

## EXTENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AND LECTURERS USE OF AFRICANA RESOURCES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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### Abstract

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*The study evaluates the extent of use of Africana resources by Postgraduate students and lecturers in Nigerian Universities libraries. Descriptive survey research method was used. The population comprised of 1,974 users drawn from six selected federal universities with dedicated Africana collections. The universities are University of Nigeria, Nsukka; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; University of Jos, Jos and University of Maiduguri. The questionnaire was the major data gathering instrument, supplemented by observation method. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze data. Findings revealed that Africana materials are sparingly consulted in Nigerian universities libraries, out of which Arts related resources are more in use than Science related Africana materials. The paper concludes that there is a relationship between availability and usage of Africana resources in Universities surveyed. It is recommended amongst others that Africana resources should be placed in open access for easy reach and retrieval to enhance their usage.*

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**Keyword:** Africana, University Libraries, Post Graduate, Students, Lecturers.

### Introduction

Africana resource is one of the information resources that are stored in the library and they include written and oral information by Africans or non- Africans about Africa. Thus, Afeworki & Holley (2006) in defining Africana stated that African studies cover the study of the African continent in general including their history, politics, culture, literature, religion, economics, traditional medicine, cultural anthropology, folklore, traditional medicine, agriculture, etc. The resources also cut across different subject formats like almanacs, charts, pictures, subject files, internet information resources, CD-ROM. The definition of Africana in the face of information technology has also expanded to include video recordings of some events in African countries, like the documentaries of the South African apartheid, the African slave trade, the Nigerian Biafran war, etc. According to the South African Book Development Education Trust, SABDET (2004), these

documentaries are in filmstrips, and VCDs. They include audio recordings, maps, language tapes, photographic slides, diskette. Africana, as Bailg (2004) observed, has also taken a new phase by incorporating video conferences of events in Africa.

Africa is endowed with diversity of culture which is the major source of Africana, however before 1950 not much was documented on this rich culture because publications on Africa were controlled and directed from outside (Fyfe. 1976). This was because publishing in Africa was weak and the few that existed were limited to religious and affiliated political activities. The Europeans who did most of the publications at that period did not show much interest in the continent. Their publications therefore centered on social anthropology which was their major interest. There is therefore need for Africans -to develop more interest in the development and usage of Africana, but is this really the case? Thus, Afigbo (1990) after his visit to some universities in the United States lamented on the scanty literature on Africana resources available in the universities he visited there. This also suggests negligence and nonchalance in the collection of the Africana resources by Africans. The findings of Omekwu (1998) in a citation analysis on agricultural communication (theses) also buttressed this stating that African students cited foreign authors' more than African authors. There seems to be a preference for foreign books in the university libraries in Nigeria by postgraduate lecturers who are supposed to promote the use of these resources as well as the postgraduate students.

Okore, Ekere & Eke (2009) are of the view therefore that the library can increase the usage of indigenous knowledge which form major part of Africana collections through collecting, preserving, disseminating and raising awareness of the existence of these resources in Nigerian university libraries. If the history of the African continent is at all important one can then wonder how far these collections are utilized in university libraries in Nigeria by postgraduate lecturers and postgraduate students. Recent studies like that of Afeworki & Holley (2006) have shown that. Africana is still under- utilized in Nigerian university libraries.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Africana contains the history and culture of Africa and covers the experiences of both the African continent and the African in Diaspora; its value transcends economic, social and cultural values. If nothing is done about its gradual disappearance, negligence and under-utilization in Nigerian university libraries, generations of Africans may not know much about the history of their origin or their cultural heritage. Studies have also proved that the original documentaries on Africana are fast disappearing due to neglect by both librarians and users

(Alegbeleye, 1994) with a consequent downward trend in their use. To this end, the study sets out to investigate the extent of use of available Africana materials in Nigerian Universities libraries; with a view to determining the factors affecting usage.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the general usage of Africana resources by postgraduate (PG) Lecturers and Students in Nigeria University Libraries. It is specifically aimed at

- Determining the extent to which Africana resources in Nigeria Universities Libraries are being used by Postgraduate Lecturers & Students (Masters & Doctoral degree students)

### **Hypothesis**

The under listed null hypothesis was formulated for this study;

- There is no significant difference among the mean ratings of Postgraduate lecturers; masters' and doctoral degree students on factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian universities libraries.

### **Literature Review**

Some organizations see Africana from the point of view of the African indigenous knowledge. Such organizations include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and in this light have defined Africana as the local knowledge unique to a given society. Okore, Ekere and Eke (2009) view Africana as all-encompassing to include technological skills, practices and beliefs. But Amoda (1978), conceive Africana from a cultural perspective and have defined culture as related to common history, language, religion, custom, geography, literature, music and visual arts. While for Creighton (1965) Africana is any work with an African background and in which African experiences are authentically emphasized.

