. This means that any policy or practical interventions that aim to address this situation ought to be well informed by drawing from empirical evidence. Therefore since there is no current document available to investigate the factors affecting the utilization of information resources and services in the NFLV library, Badagry, this study intent to fill that gap.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to identify the factors mitigating utilization of information resources and services in the NFLV library.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Type of information resources in the library

Print resources

They are materials which contain information that was originally published and made available to the public by
printing them on paper. Example of print material containing information in printed format as defined by Lawal et al. (2008) include the following.

**Books:** This is a compilation of written work or composition that have been published or printed on pages bound together as single sheet of paper with a specific title. They are made up of known facts regarding something or someone which is printed and published as a single volume work. Books are the most know information resources which mostly constitute libraries’ main stock.

**Newspapers and magazines:** For centuries newspapers have been serving human community as a powerful medium of communication. They are made up of news, articles and advertisement on current happenings in the community which are published daily or weekly on folded sheets. On the other hand, magazines are periodic publications which are mostly published weekly or monthly or at any defined internals. They contain stories, pictures, stories and articles of interest to those who purchase or subscribe to them.

**Periodical and serials:** Periodical is a powerful medium for the dissemination of information sources, they appear on fixed intervals with a distinctive title usually appearing unbound in successive numbers or part at stated or regular intervals, while serials are periodicals that appear at scheduled times with some schemes for consecutive numbering and intended to be continued indefinitely. Examples of serials are journals, annuals, monographs, proceedings and transactions.

**Pamphlet:** This is a brief write-up on a subject of interest published in form of booklet. It is a non-periodical publication having not less than five and not more than fifty pages. They are produced with response to new developments or controversies. Information sources on pamphlets are short-lived and are indispensable to social, economic and historical research.

**Government publications:** These are information sources published by government to keep one abreast on events in government ministries and their agencies. It gives information about the day to day running of the government. Examples include publications like gazettes, legislative publications, judiciary reports and so on.

**Non-Print resources**

According to Lovely Professional University (2013), non-print resources are the media where information is available in non-conventional form. Examples of non-print resources are internet website, online database, video, DVD, CD-ROM, MP3, TV/cable program, etc.

**Type of services rendered in the library**

The following are some of the essential services rendered in the library:

**Reference services:** Reference services are important library services rendered to clientele and patrons who visit the library and information centers. Reference services are aimed at making information resources which will meet the users precise requirements available to the users as easy as possible. It gives actual assistance to the users in need of information and helps the librarian and users to understand where the recorded information exist and helps in searching the information needed. This service is designed for the convenience of the user in search of information in the library (Lovely Professional University, 2013). According to Luqman and Chimu (2017), the reference section of the library is headed by the reference librarian, who takes care of important information resources that cannot be given to users on loan. Services rendered to its users include reader education, meeting users request for specific information and assistance.

**Inter-library loan:** Luqmanand Chinu (2017) explains that the introduction of these services became imperative because of the rise in price of information resources and budgetary constraint of libraries which result in the inability to purchase more recent information resources. Since no library and information centers can boast of information resources in abundance, it means some libraries lacking some certain information resources borrow through inter-library loan and document delivery services from libraries around the world. The process of both requesting and delivery of inter-library loan and document delivery services mostly take place online. This service helps to enrich the collection of libraries and provide improved and quality services to users.

**Reprographic services:** Reprography is a term used in place of duplicating, photocopying, printing, document reproduction or documentary reproduction. In library, reprographic services help in disseminating information on a large scale among libraries, and between the library itself and its users. Furthermore, it is used in reproduction and catalogue preservation of records, security, storage of information resources, securing the protection of information resources in rare and important text, helps in large reproduction of unique collection of data out of print books, manuscripts, volumes of periodicals thus saving up in library. The basic need for reprographic services in the library is that it saves a lot of space in the library, helps in preservation and conservation of library materials, promote inter-library cooperation, resource sharing, enhancing the use of library materials and facilitating the reproduction of extra copies of information resources (Anyawu, 2008; Udochukwu, 2019).
Current awareness services (CAS): These services are provided for the library users to acquaint them with the knowledge regarding the recent development on information resources that might suit their needs. Due to the tremendous growth of information resources, information users find it difficult to cope with a lot galore of available literature. It is becoming more and more difficult for them to keep themselves up-to-date and well-informed in the fields of their specialization. This therefore brings about the need for this current awareness services. These services can be introduced in the routing of periodicals, abstracting or indexing of documents, circulation of accession lists of newly acquired documents, library bulletin containing all types of useful information, etc.

