Organization of Reserved Book Collection and Utilization in Olabisi Onabanjo University Library

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Abstract

The study investigates the Organization and Utilization of Reserved Book Collection (RBC) in Nigerian University Libraries using Olabisi Onabanjo University Library as a case study. A combination of documentary records and survey by means of observation and questionnaire methods were employed. The study shows that the RBC is well used by the undergraduates and has a significant impact towards their excellent performance. The study shows that a written policy is being advocated to specify the number of materials to be placed in the RBC. Recommendations were made towards effective and efficient library services in the area of RBC to the enhancement of the users

Introduction

Libraries have been in existence since time immemorial. The major function of any Library is to provide information to its users. Libraries are to some extent educational institutions by their very nature. They are often described as a collection of information, print and non-print materials. However, if these collections are not effective in meeting the users' informational needs, the Library cannot be said to be functional. Libraries, therefore, are regarded as the heart of any institution of learning. In any academic community, the library provides resources to aid the curriculum, teaching, learning and research.

Generally, library is a service oriented institution. Thus, Reserved Book Collection is considered as one of the unique services expected to be provided by the libraries as a set of most consulted rare, scarce and/or specialized books, to their overwhelming users. Reserved Book Collection is an integral part of library collection. They are consulted most often by the users. The materials most found in the Reserved Book Collection may include books, diskettes, periodicals, maps, manuscripts, documents, theses, treaties, pamphlets, government publications, question papers and other rare collections often needed by the users. Such materials are kept in the reserved book collection due to their importance and value to the users. As Peasgood (1991) points out "Academic librarians have for many years selected from the main stock items to be placed in the Reserved and short loan collections and have acquired stock specifically for such collections." The reservation of reading materials in the Reserved Book Collection solely lies upon the decision of the librarians and lecturers who may place or recommend that certain materials should be placed in the reserved room. However, materials found in the Reserved Book Collection are in short supply but in constant and extensive demand. In addition, materials with limited copies can be placed on reserve on request.

Olanlokun and Salisu (1993) have advanced reasons for the reservation of materials based on high demand by many readers by the librarian. Books that are rare, out of print, but still in high demand can be put on reserve, some books are kept at the instance of a professor/lecturer. When few copies of the books are available in the library and many courses prescribe the same title for use of the students, the few copies are usually kept in the reserved book room so that the students in the various courses can have access to them.

Peasgood (1991) viewed that books from this collection are issued for a minimum period of one hour by a manual system so that the items can be retrieved from the borrowers as soon as they are requested by another reader after the initial hour.

The Librarian may have the privilege of loaning items from the Reserved Book Collection to users for overnight or weekend reading where found expedient. This privilege given to maximize the use of the resources in the Reserved Book Collection. Workman (1991) supported this position when he stated that when library decides to offer a good service to students, it is essential that materials on reading lists and otherwise recommended to students by lecturers and tutors is available when required.

A Brief on Olabisi Onabanjo University

Olabisi Onabanjo University formerly known as Ogun State University Library was established in 1982. Its academic activities commenced on 31st January, 1983. The journey marked the commencement of the library. This is a state university run by the state government and falls within the category of the third generation of universities in Nigeria. The University runs a non-

residential and multi-campus system. The law that established the University also established the library.

The library is made up of the Main Library at the Mini-Campus, Ago-Iwoye and eight branch libraries. The branch libraries are: Law Library in Mini-Campus Ago-Iwoye; Medical Library Sagamu; Sopolu Library, Ikenne; Main Campus Branch Library, Ago-Iwoye; Ijebu-Igbo Campus Library, Ijebu-Igbo; Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Library, Ikenne; College of Agricultural Sciences, Aiyetoro; College of Engineering and Technology, Ibogun.

The Main Library comprises of major Divisions/Sections/Units. The Divisions/Sections are: University Librarian's Office, the centre of administration, Technical Division; Cataloguing and Classification Section; Reader's Services Division, Reference and Bibliographic Services Section; Bindery Section; Acquisition Section, Gifts and Exchanges Section; Bookshop; Serials Division; and Multi-Media Resource Centre. The Divisions, Sections and Branches are not autonomous. They are under the umbrella of the Main Library. All the Divisional, Sectional and Branch Head are responsible to the University Librarian.

Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this research are to:

  i.   determine the level of access to Reserved Book Collection;
 ii.   identify factors inhibiting access to collections;
iii.   determine the perception of library users towards Reserved Book Collection;
 iv.   examine the mechanism put in place to guide the users in using the resource; and
  v.   offer recommendations on how best the user can have access to Reserved Book Collection.

Statement of the Problem

University Libraries all over the world usually pride themselves as the heart of the teaching, learning and research processes in their universities. It is a fact that the academic excellence of a university cannot be assessed in terms of its academic staff alone, but to include its library resources (human and materials). It is argued that a university is as good as its library.

