



Obstacles in Information Access and Use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library National Institute for Policy and Strategy Studies, Kuru

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Abstract

This paper examines the obstacles to information access and use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library National institute for Policy and strategy studies kuru. The aim of the study is to investigate how information is accessed and used in Olusegun Obasanjo Library and identify the obstacles to access and use of information sources. A total of twenty-five (25) library staff and 125 registered library users participated in the study. Three research questions and one hypothesis were formulated and tested at 05 level of Significance. A structured questionnaire tagged OIAUOOL was used to collect data. The technique used in data analysis was simple percentage. The reliability of the instrument was pilot tested using split-half and Cronbach alpha reliability index which stood at 0.52 for OIAUOOL. The findings showed that ICT facilities such as computer were not pass-worded in Olusegun Obasanjo library thereby makes information access by users to be smooth. The setback experience by users at times is inadequate searching skills to enable them maximize the use of information resources. It was concluded that information are access in prints and non-print formats, through the use of computers and are not restricted. Lack of awareness, inaccessibility of library resources, poor explosion of information, bad environment and lack of bibliographic control are the problems hindering users/patrons from accessing and using information resources from the library. The following recommendations are made; More of the prints and non-prints resources be made available in the library, information resources should be well organized/displayed in the library for users to be able to see and access, the library staff should improve on their information explosion, the library should be conducive for use by users among others.

Key words: Obstacle, Information Access, Uses, Library, NIPSS

Introduction

One of the fundamentals of an institution of learning is to provide enabling environment for the conduct of research and dissemination of knowledge for national development. Access to information is imperative to successful conduct of research and learning in any institution. According to Moon, Hossain and Kings (2012) access to relevant information is necessary for academic staff to take efficient decision in research. Supporting this assertion, access and use of information is key to solving problems and decision making in achieving research output (Adeloye 2000 as cited in Ani, Ngulube & Onyanacha, 2014). Therefore, access is termed used to described the degree to which a resource, service, product environment is accessible by many people as possible (Disabled World, 2019). Dictionary.com (2022) defines access as the ability, right, or permission to approach, enter, speak with, or use something.

Access to information can be viewed in a variety of ways, and a variety of academic disciplines approach access differently. Access to information has a number of effects on daily living (Muyiwa, 2015). Burnett (2008) in Muyiwa (2015), on the other hand, contends that



information access encompasses significantly more than physical and intellectual qualities. Information access has physical, intellectual, and social dimensions, all of which can be influenced by genuine external or internal causes. A better understanding of these various modalities of information access can aid efforts to offer information to those who seek it.

In light of these developments, librarians came up with the idea of training library customers on how to identify and locate the information they require for daily tasks. Individuals of all ages are always attempting to generate, gather, and exchange information (Florid, 2010). Gleick (2012) established that information is critical to people's socioeconomic and political development. The exchange and reception of intelligence or knowledge is referred to as information. It evaluates and alerts unexpected events, decreases uncertainty, offers extra possibilities, and motivates people to act. Therefore, whenever an accurate, timely, and relevant decision must be made, information should be examined to guarantee that an educated decision is made (Capurro & Hjørland, 2006). The quality of a decision is contingent upon the quality of the available information.

Obstacles to information access and use are those that prevent an individual information seeker from acquiring and properly utilising a source of information. Numerous barriers to information availability and usage have been identified by researchers, Uhegbu (2006) identifies five problems of information access and use as; economic, social, environmental, occupational, and infrastructure. Ugah (2007) compiles a list of ten such impediments to information access and use, which may include lack of awareness, inaccessibility, information explosion, bibliographic obstacles, environment, poor infrastructure, declining budgets and rising cost, cost for users, staff and crime. The following issues were mentioned in relation to access and usage in information centres: lack of knowledge; inaccessibility; information explosion; bibliographic hurdles; insufficient infrastructure; diminishing budgets and rising costs; cost to users; staff attitude toward users; and crime (Ugah, 2007 as cited in Muyiwa, 2015). Underdeveloped information management infrastructures, a lack of political will, illiteracy, inadequately executed information access laws, education and a lack of information management skills are barriers to information access and use (Svärd, 2018). According to Mahwasane and Mudzielwana (2016) insufficient funds for acquiring ICT facilities, lack of relevant ICT knowledge, lack of library education, lack of information literacy skills, lack of information retrieval skills and lack of awareness of Information Communication Technology facilities are major problems to information access and use.

