

Investigating the Factors that Decrease the Usage of Nigerian Academic Libraries: A Case Study of Basug Library

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the factors that decrease the usage of Nigeria academic libraries and the BASUG library as a case study using four relevance factors that expected as ones that contribute towards decreasing library usage. To identify these factors as factors that decreases the usage of Nigeria academic libraries. A self-administered questionnaire comprising the three (3) scales and their items were incorporated and analyze to find out the findings. The findings indicated that these factors are causing the students not to frequent attending the library. The results of running these factors indicated that the library environment factor is higher in terms of mean scores and standard deviation with a slight difference with library staff and library services. This shows that the library environment factor is the factor that causes students, not to visit the library frequently followed by library staff and library services. However, the library staff and library services are the same in terms of mean scores, indicating that poor attitude of library staff and inadequate of library services at the BASUG library were produced the same results. It is hoped that the BASUG Library and other academic libraries would adopt the recommendations revealed by this study. The study discovered instance challenges that the users face in attending the library. However, these factors will guide the management to provide measures that help students to frequent attending any academic libraries.

Keywords: Factors, library, environment, service, staff, decrease.

Introduction

The academic library is the heart of any institutional learning whereby there are no institutions operate its services adequately and effectively without a library. It is suitable for any academic libraries to keep the eager learners/students abreast with a fact about his/her field of study and informed of other things that might attract individual attention. The role of the University library is to support students and staff information needs by providing relevant and up-to-date information resources and services effectively, (Abusin and Zainab 2017 cited in Mohammed *et al.* 2019). Any library has a story and uniquely powerful as well as challenges in operating its normal activities especially when it comes to charge and discharging their clientele. At the BASUG library, most of the students choose to visit the main library because of the atmosphere and suitability in location as well as reading facilities and resources.

It has been observed that the undergraduate students do not use library resources efficiently and effectively, some students for the first two sessions or more may not even care or bother to step into the library talk less to use the library resources. Thus, the purpose of this study is to find out the factors that cause undergraduate students not to frequent visit the library. To do that, the researcher used the following factors to know what factor is higher toward decreasing the undergraduate students to the frequent visit of the library. These factors are: (a) negative perceptions towards library environment; (b) negative perceptions towards library services; and (c) negative perceptions towards library staff. However, these factors were assumed as the factors that lead students to not frequent visit the library.

Therefore, this study is aimed at measuring which factor is higher or lower in contributing to the decreasing of the library patronizing so as the libraries would provide measures that tackle for a frequent attending and patronizing the library.

Statement of the Problem

It is disheartening to note that, majority of the library users do not utilize the library resources efficiently and effectively. The library was established almost in the same year with the university. It was found that the library had adequate information resources that support the students' needs. It was discovered that most students find it difficult to use the library to locate or access and use the library's resources as a result of that majority of them are neglecting to use the library resources. It is assumed that the patronage of the library by undergraduate students is just like a hospital only to visit when

needs may arise. They were mostly visiting the library during examinations period, and mostly to read their lecture notes. This necessitated the researcher's interest to look into the students and find out what discourages them not to frequent visit the library using some selected factors as the factors that cause the library avoidances which include: negative perceptions towards library staff, library services, library environment, and peers.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To examine whether these factors: (a) negative perceptions towards library environment; (b) negative perceptions towards library services; and (c) negative perceptions towards library staff effects in contributing towards decreasing library usage.
- ii. To explore which factor among these factors is higher or lower towards decreasing the library.

Questions

- i. Does these factors: (a) negative perceptions towards library environment, (b) negative perceptions towards library services and (c) negative perceptions towards library staff effect in decreasing library usage?
- ii. Which of these factors is higher or lower towards decreasing the library patronizing?