The Reserved book services are one of the most important services in the university library normally provides. It stocks essential and much needed information resources due to their limited copies which not allow them to be placed on the open shelves. The University Library is therefore required to sensitize the users to use the reserved book collection rather than allow them to gather

dust and waste away as their value lie in their usage.

Seen as a place in the library where staff and users have close interaction on a daily basis and the staff are naturally busy to meet their yearnings, the reserved Book collection is created to ensure that the Library materials that are in limited copies are evenly distributed among the users so as to avoid monopoly by individual user. It is against this back drop that this study investigated the use of the reserved books in the university under study.

Methodology

The data for the study were collected using questionnaire, observation and available documents records. The study was carried out before the second semester of 2005/2006 in order to avoid some biases associated with the peak of library use during examination periods. The questionnaire contained 16 questions relating to some fundamental of Reserved Book Collection in the Olabisi Onabanjo University Library. In order to make the users comfortable in completing the questionnaire, users were required to choose from the alternative answers provided with one open ended spaces for views relating to reserved book collection.

The writer made use of research assistants in administering the questionnaire in the Library. The respondents who had completed a copy of the questionnaire once were not served on another visit to avoid duplication. Two library assistants were used as research assistants to administer the questionnaire covering library operational hours 08.00 hour – 6.30p.m for six weeks. The Library Assistants assisted in clarifying some of the question raised by the respondents. The method adopted enabled a high turnover of completed copies of questionnaire with a short time and with minimum difficulty. One thousand (1000) copies of the questionnaire designed were administered. All the copies (1,000 copies) were completed, returned and found usable. The data obtained were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Literature Review

Akinbode (2002) observed that it is the responsibility of the library to render certain services to users so as to make maximum use of the materials. Services to be rendered to users include instruction on the use of the library, issuance of guide to the library and the library regulations to readers, provision of general and specific information, assistance on location of documents, reservation of documents for the benefit of readers, literature search, readers' advisory service, inter-library loan, photocopy service, translation services just to mention a few. Ajibero (1992) corroborated

this, that for the library to perform its role adequately, its resources must be utilized effectively. As a way of achieving this, the library is often divided into services units, such as technical, serials, readers' services units. These units are further subdivided so that users will get a better value from the library's collection.

Agboola (2000) noted that the existing economic climate in Nigeria has made it difficult for students, even lecturers, to acquire personal copies of essential textbooks. This has also added to the burden of the libraries in seeing to it that the available resources are maximized.

A survey carried out by Ikem (1982) on academic growth and use of Ibadan University Library, 1968 – 1978 found among others that the Reserve Book Unit of Ibadan University Library was grossly under utilized and that there was an urgent need for the Library Managers to do something to rectify the situation.

The importance of newspapers as information source was highlighted in Aiyepeku (1982) study on information utilization by policy-makers. The study revealed that 84% of the policy makers consulted newspapers and magazines. This according to the study, ranked among the five most consulted information resources utilized by policy makers in the country.

Sowole (1995) however, observed that the growth of libraries' collection, were not commensurate to the users' population. As a way of maximizing the available resources for the use of a greater number of users, the idea of the Reserved Book Collection (RBC) becomes necessary. It allows for the setting apart some books that are of limited copies or rare books that are difficult to replace in a special area within the library for the use of all at specific times/schedules.

The existence of Reserved Book Unit in many University Libraries was to solve the problem of over population (orientation) as there are too many readers chasing too few library materials. This was the finding of the study by Abubakar (2002) who recommended that studies like these should be carried out periodically to assess the functionality of the various units in libraries.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondent by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	577	57.7
Female	423	42.3
Total	1000	100

The information in table 1 above 55.7% shows that (577) of the respondents are male students as against 42.3% (423) female students. The Library may have to investigate further, why the female students do not use the Reserved Book Collection as much as their male counterparts.

Table 2: Distribution o f Respondents by Study Level

Level	Respondent	Percentage
100	389	38.9
200	204	20.4
300	211	21.1
400	166	16.6
500	30	3.0
Total	1000	100

Table 2 above indicates that majority of the reserve book collection were 100 level students 38.9% followed by 200 level students 20.4% and 300 level students 21.1%. This trend shows that the higher the students progress in their academic level (year) the less they use the Reserved Book Collection. What this implies is that the final year students from 400 level and above made less use of the reserve book Unit of the library.

Table 3: Awareness of the Reserved Book Collection (RBC) Among Users

Type of Response	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	452	45.2
No	548	54.8
Total	1000	100

It has been discovered that 45.2% of the respondents were aware that the RBC exists in the library while 58.4% of them were not aware that RBC is operating and providing a good service towards their educational pursuit. This should be of great concerned to the Library Management.