While experience in the field of library science indicates that the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) appears to be making a concerted effort to make information resources accessible to its users, the users do not appear to be accessing and utilising the resources adequately and efficiently for learning, teaching, and research purposes. Similarly, library consumption has decreased in a number of libraries, including NIPSS.

Despite the inevitable and fundamental needs for the establishment of the library which is derives from Section 4 of the institutes Act Cap 262 of the law of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 which recognized the symbiotic relationship between a think-thank and unfettered access to information (Ameh, 2019), reduced funding and rising expenses of information resources, staff attitudes toward users, and user costs continue to be some of the library's current concerns. It is against this problem the study intends to examine the obstacles to information access and use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library Kuru.



Purpose of study

This paper is meant to access the obstacles in information access and use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library National Institute for policy and Strategy Studies kuru Jos. The specific objective includes:

1. To examine extent of information accessibility and used in NIPSS library.
2. Identify the obstacles to access and use of information resources in NIPSS library kuru.
3. To proffer measures to obstacles for information access and use in NIPSS library kuru.

Research Question

1. To what extent are information access and use in NIPSS library kuru?
2. What are the obstacles to access and use of information resources in NIPSS kuru?
3. What are the solutions for obstacles to information access and use in NIPSS library kuru?

Methods

Research design

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey method. This method is used by researchers who are interested in the collection of information from a representative sample upon which inferences are drawn about the attitude or opinions of the target population. A population of 67 was used for the study. The population for this study comprised of seventeen (17) library staff from 6 units of the library as; E-library unit - 1; Readers services unit – 5; Acquisition unit – 2; Cataloguing & classification unit – 2; Serials unit – 5 and Reference unit 2 and 50 registered library users for the year 2020/2021 was used. Due to the small size of the population, the entire population was used for the study.

Instrument

The instrument used data collection was a close-ended questionnaire tagged “Obstacles to Information Access and Use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library (OIAUOOL)” with 19 items demand response as strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The Validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts in the field of Test and Measurement and of Library and Information Science, Department of Social Science Education University of Jos. The split-half technique was applied and the test-retest reliability of the instrument of 0.52 was obtained.

Procedures

The researcher personally administered the questioners to the respondents. The face-to-face method or the direct delivery techniques was used I order to ensure a good percentage of returned questionnaire. This enhanced the rate of returns and afforded the researcher the opportunity to answerer relevant question from the respondent.

Method of Data analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and simple percentages.

Results

The data analysis, the investigation's findings, and the interpretations of the findings from the study's questions are presented below. The outcome is summarised in a table.



Table 1: To what extent are information access and use in Olusegun Obasanjo Library NIPSS Kuru?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Information is access through the use of printed recourses such as book, periodical and serials.	40(59.7%)	15(22.4%)	7(10.4%)	5(7.5%)
2	Information can be access using electronic means such as internet, and ICT facilities.	35(52.2%)	20(29.9%)	8(11.9%)	4(6.0%)
3	Information in library NIPSS is provided without restrictions.	50(74.6%)	8(11.9%)	5(7.5%)	4(6.0%)
4	Printed and non-printed material are made adequate and with ease of accessing them.	50(74.6%)	10(14.9%)	2(3.0%)	5(7.5%)
5	ICT facilities such as computer are passworded and that make information access difficult	7(10.4%)	5(7.5%)	20(29.9%)	35(52.2%)

Table 1 revealed that information access and use 40 respondents representing 59.7% strongly agreed with the statement that information is access through the use of printed resources. 15(22.4%) agreed, 7 representing 10.4% disagreed, while 5(7.5%) strongly disagree respectively. In the same vein, 35 representing 52.2% of the respondent strongly agreed that information can be access using electronic means through internet and ICT facilities, 20(29.9%) agreed, 8 representing 11.9% disagreed while 4(6.0%) strongly disagree. There was also a strong agreement that NIPSS library information is available to everyone with a score of 50 representing 74.6% of the respondents. 8(11.9%) of the people who answered agreed, 5(7.5%) disagreed, and 4(6.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Majority of the people who took the survey strongly agreed with the statement that printed and non-printed materials are made adequate and easy for people to get to, but only 10 of the people who took the survey said they agreed with the statement. Two people disagreed with the statement, and five people strongly disagreed. Finally, the people who took the survey said that ICT facilities like computers are password-protected, which makes it hard to get information. They gave the survey a score of 7, which is 10.4%. Some of the people who took the survey said that they agreed even more with a score of 5 (7.5%), disagreed with a score of 20 (29.9%) and strongly disagreed with a score of 35 (52.2%)

