Assessment of resources and services of the Nigerian Arabic language village library

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Abstract

The study assessed resources and services of the Nigeria Arabic Language Village (NALV) Library, Ngala. Four objectives and four research questions guided the study. Survey research design was adopted. The target population of the study was 1,030, out of which, 206 was drawn as the sample for the study. The data collection instruments were a questionnaire, checklist and documentary sources. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic. Findings from the study revealed that the professionals, paraprofessionals and other support staff of the library are inadequate though they were found to be helping users in some of their information needs; the library's collections were found to be obsolete. The physical facilities of the library were found to be adequate and there were no sufficient effective services provided for users in the library. Recommendations were made to include among others, the need to embark on the acquisition of various library resources which are relevant, adequate and current in the field of Arabic language and literature based on a well-developed collection development policy.

Keywords: Arabic, information, services, assessment, resources

Introduction

All libraries exist to meet the interest of their serving institutions. Libraries in universities, inter-university centers, polytechnics, colleges, research institutes and other organizations are concerned with selection, collection, organizing, preserving and dissemination of information resources and services for the purposes of teaching, learning and research. The library is the heart of the universities and inter-university centers, where intellectual knowledge and activities are discharged to its users through the provision of relevant and adequate information resources by librarians. Provision of reading materials coupled with professional services to users is a very important aspect in achieving the aims and objectives of the libraries. The information resources and services provided should be commensurate with the needs of the users. Similarly, Bello (2011) opined that library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency to support the institutions' curriculum. In a related development, Oyedum (2006:23) asserted that "one of the objectives of the university is to encourage acquisition of knowledge, to encourage and promote scholarship and research in all fields of human endeavor". Apart from classroom teaching and practical exercises in university laboratories, one of the main departments

that assist the university to achieve these objectives is the library (Oyedum, 2006).

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary for universities and inter-university centers to provide their libraries with adequate personnel to establish adequate collections, facilities and effective services towards meeting the teaching, research and knowledge dissemination needs of their serving institutions. Moreover, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) stated that in effect, a university, college or school library, for example, cannot be expected to fulfil its roles and cannot carry out its responsibilities effectively if its institutional authorities fail to provide it with adequate funds, personnel, and physical facilities and if the librarians cannot collaborate with the teaching staff in building up the library's collections and in creating the students' interest to effective use.

However, provision of all these resources and services cannot be an end themselves. They should be adequately supplemented with regular and sustainable assessment in order to justify their continuous usage in the library. Provision of adequate and effective resources and services in a library is very crucial so also supplementing them with the regular and sustainable assessment. Thus, views and feelings of the library users are sought through guided research by obtaining information about whether they are satisfied with the resources and services provided in the library. To ascertain whether the library is meeting its aims and objectives, the views, opinions, and

perceptions of the library users should be sought (Bassey, 2006).

The assessment of the Nigeria Arabic language village (NALV) Library has become necessary for determining the actual level of user's satisfaction and maximum utilization as Aina (2004) emphasized that it is necessary for libraries to periodically examine the extent to which the facilities and services are utilized as this would assist the library management in the planning and management of activities as well as evaluating the performance and achievement of their goals. To this end, the researchers embarked on assessing the resources and services of NALV library with a view to ascertaining their adequacy and effectiveness or otherwise to help the institution in its planning and evaluation efforts towards meeting the teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination needs.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to assess the:

- Adequacy of the library's personnel in meeting the teaching, research and knowledge dissemination needs of the NALV,
- Adequacy of the library's collection in meeting the teaching, research and knowledge dissemination needs of the NALV
- Adequacy of the library's physical facilities in meeting the teaching, research and knowledge dissemination needs of the NALV and

- Effectiveness of the library services in meeting the teaching, research and knowledge dissemination needs of the NALV

Methodology

The methodology used was survey research design. The target population of the study was 1030 from which 206 was drawn as the sample size for the study. The population includes academic and non-academic staff, students and staff of the International School of Agriculture, Ngala. The questionnaire, checklist and documentary sources were the instruments used in data collection. Data collected were analyzed with the use of simple descriptive statistics applying frequency counts and percentages in tables.