Methodology

This study is first of its kind considering the factors selected to measure the library the level of decreasing library patronization among undergraduate students. The data of this study were collected among undergraduate students in the faculty of Science between 300 level and final year students, the reason for chosen these respondents is because they are eager and breast to use the library resources and services for their final year projects and courses as well as their assignment. According to BASUG registry records, the populations of 200 level as well as final year undergraduate students during the study are three thousand and twenty-eight (3028). For the benefit of this study, a random sampling technique was adopted, in which each individual in the population has an equal probability to select, (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the sample size of three thousand and twenty-eight (3028) according to Kriecie and Morgan's (1970) Population and sample table is three hundred and thirteen (341). The study was conducted using a survey method with a structured questionnaire adopted and modified to fit this study for data collection. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection.

Results

Research Question1: Do these factors: (a) negative perceptions towards library environment, (b) negative perceptions towards library services and (c) negative perceptions towards library staff effects in decreasing library usage?

Research Question 2: Which of these factors is higher or lower towards decreasing the library patronizing?

Table 1: Negative Perceptions Towards Library Environment

S/N	Items	Number of Positive Response	%	Number of Negative Response	%	Total
1.	The size and space of the library is not adequate and suitable for my reading. Just no option.	207 (Yes)	69.0	93 (No)	31.0	300
2.	The size and space constraints inside the library restrict and expose students to noise/disturbance in the library.	89 (Yes)	29.7	211 (No)	70.3	300
3.	Crowding in the library causes lack of concentration and forces me to leave library.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
4.	Seating areas are not enough to accommodate more students. This discourages me from coming to the library frequently.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
5.	Poor arrangement and dirtiness cause library avoidance.	127 (Yes)	42.3	173 (No)	57.7	300
6.	The library opening hours and rules and regulation are not suitable to me.	46(Yes)	15.3	252 (No)	84.7	300
7.	Absent of library lockers cause insecurity about property's safety. Cause library avoidance.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
8.	Poor ventilation and poor lightning cause library avoidance.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
9.	The Library lay out is unattractive and cause discomfort.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
10.	Offensive smells inside the library cause discomfort and lead me to leave or refrain from visiting the library frequently.	127 (Yes)	42.3	173 (No)	57.7	300

In Table 1, the response to item 1 indicates that 207(69.0%) respondents responded that the size and space of the library is not adequate and suitable for their reading, just they don't have an option to go other libraries in campus for their study, while 93(31.0%) of the respondents disagree. In item 2, 211(70.3%) students responded negatively to the statement that the size and space constraints inside the library restrict and expose them to noise/disturbance in the library, only 89(29.7%) agreed to that. Response to item 3, indicated that 257(85.7%) of the respondents agreed that crowding in the library causes lack of concentration and forces them to leave the library, while the remaining 43(14.3%) students disagree with the statement. This corresponds to item 4, where 257(85.7%) respondents responded that seating areas are not enough to accommodate more students. This discourages many students not to come to the library, very few of them disagreed with this statement. This was consistent with the findings of item 5, majority of the respondents (257=85.7%) agreed that poor arrangement and dirtiness causes library avoidance, only 43(14.3%) disagreed with this statement.

In item 6, 252 (84.7%) disagreed with the statement that the library opening hours and rules and regulation are not suitable to them, very few of them 46 (15.3%) agreed with this statement. The respondents agreed with item 7, 252 (84.7%) that the absence of library lockers causes insecurity about property's safety which cause library avoidance or not visiting the library frequently while 46 (15.3%) disagreed with the statement. In item 8, the respondents 252 (84.7%) responded the same with this statement that poor ventilation and poor lighting can cause library avoidance while the remaining respondents 46 (15.3%) disagreed. This was also consistent with the finding of item 9, the respondents 252 (84.7%) responded that the BASUG library layout is unattractive and cause discomfort to the library avoidance, a limited number of respondents disagreed with this statement. (See table 1). Finally, in item 10, the respondents 173 (57.7%) disagreed that the offensive smells inside the library cause discomfort and lead them to leave or refrain from visiting the library frequently while 127 (42.3%) approved with the statement.

Thus, the overall findings of the above table show that the majority of the respondents were agreed with this factor that causes them to the library avoidance or not frequent visit the library. The findings of this study indicated that negative factor towards the library environment can cause students not frequent attending to the library. This factor was also considered as a factor decreasing the usage of library considering the respondents' comments on the 10 items which shows that the entire item under this factor has supported the students in the library avoidance. Henceforth, what the library would do is to revisit these items and improve the services as well as challenges to increasing the students' patronages and usage of the university library.