Document delivery services (DDS): DDS has to do with the supply of document to the user on demand either in original or its photocopies irrespective of the location and form of original document. This service became imperative due to ever increasing subscription cost of learned journal that would lead to a situation where no library can hold every item required to meet the needs of its users. DDS delivers copies of papers from learned journals, conference proceedings and other materials available in their collection.

Translation services: Translation is the conversion of one language into another but retaining the original sense. The original language is known as the "source language" and the language into which it is been translated to is the "target language". In library, imploring translation service is to enable free flow of information since language is one of the barriers in the flow of information. The main objectives of translation services is to provide information resources in user language, help save the time of users in consulting information resources, promote the use of information resources, promote cultural understanding between users of different languages, establish cooperation and co-ordination with international organizations, agencies, etc. (Subhajit, ND).

Bibliographic services: Bibliography is a list of citations or references to books or periodical articles on a particular topic that can appear at the end of a book, journal or encyclopedia article in a separate publication. Bibliographic service in library organizes the listing of books and the systematic description of these books as physical objects. Some functions of bibliographic services in the library are to guide the literature of a subject, finding the existence of what has been written in a subject area, verification of bibliographic details, location of materials in terms of place of publication and location in the library on point of purchase. It helps in book selection, that is, which book should be consulted for a given purpose.

User education: User education has been defined as instruction which provides library users with the skills to enable them to be independent and sophisticated users of libraries and their information resources. User education equips library users with enough knowledge on the use of library information resources effectively and efficiently. The activities involved in teaching users on how to make the best use of library’s information resources, services and facilities, including formal and informal instruction is delivered by a librarian or other staff member to the users one-on-one- or in a group (Lawal et al., 2008; Chalukya, 2015).

Reservation services: According to Lawal et al. (2008), there are some information resources in the library that merit to be reserved for use only in the library due to their frequent use by the library users or because of the high risk that such information resources can be stolen or mutilated if they are kept in open shelves. In the library, reservation service is implored by removing such resources from the open shelves and keeping them in a restricted area where they could be loaned out for a limited period of time.

Indexing and abstracting services: Indexing service is the systematic process of arranging of entries in the library which is designed to enable information users to locate items in a document. It is a tool used to systematically arrange list of periodical literature providing complete bibliographical references of already published individual items of primary documents which are published at regular intervals. They are arranged in a convenient way and are used to identify and locate the required information resources which appeared in particular periodicals (Lovely Professional University, 2013). Abstracting service on the other hand has to do with the summarizing or interpreting the content of a document giving the salient point so as to enable users to quickly determine whether to read the entire text or not in order to satisfy an information need. In essence, abstracting process provides additional value to documents aside providing a summary and bibliographic detail of documents (Niran, ND).

Factors that hinder library information resources and services’ use

In recent times, libraries particularly in developed countries have become more sophisticated and more ICT inclined because virtually, all aspects of library operations are affected by ICT without physical presence of its staff. However, in developing countries, that is not always the case. Not only that these libraries lack adequate ICT facilities, their staff in most cases has little or no knowledge about it. This therefore made rendering of library services cumbersome in most cases to users who
intend to make use of the information resources in the library (Luqman and Chinu, 2017).

According to Oyedum (2012), it is generally believed that for effective learning to take place, a conducive environment is highly needed. A conducive learning environment is that which includes all the factors such as good lightning system, furniture, noise free reading areas and good ventilation are adequately provided for learning. That means absence of these factors will adversely affect the library and the use of information resources and services.