Findings and discussion

Table 1 Adequacy of the library's personnel

		SA		A		UD		D		SD		Total	Total
S/N	**Personnel adequacy**	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The professional staff of the library are adequate	17	10	34	20	11	6	79	46	31	18	172	100
2	The paraprofessional staff are adequate	15	9	34	20	16	9	84	49	23	13	172	100
3	The library Assistants of the library are helping users	88	51	66	38	12	7	5	3	1	1	172	100
4	The library staff are providing effective services to users	6	3	15	9	33	20	66	38	52	30	172	100
5	The number of the professional staff is sufficient	32	19	31	18	32	19	50	29	27	15	172	100
6	There is need for more professionals in the library	9	58	3	28	12	6	99	5	49	2	172	100
7	The number of the Library Assistants is adequate	17	10	38	22	48	28	62	36	7	4	172	100
8	The library staff help users in their daily routines	44	26	88	51	11	6	20	12	9	5	172	100
9	Users are satisfied with the services provided by the staff	8	5	35	20	21	12	81	47	27	16	172	100

10	Your information needs are being met by the staff	5	3	12	7	38	22	74	43	43	25	172	100

The responses as indicated in Table 1 show that majority (64%) disagreed that the professional staff of the library is an adequate while, a few (30%) agreed that they are adequate and very few (6%) were undecided. The table also shows that majority (62%) of responses indicated that the para-professional staff of the library are inadequate, few (29%) were of the view that they are adequate and very few (9%) were undecided. But, the library Assistants/Attendants are found to be helping users as most (89%) of the respondents indicated that the library assistants are helping them in their various information needs, very few (4%) were of the view that they are not being helped and few (7%) were undecided.

Pertaining provision of effective services to users, the majority (68%) of the respondents disagreed that there are effective services in the library; very few (12%) agreed that there are effective services provided for them and few (20%) were undecided. While, regarding the sufficiency of the number of professional staff, about half (44%) of the respondents disagreed that they are sufficient; few (37%) agreed that they are sufficient and minority (19%) were undecided. On the need for more professionals in the library, most (86%) of the respondents agreed that the library does not need more professionals; few (7%) of them agreed that the library needs more professionals

and very few (6%) were undecided. This view of the respondents might be due to the fact that most of the users cannot distinguish between the library staff based on their level of education and responsibility. To them all staff in the library are professionals. Therefore, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, the library needs more professionals to provide all the desired services for users.

As clearly shown in Table 1 half (40%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that, the number of library assistants is adequate, few (32%) agreed with the statement and minority (28%) were undecided. The table also shows that most (77%) responses indicated that the library staff help users in their daily routines, few (17%) disagreed and very few (6%) were undecided. Moreover, regarding user satisfaction with services provided by the staff, more than half (63%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they are satisfied, few (25%) agreed and very few (12%) were undecided. Furthermore, the majority (68%) of the respondents indicated that their information needs are not being met by the staff, minority (10%) agreed with the statement and few (22%) were undecided.

Table 2 Adequacy of the library's collections

S/N	Collections adequacy	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Total		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The library's holding in terms of textbooks is adequate	69	40	52	30	22	13	17	10	12	7	172	100
2	The journal titles of the library are adequate	24	5	31	18	33	19	75	44	9	14	172	100
3	There are sufficient journals provided for users	21	12	64	37	27	16	53	31	7	4	172	100
4	The library has adequate Audio Visual materials	24	14	35	20	27	16	61	35	25	15	172	100
5	The library has reserve section for users	58	34	84	49	14	8	12	7	4	2	172	100
6	The computers of the library are sufficient	27	16	81	47	22	13	26	15	16	9	172	100
7	The library has adequate reference materials	65	38	72	42	17	10	16	9	2	1	172	100
8	The reference materials of the library are up-to-date	54	31	9	6	42	24	22	13	45	26	172	100
9	The journals of the library are current	36	22	40	23	48	27	38	22	10	6	172	100
10	The library has current textbooks	53	24	11	16	39	23	27	6	42	31	172	100