Table 2: Negative Perceptions Towards Library Staff

S/N	Items	Number of Positive Response	%	Number of Negative Response	%	Total
1.	The library staff treats me indifferently.	153 (Yes)	51.1	147 (No)	48.9	300
2.	The library staff did not shelving books. This fails me to locate items on the shelves.	89 (Yes)	29.7	211 (No)	70.3	300
3.	The library staff are not helping to locate books on the shelves.	202 (Yes)	67.3	98 (No)	32.7	300
4.	The library staff are not exercising their power to maintain rules and orders in the library.	112 (Yes)	37.3	188 (No)	62.7	300
5.	The library staff are irritable and this prevents me from asking their helps.	62 (Yes)	20.7	238 (No)	79.3	300
6.	The library staff are not professionals and some are not aware of the location of books on the shelves.	46 (Yes)	15.3	252 (No)	84.0	300
7.	The library staff are discriminative behaviors and bias towards their relatives.	200 (Yes)	66.7	100 (No)	33.3	300

In Table 2, with regards to item 1, 153(51.1%) respondents indicated that the library staff treats them indifferently which can cause them not visiting the library regularly while 147(48.9%) revealed as opposed to this statement. In item 2, the respondents 211 (70.3%) disagreed that the library staff did not shelve books where this can fail them to locate items on the shelves whereas the remaining respondents 89(29.7%) agreed to this statement. However, the majority of the respondents responded positively 202(67.3%) to item 3, that the library staff are not helping them locating books on the shelves, while 98(32.7%) negatively responded to this item. This contrasts to item 4, the majority of the respondents 188(62.7%) responded negatively that the library staff are not exercising their power to maintain rules and orders in the library, whereas 112(37.3%) respondents responded positively about this statement.

The respondents disagreed with item 5, 238(79.3%) that the library staff are short-tempered and this prevents them from asking their bits of help, only 62(20.7%) respondents responded positively to this statement. In item 6, the majority of the respondents 252(84.0%) disagreed with this statement that the library staff are not professionals and some are not aware of the location of books on the shelves, very few of them 46(15.3%) agreed on this statement. This was contrasts with the finding of item 7, the respondents 200(66.7%) agreed that the library staff are discriminative behaviors and bias towards their relatives, while 100(33.3%) respondents disagreed about this statement.

Finally, the overall findings on negative perceptions towards library staff shown that four out of seven items revealed that the library staff factor have an effect decreasing the student frequent visit of the library with can cause a lack of library usage at the BASUG library.

Table 3: Negative Perceptions Towards Library Services

S/N	Items	Number of Positive Response	%	Number of Negative Response	%	Total
1.	The library does not provide adequate number of books and reference books on the shelves.	207 (Yes)	69.0	93 (No)	31.0	300
2.	The library does not allow borrowing books and photocopying in the library. This frustrated me.	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
3.	Absence of loan services causes me dissatisfaction	257 (Yes)	85.7	43 (No)	14.3	300
4.	Books are not up-to-date, often irrelevant to the area of my study. This makes me to use other alternatives (e.g. internet).	211 (Yes)	70.3	89 (No)	29.7	300
5.	Absent of non-print materials in the library such as audio visual and internet resources cause dissatisfaction.	154 (Yes)	51.3	146 (No)	48.7	300
6.	Library does not provide access tools to its collection and need to introduce card or electronic.	100 (Yes)	33.3	200 (No)	66.7	300
7.	Library does not provide adequate signage indication classification number and subject books on the shelves. This make the search process difficult and time consuming and frustrating.	207 (Yes)	69.0	93 (No)	31.0	300

In Table 3, regarding item 1, 207(69.0%) respondents indicated that the library does not provide an adequate number of books and reference books on the shelves, only 93(31.0%) opposed this statement. In item 2, the majority of the respondents 257 (85.7%) agreed that the library does not allow borrowing books and photocopying in the library while 43(14.3%) agreed to this statement. This corresponds to the statement of item 3, the respondents 257 (85.7%) indicated that the absence of loan services causes them dissatisfaction whereas the remaining respondents 43(14.3%) disagreed to this statement.