According to Zell (2003), book on Africa made its first impact in Sub-Saharan Africa largely through the influence and activities of Christian missionaries. It is important to state that during the struggle for independence, publications of nationalist newspapers and magazines flourished but when independence was achieved, their emphasis changed to publishing educational books. The early collections on Africana as Fyfe (1976) noted also include government reports on

the explosive political happenings at that time such as the Aba riots of 1929, the Gold Coast disturbances of 1948, Tomlinson Lethem report on Islamic propaganda in Northern Nigeria, pamphlets, songs, hymns and prayer books. These early collections included also the writings of contemporary generation of political leaders like Herbert Macaulay, Blaise Diagne, Leopold Senghor, Harry Thukur, among others. Africana was also developed through the contributions of some African writers between 1950, 1958 and 1959. Such writers documented Nnamdi Azikiwe's explanation on the ways in which his ideas had been influenced by Garveyism, James Coleman a prominent American, Ndabaning Sithole. Basil Davison's collections on Africa also contributed to Africana collections, Clarence Holt also contributed a lot to the Africana collections. He was an African American bibliographer who started his collections on Africana right from his youth and during the 1977 FESTAC in Nigeria, these collections were bought over by the Ahmadu Bello university library. Thus Africana was collected by institutions either through donations from individuals or bought from such individuals.

However research findings have proved that the usage of the Africana is not very wide and this may have affected the development of the resources in Nigerian university libraries. No wonder a body like the South African Book Development Education Trust in Africa (SABDET) was set up with its main theme as-Readers and libraries in Africa. It is a promotional campaign aimed at reading groups and users to read Africana books as a mandate, (SABDET 2005). As Mensah (2004) put it, the emphasis for a long time was on European literature with European culture at the background, this may have affected the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.

Africana no doubt has great potential in academics, Africana studies, which is the study of Africa with all her great potentials yet untapped will make important contributions to the world of academics both economically, politically, culturally and socially. Africana provides insights to different cultures, politics, and history of Africans (Michigan State University Study Guide, 2007). Africana is essential to research fellows and students in carrying out researches in various fields of knowledge, covering traditional medicine and every aspect of culture. Africana resources are indeed of great value to academics because every research is built on previous knowledge, more so now that Africana covers very many subject areas including science and technology, politics, international relations and the publication of Africana in all genres has continued to grow at a rapid pace. The ability to determine the rate at which an information resource is used plays an

important role in the effective planning and management of any information resource.

Contextual or subjective understanding and use of information resource is a function of the subjective meaning given to it. The importance that is attached to the Africana resources by the different categories of its users fuels its usage; if it is underrated, its use will be affected also. The accessibility and availability of the information resources are some of the prerequisites for the use of that information resource. This is indeed one of the problems that maybe affecting the interest and the rate of usage of the Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.

### **Research Methods**

The design of this study is descriptive survey. This study was carried out only in federal universities in Nigeria. The population for this study comprised of a total of 42,873 users (postgraduate lecturers and students) in thirteen (13) federal universities that have dedicated Africana collections in Nigeria. They are - University of Nigeria Nsukka; University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt; University of Benin, Benin; University of Calabar, Calabar; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; University of Lagos, Lagos; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; University of Sokoto, Sokoto; University of Ilorin, Ilorin; University of Jos, Jos and University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri. From the 13 federal universities that have dedicated Africana collections in Nigeria. One university was randomly selected from each of the six geo political zones in the country. A sample size of 1,974 users was therefore drawn from the six federal universities selected for this study, which are - University of Nigeria Nsukka; University of Uyo, Uyo; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; University of Jos, Jos and University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri. This was arrived at as a result of multi-random sampling technique adopted because of the heterogeneous population involved. Questionnaire and observation methods were used to elicit data for this study. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze data. The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA.

#### ***Limits of real numbers for decision.***

0.05- 1.49 = Not Often (NO)

1.50 -2.49 = Sparingly (S);

2.50- 3.49 Often (O)

3.50- 4.49 = Very Often (HO).

### Findings and Discussion

The results from data analysis are presented below.

Table 1 displays the results of the analysis in respect of the response of users (PG Lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students) on the extent the Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries are being used.

**Table 1.**

**Mean of the response of users (PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students) on extent of usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.**

Items	Master Students	PhD Students	PG Students	Total	Decision
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	
Anthropology	2.46	2.52	2.45	2.47	S
Education	2.71	2.75	3.06	2.68	O
Economics	2.49	2.62	2.34	2.46	S
Folklore	2.59	2.38	2.34	2.48	O
History	2.70	2.61	2.69	2.69	O
International relation	2.37	2.39	2.58	2.44	S
Politics	2.51	2.41	2.64	2.54	O
Literatures	2.62	2.51	2.41	2.54	O
Language	2.64	2.44	2.26	2.50	O
Religion	2.52	2.45	2.14	2.40	S
Psychology	3.02	2.00	2.02	2.21	S
Sociology	2.43	2.38	2.06	2.31	S
Traditional medicine	2.40	2.31	1.93	2.25	S
Physics	1.99	1.90	1.73	1.90	S
Chemistry	1.95	1.92	1.70	1.87	S
Biology	2.06	2.02	1.67	1.94	S
Mathematics	2.06	1.95	1.72	1.94	S
Geography	2.21	2.07	1.86	2.08	S
Overall	2.39	2.33	2.17	2.32	S