Table 2: Obstacles in accessing and use of information resources in Olusegun Obasanjo library NIPSS kuru.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Lack of awareness from the library staff	59(88.1%)	5(7.5%)	1(1.5%)	2(3.0%)
2	Inaccessibility of library resource	30(44.8%)	20(29.9%)	10(14.9%)	7(10.4%)
3	Information explosion is poor	36(53.7%)	5(7.5%)	21(31.3%)	5(7.5%)
4	Bibliographic obstacles	30(44.8%)	15(23.3%)	20(29.9%)	2(3.0%)
5	Environment is not conducive	5(7.5%)	4(6.0%)	50(74.6%)	8(12%)
6	Poor infrastructure in library	10(14.9%)	15(23.3%)	35(52.2%)	7(10.4%)
7	Declining budgets and rising cost of library resources and facilities	8(12%)	7(10.4%)	45(67.2%)	7(10.4%)
8	Cost for Users registration	2(3%)	15(23.3%)	38(56.7%)	12(17.9%)
9	Staff attitude toward Users and crime	10(14.9%)	5(7.5%)	15(23.3%)	47(70.1%)



Table two showed that 59 representing 88.1% of respondents and 5(7.5%) strongly agreed and agreed that lack of awareness from the library is an obstacle in accessing and using of information resources. 2(3%) and 1 representing 1.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. For inaccessibility to library resources, 30 representing 44.8% and 20(29.9%) of respondents strongly agree and agree with the statement that inaccessibility of library resources is one of the obstacles of accessing and using of information resources in Olusegun Obasanjo library NIPSS Kuru. While 10 (14.9%) and 7 representing 10.4% disagree and strongly disagree with the statement. As for information explosion is poor in Olusegun Obasanjo library NIPSS Kuru, 36 representing 53.7% of respondents, 5(7.5%) strongly agreed and agreed, 21(31.3%) disagreed while 5 representing 7.5% strongly disagreed with the assertion accordingly. The respondents strongly agreed that Bibliography is an obstacle in accessing and use of information resource with a percentage score of 44.8%, 15(23.3%) agreed, 20 representing 29.9% disagreed while 2(3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, the respondents declined that environment is not conducive in accessing and use of information resources in Olusegun Obasanjo library with 5 representing 7.5% strongly agreed, 4(6%) agreed while 50 (74.6%) and 8 representing 12% disagree and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. The respondents declined with the assertion that poor infrastructure in library is an obstacle in accessing and using of information resources with corresponding score of 10(14.9%) strongly agreed, and 15 representing 23.3% of respondents agreed. While 35 (52.2%) of respondents and 7(10.4%) disagreed, and strongly disagree with the statement. Similarly, 8(12%) and 7 representing 10.4% of respondents strongly agreed and agree that declining budgets are obstacles in accessing and use of information resources, 45 representing 67.2% and 7(10.4%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. The respondents responded with a percentage score of 2 representing 3% and 15(23.3%) with a statement that cost of user registration is an obstacle in accessing and use of information resources, 38(56.7%) and 12(17.9%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree with the statement. 10 representing 14.9% and 5(7.5%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that staff attitude toward users and crime is not an obstacle to information access and use, while 15(23.3%) and 47(70.1%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 3: Measures to cope with obstacles in accessing and use of information resources in Olusegun Obasanjo library NIPSS Kuru.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Good awareness from the library to all Users	40(59.7%)	12(17.9%)	10(14.9%)	5(7.5%)
2	Library resources should be made accessible to users	40(59.7%)	10(14.9%)	14(20.9%)	3(4.5%)
3	New resources should be exhibit so that all users will be aware	35(52.2%)	20(29.9%)	7(10.4%)	5(7.5%)
4	Summaries of information resources should be made in bibliographies in order to help users access them easily	56(83.6%)	7(10.4%)	4(6.0%)	----
5	Environment should be made very conducive	48(71.6%)	12(17.9%)	1(1.5%)	6(9.0%)