Resources availability is another factor that motivates library users to visit the library. Aina (2003) in Oyedum (2012) described these information resources to include books, journals, newspapers and magazines, encyclopedia, internet facilities and other materials that satisfy library users information needs. Luqman and Chinu (2017) opined that the sustainability of any given library depends on the volumes and current available resources for consultation by the users. This means that the users should be considered before deciding to acquire library collection, after all, availability of information resources means ensuring their presence in library. According to Adejo (2009), poor funding of the library could lead to non-availability of relevant and current information resources on French language studies in the library. If the library is properly funded, latest books and journals for teaching and research could be procured for the advancement of the programme.

Baro (2009) pointed out that a stable electricity system is an indispensable infrastructure in the proper functioning of information transfer. However, most developing countries are plagued by endemic power failure which has continued to hinder efficient library services. According to Ugwu and Orsu (2017), the situation often forces the library to shut down its services before the closing time. Without regular power supply, the aim of installing and providing online services would be defeated. Furthermore, extending library hours may not be possible in a situation of uncertainty. Regular power supply will not only enhance the library’s image but also attract more users to the library. In addition, the library users can have enough working hours in the library.

Luqman and Chinu (2017) asserted that quality of staff usually reflects on the quality of service delivery. Certain basic attributes is required of an effective library staff, sadly enough most of the staff lack these basic qualities partly because of poor training or sheer lack of job satisfaction as some find themselves in the profession as a means of survival. Foskett (2007) pointed out that, users’ skills, technical support and inadequate parts to replace damaged electronic resources are some of the impediments affecting utilization of these resources. This leads to inability to repair or replace broken down parts of these resources. He also stressed that lack of technical know-how on the use of these resources coupled with non-availability of back-ups for these resources hinder utilization. Indeed, inadequate funding to procure these back-ups for the library could also impede utilization of resources.

Lack of awareness of the resources in the library could be a form of impediment to utilization of resources in the library. Salisu (2005) in summation of utilization of Arabic resources in Nigerian university libraries affirmed that lack of awareness of resources by library patrons hinder utilization of resources. Apart from this, user education of the resources in the library could also hinder utilization of the resources in the library. He is of the view that users’ awareness and availability of these resources would enhance utilization. Poor organization of resources could also mar the utilization of resources.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study is 2,258 which comprised ten (10) library staff, thirty (30) lecturers and all the two thousand, two hundred and eighteen (2218) undergraduates of Nigerian universities and colleges of education offering French language as a course of study in their various institutions, from the six geo-political zones of the country (NFLV Staff Nominal Roll, 2015). Names of various Nigerian universities and colleges of education and the number of students from each institution are presented in Table 1. A sample of 226 respondents was obtained for this study through stratified random sampling (that is, 10% of the entire population which include library staff, lecturers and undergraduate students).

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Therefore, closed end questionnaire was used to give responses to the research questions. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with the method of personal observation. Therefore, 226 copies of the questionnaire were administered. Only 211 questionnaire were returned and 209 were found valid. The data collected from the respondents (library users) through questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and central tendency (mean).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the respondents on problems of provision and utilization of information resources and services in the French language immersion programme. Using the criterion mean of 2.50 on a 4 point scale, the results of the data analysis show that the respondents agreed that items 1-4, which include epileptic power supply, lack of ICT in the library, poor reading culture amongst undergraduates on language immersion and lack of modern facilities in the library were problems of NFLV library resources, since their mean (x) score is above (2.50) the criterion mean (x). Furthermore, the overall mean (x) showed that epileptic power supply (mean = 3.09) is ranked highest, while poor organization of library resources (Mean = 1.93) is ranked lowest as problems associated with the utilization of NFLV library resources. These findings as shown in Table 2 revealed that there are enormous problems associated with the utilization of the library resources. Topmost of these
Table 1. Names of Nigerian universities and colleges of education and number of student from each Institution.