On the adequacy of the NALV library's collections towards meeting the information needs of the respondents, the result indicated that majority (70%) of the respondents agreed that the library collections in terms of textbooks are adequate, few (17%) disagreed and very few (13%) were undecided. Regarding journal titles of the library, more than half (58%) of the respondents disagreed that they are adequate; few (23%) agreed that the journal titles are adequate and very few (19%) were undecided. In relation to sufficiency of journal's provision for users, about half (49%) of the respondents agreed that there are sufficient journals in the library, few (35%) disagreed and very few (16%) were undecided. It has been also clearly shown in Table2 that half (50%) of the respondents disagreed that the library has adequate AV materials; few (34%) agreed and very few (16%) were undecided. By and large, most (83%) of the responses agreed that the library has

reserved a section for users, very few (9%) disagreed with the statement and some few (8%) were undecided.

As can be seen in Table2 more than half (63%) of the respondents agreed that there are sufficient computers in the library, some few (24%) disagreed with the statement and very few (13%) indicated that they were undecided. Pertaining the adequacy of reference materials in the library, the majority (80%) of the responses indicated that the reference materials are adequately provided in the library, very few (9%) disagreed with the view and few (11) were not decided. However, with regards to the currency of the reference materials, the majority (39%) of respondents were of the view that the library's reference materials are obsolete, minority (37%) agreed that they are up-to-date and very few (24%) were undecided. While respondents in the

majority (45%) were in a position that the library's journals are not current, few (28%) disagreed with the statement that the journals are not current and very few (27%) were undecided. This belief would be responsible due to the fact that majority of the library users are not in a good position to distinguish between current and not current materials. They are usually behind relevancy of the materials to their discipline and specialization. But to the best knowledge of the researcher, there are current journals in the library which were recently acquired through donations from some Arab countries. Finally, pertaining availability of current textbooks in the library, the majority (40%) of the responses indicated that there are no current textbooks provided, few (37%) were in the position that there are current textbooks provided and very few (23%) were undecided.

Table 3 Adequacy of the library's Physical Facilities

S/N	Facilities adequacy	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Total	Total
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The library building is adequate for accommodating the personnel, collections, services and other facilities	95	55	49	29	17	10	9	5	2	1	172	100
2	The book shelves of the library are adequate	60	35	85	49	15	9	11	6	1	1	172	100
3	The shelves are sufficient for arrangement of the library's collections	3	2	24	14	38	22	52	30	55	32	172	100
4	There are adequate journal display racks in the library	3	2	41	24	28	16	57	33	43	25	172	100
5	The library's catalogue cabinets are sufficiently adequate	48	28	77	45	22	13	18	10	7	4	172	100
6	There are adequate computer	54	31	51	30	33	19	25	15	9	5	17	10

	facilities in the library										2	0
7	The library users are satisfied with reading tables, chairs and other related facilities	64	37	62	36	27	16	16	9	3	2	172	100
8	The library's lighting is adequate	65	38	67	39	21	12	14	8	5	3	172	100
9	The library is adequately provided with ACs, acoustics etc for users convenience	35	20	32	19	35	20	44	26	26	15	172	100
10	The library is conducive for users and staff for maximum utilization and proper service delivery	36	21	92	53	24	14	11	7	9	5	172	100

According to Table 3, most (84%) of the respondents agreed that the library's building is adequate for accommodating the resources and services of the library, very few (6%) disagreed the statement and few (10%) were undecided. As per the library's adequacy of the bookshelves, the majority (84%) of the responses indicated that the library's bookshelves are adequate, minority (7%) indicated that the shelves are inadequate and few (9%) were undecided. The statement about the sufficiency of the shelves for arranging library collections was disagreed by the majority (62%) of the respondents, very few (16%) agreed that the shelves are sufficient and some few (22%) were undecided. Pertaining to the adequacy of journal display racks of the library, more than half (58%) of the responses indicated that they are inadequate, few (26%) were of the view that the racks are adequate and minority (16%) were undecided.