Where 'S' = Sparingly, 'O' = Often

The table shows the mean of the extent of usage of Africana resources by PG lecturers, masters' and doctoral degree students in Nigerian university libraries. The table also shows the overall usage of Africana resources. Items like; anthropology, economics, folklore, international relation, religion, psychology, sociology, traditional medicine and geography (1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 18) are sparingly used with the mean (2.47, 2.46, 2.48, - 2.44, 2.40, 2.21, 2.21, 2.25, and 2.08) respectively. Items like; education, history, politics, literature and language (2, 5, 7, 8 and 9) are often used with mean (2.68, 2.69, 2.54, 2.54, and 2.50) respectively. However items like; physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics (14, 15, 16, and 17) are not frequently used as can be seen in the mean of 1.9, 1.87, 1.94, and 1.94 respectively. It is however observed that the extent of usage of Africana resources has a direct relationship with the availability of the resources in the university libraries. The mean responses on availability of Africana resources in subject areas indicated that; education, history, politics and literature with mean of (3.4, 3.4, 3.4 and 3.3) respectively are the most available in the university libraries and the most often used as can be seen on the table. The research carried out by Udensi (2010) revealed that anthropology, economics, folklore, international relation, religion, psychology, sociology, traditional medicine and geography with mean of (3.0, 3.1, 2.9, 2.8, 3.2, 3.0, 3.1, 2.7 and 2.8) which are moderately available in the university libraries studied are also sparingly used in Nigerian university libraries as can be seen on the table. But on a general note, the mean responses revealed that the masters degree students use the Africana resources in subject formats more than the doctoral degree students and the PG lecturers use the resources less with overall mean responses of (2.39, 2.33, and 2.17) respectively.

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference among the mean ratings of PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students on the factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.

Table 2 displays the summary of the ANOVA that tested further the significant difference among the mean ratings of the users (PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students) on the factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.

**Table 2:**

Summary of the ANOVA table for the significant difference among the mean ratings of the perception of PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students on the factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.

Sources	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between group	2.59	2	1.30	1.99	0.14
Within group	703.60	1086	0.65		
Total	706.19	1088			

The table shows the summary of ANOVA for the significance difference among the mean ratings of the perception of PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students on the factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries. The result shows that F (1.99) is not significant at 0.05 since the computed F is not significant at 0.14. Therefore, there is no significance difference among the mean ratings of the perception of PG lecturers, master degree students and doctoral degree students on the factors affecting the usage of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

The research revealed that history, education, politics, literature, and language are frequently consulted but history is the most frequently consulted by PG lecturers, masters and PhD students as can be seen on the table, while physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics are seldom consulted. The respondents' answers on the table 1 showed that anthropology, economics folklore, international relations, religion psychology, sociology, traditional medicine and geography are generally sparingly used in the universities used for the study. Traditional medicine and geography stood out as the lowest used in the category. The findings also revealed that there is more usage of the Arts Africana resources than science Africana resources in the university libraries. However the research also revealed that the variations in the usage of the different Africana resources have a direct relationship with the availability of the resources in Nigerian university libraries.



The overall summary still showed that Africana is not adequately consulted and these findings further support the findings of the study carried out by the South African Book Development Trust-SABDET (2005) that there is a clear drop in the usage of Africana resources. The fact that there is a relationship between availability and usage as revealed by the findings confirms the assertions of Schmidt (1995) that there are not much works on Africa in African universities despite the fact that courses on Africa have been part of the undergraduate curriculum in African universities for more than three decades. No wonder it was a consensus conclusion in the 2000 seminar on scholarly publishing in Africa, that university publishing in Africa has remained weak.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Africana resource contains a wide coverage of information ranging from the arts and the sciences valuable to carry out any form of research in the universities. Africana resources contain the various indigenous knowledge of the culture of the African continent and African in Diaspora, despite its importance, Africana resources are not popular and not well utilized by Postgraduate lecturers and the Postgraduate students in the Nigerian university libraries. To this end, the following recommendations are necessary:

- There should be increased funds for the management of the library so as to accommodate increase purchase of more Africana resources. This will consequently increase usage as the finding of the research established a relationship between availability and usage of the different Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries.
- The University librarians should endeavor to send qualified and experienced professions as unit heads in the Africana units so as to increase users assistance in the retrieval of information.
- The Africana unit should be equipped with ICT information retrieval tools and Africana staff should be trained and retrained in the knowledge and use of ICT in the Africana unit.
- New arrivals in Africana should be displayed at strategic places so as to attract more users. Africana resources should be placed in open access for easy reach and retrieval by users.

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