| S/N | Name of university                                      | Population |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1   | Abia State University, Uturu                            | 68         |
| 2   | Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria                          | 68         |
| 3   | Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma                          | 80         |
| 4   | Babcock University                                      | 80         |
| 5   | Bayero University, Kano                                 | 30         |
| 6   | University of Benin, Benin City                         | 70         |
| 7   | Benue State University, Makurdi                         | 90         |
| 8   | Delta State University, Abraka                          | 46         |
| 9   | Ekiti State University                                  | 50         |
| 10  | University of Ibadan                                    | 60         |
| 11  | Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University, Lapai            | 23         |
| 12  | Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, River State | 46 |
| 13  | Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode          | 60         |
| 14  | University of Ilorin                                    | 22         |
| 15  | Imo State University, Owerri                            | 46         |
| 16  | University of Jos                                       | 42         |
| 17  | Kaduna State University, Kaduna                         | 50         |
| 18  | University of Maiduguri                                | 20         |
| 19  | Nasarawa State University, Keffi                         | 30         |
| 20  | University of Lagos, Lagos                             | 76         |
| 21  | Lagos State University, Ojo                             | 50         |
| 22  | Nnamdi Azikwe University                                | 37         |
| 23  | University of Nigeria, Nsukka                           | 67         |
| 24  | University of Port Harcourt                            | 43         |
| 25  | Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto                       | 20         |
| 26  | College of Education, Agbor                            | 23         |
| 27  | College of Education, Akankpa                           | 38         |
| 28  | College of Education, Akwanga                          | 80         |
| 29  | Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa                  | 90         |
| 30  | Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu                 | 42         |
| 31  | College of Education, Ekiadolor                         | 80         |
| 32  | College of Education, Gashua                            | 20         |
| 33  | College of Education, Gindiri                           | 50         |
| 34  | College of Education, Katsina Ala                       | 56         |
| 35  | Adeniiran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin      | 42         |
| 36  | College of Education, Nsugbe                            | 30         |
| 37  | Federal College of Education, Obudu                     | 78         |
| 38  | Federal College of Education, Okene                     | 21         |
| 39  | College of Education, Oro                              | 21         |
| 40  | Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo             | 60         |
| 41  | Federal College of Education, Suleja                    | 28         |
| 42  | Federal College of Education, Pankshin                  | 68         |
| 43  | College of Education, Sokoto                            | 40         |
| 44  | College of Education, Warri                            | 22         |
| 45  | Federal College of Education, Zaria                     | 50         |
|     | Total number of students                                | 2218       |

Source: Students’ Registration File, 2015.

problems is epileptic power supply, lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in the
library, poor reading culture amongst undergraduates on language immersion programme, lack of modern facilities in the library, etc. It was observed that, some challenges such as funding and poor power supply have been communicated to the authorities and are receiving attention. These findings are in line with Afebende and Ebyae (2008), Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) as well as that of Parameshwar and Patil (2009) and Agada (2010) which stated that most of the prevalent problems drastically affect utilization. Agada (2010) particularly emphasized that lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) affects both the use and operation of the library.

Ndagana (2000) observed that unsteady supply of electricity affects the usage of information resources in libraries of institutions of higher learning. Irregular power supply poses a serious problem on the utilization of the library resources by undergraduates. A closer look at these problems will indicate that they are institutional problems and require the attention of the NFLV authority. Notwithstanding, these problems hindering effective utilization of library resources and services also prevent better academic performance amongst undergraduate students on French language immersion programme.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study tried to uncover the challenges affecting the utilization of information resources and services in the NFLV library, Badagry. Specifically, the factors include: epileptic power supply, lack of ICT in the library, poor reading culture amongst undergraduates on language immersion, lack of modern facilities in the library, insufficient resources, inadequate staff in the library, attitudinal behaviour of library staff to users, non-acquisition of current resources, noisy and unconducive language immersion programme, available staff not properly trained and poor organization of library resources. The aforementioned factors hinder the library users to utilize the information resources and services effectively.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the library should procure its own generator so that it could power the library when there is power outage from Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The library authorities should employ more qualified hands so that it could withstand pressure of requests from library users. Library staff should be taught the ethics of handling or dealing with library clientele as this will encourage patronage of the library.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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