As Table 3 indicated, the majority (73%) of the respondents agreed that the library's catalogue cabinets are sufficiently adequate to cater for filing all catalogue cards, few (14%) disagreed and very few (13%) were undecided. In a related development, concerning the library's computer facilities, more than half (61%) of the responses indicated that the library's computer facilities are adequate, few (20%) disagreed with the idea and minority (19%) of the respondents being undecided. By and large, the table also shows that majority (73%) of the respondents agreed that they are satisfied with the reading tables, chairs among others, minority (11%) disagreed and few (16%) were undecided in support of the statement. Furthermore, the majority (77%) of the respondents indicated their agreement about the library's lighting for clientele's utilization and staff's convenient service delivery in the day and night times of the opening period, very few (11%) disagreed with the view and some few (12%) were undecided. Then, with reference to the adequate provision of air conditioners, acoustics, and other related facilities in the library, half (41%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement; few (39%) agreed with the view and minority (20%) were undecided. In nutshell, most (74%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the library is conducive for users and staff for maximum

utilization and proper service delivery, very few (12%) indicated that they are not

in support of the view and few (14%) were undecided.

Table 4 Effectiveness of the Library's Services

		SA		A		UD		D		SD		To tal	Tota l
S/N	**Services effectiveness**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1	The circulation services of the library is effective	73	43	61	35	23	13	15	9	0	0	17 2	100
2	The users are satisfied with the number of books provided for loan	5	3	17	10	35	20	71	41	44	26	17 2	100
3	The library's current awareness (CAS) is effective	5	3	15	9	31	18	66	38	55	32	17 2	100
4	Reference service of the library is effective	31	18	86	50	26	15	20	12	9	5	17 2	100
5	There is inter library loan service in the library	8	5	12	7	62	36	70	41	20	11	17 2	100
6	The inter library loan service of the library is effective	4	2	33	19	50	29	61	36	24	14	17 2	100
7	There is user education service in the library for clientele	24	14	25	15	40	23	69	40	14	8	17 2	100
8	The user education service of the library is effective	23	13	32	19	22	13	79	46	16	9	17 2	100
9	The library's card catalogue service is effective	26	15	42	25	28	16	66	38	10	6	17 2	100
10	The users' needs are being met by the library	5	3	8	5	29	17	79	46	51	29	17 2	100

Asked to assess the effectiveness of the NALV library's services in meeting the information needs of its users, the majority (78%) of the respondents have mostly agreed that the circulation service of the library is effective. As shown in Table 4 very few (9%) were of the view that the circulation service is ineffective and some few (13%) were undecided. This supportive view would have been a result

of the fact that users of the library were encouraged to register freely with the library at their initial period of enrolment and were also allowed to borrow books for home use. And certainly, the researcher observed that the service is effective and the very busiest one among the library's available services.

Considering user's satisfaction of the number of books issued for a loan,

more than half (67%) responded that they are not satisfied with that arrangement; very few (13%) indicated that they are satisfied and few (20%) were undecided. On the other hand, current awareness service of the library has been indicated by most (70%) of the respondents as ineffective, very few (12%) indicated that it is effective and some few (18%) were undecided. With regards to the effectiveness of reference service in the library, more than half (68%) of the responses indicated that it is effective, few (17%) were of the view that it is not effective and very few (15%) were undecided.