Table 4: Waiting Period To Receive Materials From RBC

Time-Taken	Respondents	Percentage
5 – 10 minutes	162	16.2
10 -15 minutes	303	30.3
15 – 20 minutes	535	53.5
Total	1000	100

This study investigated the accessing period it takes a respondent to receive material from RBC. It was discovered that 16.2% (162) of the respondents accessed materials within 5-10 minutes while

30.3% (303) accessed the reading materials within a period of 10 -15 minutes, 53.5% (535) of the respondents have access to the RBC materials within 15 – 20 minutes. This reveals that most of the respondents are not satisfied with the services of RBC because as time is very precious to readers. This could be attributed to some human factors that could easily be surmounted by the Library staff desired.

Table 5: Impact of Reserved Book Collection on Respondents

Type of Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Possible impact	285	28.5
Negative impact	75	7.5
Great impact	498	49.8
Much impact	142	14.2
Total	1000	100

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the RBC has impacted on their learning. While 28.5 (285) of the respondents agreed that using the materials in the RBC has possible impact on their performance, 7.5% (75) of them viewed that using the unit's collection has a negative impact towards their studies. However, 49.8% (498) of the respondents indicated that RBC has great impact on their learning while 14.2% (142) of them indicated said that much impact were witnessed by them through using RBC. Generally therefore, it could be said that the RBC materials have positive impacts on the users.

Table 6: Rating of the Reserved Book Collection

Level Of Rating	Respondent	Percentage
Very adequate	311	31.1
Fairly adequate	354	35.4
Inadequate	153	15.3
Grossly inadequate	60	6.0
Indifferent	111	11.1
Don't know	11	1.1
Total	1000	100

In table 6 above, majority 35.4% (354) of the respondents viewed that the RBC materials are fairly adequate to their aspirations, (31.1%) (311) of them ranked the RBC very adequate. 15.3% (153) of them indicated that the RBC were not adequate to their needs. 6.0% (60) ticked grossly inadequate materials. 11.1% of the respondents were indifferent towards RBC while 1.1% (11) signified that they did not know anything about RBC. On the whole, it could be concluded that a majority of the respondents are satisfied with the RBC.

Table 7: Level of Accessibility to Reserved Materials

Levels Of Accessibility	Respondents	Percentage
Once	129	12.9
Twice	137	13.7
Thrice	74	7.4
Never	600	60.0
As desired	60	6.0
Total	1000	100

The table 7 above shows the respondents levels of accessibility to the RBC materials. About 12.9% of the respondents had access to reserved materials once, 13.7% of them had access twice, 7.4% had access to the materials thrice while 60.0% of the respondents who stood to be the highest had no access towards the RBC materials. The 6.0% who had access to the materials is insignificant of the total number of respondents. This implies that much is requested to facilitate easy access to the RBC.

Table 8: Sources of Information About Books on Reserve

Sources	Respondents	Percentage
Through Lecturer	292	29.2
Library Notice board	117	11.7
Colleagues	431	43.1
Orientation programme	160	16.0
Total	1000	100

The table 8 above shows that the 29.2% of the respondents had information about books and other materials in the RBC through their lecturers, 11.7% of them through the Library notice board, 43.1% and 16.0% through library orientation programme for the freshers. The implication of this is that readers have taken over the responsibility of the library staff in advertising their products to their consumers. Hence the need for the library to have avenues for creating awareness on the services of RBC.

Summary Of Major Findings
Some of the major findings of this study are:
1. The Reserved Book Collection is constantly used in the library by the undergraduate students of the university.
2. The RBC Unit is well patronized by the students before and after examination periods.
3. The 100 to 300 level students use the RBC materials much more than the other undergraduate students.
4. Male students 57.7% use the Reserved Book Collection as against 42.3% by the female students.

Recommendations

There should be a written acquisition written policy indicating the numbers of copies of materials to acquire for the Reserved Book Collection. The Africana and Nigerian policy should take notice of the collections so as to develop local collection for posterity. There is need for the expansion of the Library building to accommodate more users, materials and staff. Alternative to electricity power supply must be provided to make the library conducive to learning.

The Library Management should mount a publicity channel for advertising the Library products to the users. This can be done through library education/instruction to the users.

The Library should ensure that all the departments in the institution submit copies of the past projects of their respective students so as to update the library resources. This will allow more current information to be accessible to all categories of users.

The list of the reserved book collection should be boldly written and conspicuously displayed both at the reserved book room and at the notice board.

The time users spend to receive the RBC materials for use should be reduced drastically.

The staff needs to be more responsive and aggressive towards providing RBC services to the users.

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