The analysis of respondents' responses yielded some interesting suggestions to cope with the obstacles of information access and use in Olusegun Obasanjo library with respect to good awareness from the library to all users with a score of 40 representing 59.7% and 12(17.9%) that strongly agreed and agreed respectively, 10(14.9%) and 5 representing 7.5% of respondent



disagreed and strongly disagree. Similarly, 40(59.7%) and 10(14.9%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that library resources should be made accessible to users, 14 representing 20.9% disagreed with the statement while 3(4.5%) of respondents strongly disagreed. The statement that new resources should be exhibit so that all users will be aware had a score of 35(52.2%) and 20(29.9%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, 7 representing 10.4% and 5(7.5%) disagree and strongly disagreed. In the same vein, 56 representing 83.6% and 7(10.4%) strongly agreed and agreed with the statement that summaries of information resources should be made in bibliographies format to help users have access easily, only 4 representing 6% of the respondents disagreed. Respondents strongly agreed with a score of 48(71.6%) and agreed with 12 representing 17.9% that environment should be made very conducive for library users, while 1(1.5%) and 6 (9.0%) disagreed and strongly disagree with the statement accordingly.

Discussion

The computed table value revealed that most of the library resources available in Olusegun Obasanjo library NIPSS Kuru are printed resources. The findings are synonymous with Kumar and Reddy (2014) who suggested that majority of academic community still uses printed resources for their research and academic work. Supporting this assertion, Edem and Ofre (2010) opined that 63.2% of users read printed materials on the daily basis in the library than electronic resources.

This study gathered that information resources can also be accessed using electronic means such as the internet and ICT facilities. This is in line with the findings of Adeniji, Babalola & Ajayi (2015) who asserted that majority of library users uses the available internet and email facilities to access information resources online. Equally, Salaam and Adegbona (2010) states that search engine were essential information resources that help users to browse for information resources online with the help of available internet connectivity in their library.

Relating to the question that information resources are been provided in the library to serve interested users, results showed that information resources users are not restricted from accessing and using the available information at their own disposal. This goes with the findings of Makori (2015) who reveals that information are important in the success of research, teaching, learning and administrative function of any academic institution for the development of an individual and the society at large by allowing the users to have access to the information resources provided by the library to develop their intellect.

Findings further reveals that ICT facilities such as computer are not pass-worded in Olusegun Obasanjo library thereby makes information access by users to be smooth. The setback experience by users at times is inadequate searching skills to enable them maximize the use of information resources. Ojokoh and Asaolu (2005) revealed that inadequate access points within the campus was the problem that hindered the students from using ICT facilities.

The study discovered that the following are obstacles hindering information access and use in the library; lack of awareness from the library, inaccessibility of library resources, poor exploitation of information, bibliographic control and, issue of environment. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Ugah (2007), Ugah (2008) who suggested that problems associated with access and use of information resources in a library are lack of awareness, inaccessibility, information explosion, bibliographic obstacles, environment, poor infrastructure, declining budgets and rising costs, cost for users; staff attitude, location, age of collection and so on. In order to satisfy the information access and use of users in Olusegun



Obasanjo Library, NIPSS Kuru, it was suggested that the library management should create good awareness to all library users, library resources should be made accessible by the staff for users to access them with ease, new arrival in the library should be displayed where users can see, summary of information resources should be made in form of bibliographic control material and the environment should be made very conducive. This is in agreement with the finding of Ugah (2007).

Conclusion

Certain conclusion can be drawn from the study that information are access through the use of printed resources, electronic means, information in the library are provided without restrictions, printed and non-printed materials are made adequate and with ease of accessing and ICT facilities such as computer are not passworded. Obstacles such as lack of awareness, inaccessibility of library resources, poor explosion of information, bad environment and lack of bibliographic control are the problems hindering users/patrons from accessing and using information resources from the library. Creating awareness to library users, library resources should be made accessible to users, new resources should be displayed, summaries of information resources should be made in bibliographies format and environment should be made very conducive for users.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. More of the prints and non-prints resources be made available in the library.
2. Information resources should be well organized/displayed in the library for users to be able to see and access.
3. The library staff should improve on their information explosion.
4. The library should be conducive for use by users.
5. The librarians should provide bibliographic control list of their information resources apart from the catalogue cards in the library.

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