As has been seen in Table 4, half (52%) of the respondents disagreed that there is interlibrary loan service in the library, minority (12%) agreed with the statement and few (36%) were undecided. As regards to the effectiveness of inter-library loan service in the library, half (50%) of the response rate indicated that the service is ineffective, few (21%) agreed that it is effective and very few (29%) were undecided. Though it is not easy for all users to ascertain the effectiveness or otherwise of such core services of libraries, their response corroborated with the best knowledge of the researcher that the service is ineffective. Moreover, considering provision of user education service for clientele in the NALV library, it has been indicated by half (48%) of the respondents that there is no user education being carried out for users, few (29%) agreed that the service is available and very few (23%) were undecided. This notion depends on the perception of the users about the term 'user education'. As the study revealed, most of the NALV library users were of the view that a user education in a library is a knowledge acquired with use of a particular library. However, user education service in a library is referred to the series of instructions received or learned on how to make fruitful use of the library resources and services for achieving one's objectives.

Then, with regards to the effectiveness of the user education service of the library, more than half (55%) of the responses indicated that the service is ineffective, some few (32%) indicated that it is effective and very few (13%) were undecided. While the library's catalogue service was rated ineffective by about half (44%) of the respondents, few (40%) disagreed and minority (16%) were undecided. Furthermore, with regards to meeting the needs of all users, the majority (75%) of the respondents disagreed that their information needs are being met by the library; very few (8%) indicated that their needs are being met and few (17%) were undecided.

The overall assessment revealed that personnel of the library in terms of professionals, paraprofessionals, and other support staff are not adequate to provide desired effective services to users. This state of the library contradicts Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities' (CULNU)'s Guidelines and Standards for University Libraries (2001), Rev. Ed. The study indicated that the library has adequate textbooks, reference materials and journals however the collections are obsolete. Regarding the provision of adequate journals, Nweke (1992:13) asserted that "there is the need for recent issues of a variety of other local and foreign journal titles to enable students and scholars keep abreast with development in the fields".

Findings also revealed that the library has adequate facilities such as; new library building and other facilities like; bookshelves, computers, enough seating space, reading tables, chairs, catalogue cabinets and adequate lighting.

Concerning the provision of desired and effective services to users in the NALV library, it has been observed that the library has no comprehensive and effective services at its disposal. There are no card catalogue service, user education, inter-library loan, current awareness service and lots more. As the study reveals, circulation and reference services are the most effective services provided. Thus, in an effort to effectively create conducive service delivery for the benefit of clientele, Oyelekan and Iyortsun (2011:129) stated that a library must satisfy its users' information needs. Effective reader services could be achieved when identified services are provided and a user succeeds in effectively making use of them in satisfying his or her information needs. This statement corroborates Akintunde's (2010) assertion that library services improve knowledge and skills for positive productivity as a tool for national development.

Conclusion and recommendations

It could be concluded from the findings of the study that the NALV library is in short of qualified professionals. But, its collections in terms of textbooks and reference materials are found to be adequate, though they are equally found to be not up-to-date for current information needs of the users. The library is adequately built and has adequate bookshelves, reading tables, chairs, computers, cabinets and adequate lighting.

But, it also lacks some important library working facilities such as binding equipment, audio-visual facilities, acoustics, telephone facilities, automation facilities among others. Also, the library has not yet embarked on the provision of wide range professional and informational services to users. Its services are only restricted to circulation, reference and current awareness services (CAS). However, the library still has a very bright prospect especially if the suggestions and recommendations of this study are implemented.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The NALV library and the management of the NALV Ngala should employ more professionals and para-professionals for proper and effective service delivery. Some other support staff should also be provided.

- There is also a need for the NALV to acquire various information resources which are relevant, adequate and current in the area of Arabic language and literature.

- The NALV library should endeavor to provide all the necessary physical facilities known in the university library system to supplement with its available facilities to attain university library's standard to focus on proper achievement of goals and objectives.

- Effort should be made by the NALV to provide various specialized informational and

professional services known in the university library system.

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