Moreover, in item 4, the majority of the respondents 211(70.3%) revealed that books are not up-to-date, often irrelevant to their area of study. This makes me use other alternatives (e.g. internet), only 89(29.7%) respondents opposed this statement. This shows that the library is at the meddling that needs to provide adequate resources that cater to any discipline of the study. In item 5, the respondent 154(51.3%) agreed that absent of non-print materials in the library such as audiovisual and internet resources cause them dissatisfaction while 146(48.7%) respondents do not have this perception.

With regards to item 6, the majority of the respondents 200(66.7%) disagreed that the library does not provide access tools to its collection and need to introduce card or electronic, only respondents 100(33.3%) agreed to this statement. This contrasts to the findings of item 7, the respondents 207(69.0%) agreed that the library does not provide adequate signage indication classification number and subject books on the shelves whereas, 93(31.0%) respondents were negatively responded that they have difficulties in identifying books on the shelves because of the poor signage indication.

Finally, the overall findings on negative perceptions towards library services shown that majority of the respondents were considered library services as a factor influencing library avoidance, meaning that the library services providing in the BASUSG library is not enough for the users to be proud up.

Table 4: Negative Factors Towards Decreasing Library Patronizing

S/N	Factors	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation	TOTAL
1.	Library Environment	15.3133	2.42930	300
2.	Library Staff	10.7867	1.83823	300
3.	Library Services	10.7867	1.83823	300

In Table 4, the results of running these factors indicated that the library environment factor is higher in terms of mean score and standard deviation with a slight difference with library staff and library services. This shows that the library environment factor is the factor that causes students not to visit the library frequently followed by library staff and library services. However, the library staff and library services are the same in term of mean scores, indicating that poor attitude of library staff and inadequate library services at the BASUG library were produced the same results.

Conclusions

The study was conducted with the aim of determining whether these factors: negative perceptions towards library environment; negative perceptions towards library services; and negative perceptions towards library staff effects in contributing towards decreasing library attendance. From the results of this study, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents were agreed on these factors as ones that are influencing them not to frequent visit their academic library. The study has shown that the library environment is the number one factor that causes students not the visit the library followed by three other factors. This shows that the library building has a peculiar problem may be in term of location, size, ventilation, and etc. that were regarded as caused to this factor. It was hard that the university wanted to build a bigger library with the upstairs structure at the new side of the university; this can rectify this factor when a new building of the library is established.

Recommendations

The following are observations and recommendations for our academic libraries in Nigeria:

- i. The study discovered that the size of the library is not adequate for the users due to the larger number of users in the university. This study recommends the university to build another library that accommodates many users at a time.
- ii. The study observed that users of the library are not properly oriented about the services that are available in the library that is the reason why this factor (library service) is considered as a negative factor towards library patronizing. Hence, the users need to be properly oriented about the services and resources that are available in the library. Use of library skills course is not enough for these students, there is a need to be taught information literacy skills for understanding how to locate, access and use the needed information resources.
- iii. The staff of the library needs to be trained and retrained for better guidance of their students. Most of the library staff are novice due to the inability of prior experience in the librarianship. It suggests that the management to recruit experience librarians that can be able to cover this gap of experience. This is in the line of scholars saying: the competence librarian is the one who has 3experiences (experience, experience, and experience).
- iv. The study advised the university management of our Nigerian universities to let any library staff acquire relevant certificates of library and information science because most of the Para-professionals staff have only secondary school certificate which is not enough to serve their users about their information needs.
- v. Foreign academic library services like coffee machine, snacks, relaxation centre, children unit, and many more need to be invested in our academic libraries for the library to be fully patronized by majority users.
- vi. Any difficulty (peer) that the users facing in locating, or accessing information resources need to be curtailed by providing machines that can reduce the hardship of the users and feel comfort while locating information resources.

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