

A Survey of Culnu Guidelines on Standards on Readers Services in State University Libraries in North West Nigeria

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Abstract:- This paper surveyed the extent of implementation of CULNU's (Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian Universities) [11] on reader's services in State Universities in North West, Nigeria. The study engaged descriptive survey research design. Questionnaire and observation checklist was used to collect the necessary data from the respondents and the university libraries under study respectively. The findings of the study revealed that all the state university studied has to a large extent implemented the recommended standards on readers services by CULNU. Although there are still just few aspects that has not been implemented such as Email, internet services, photocopying services among others. The study concluded by applauding the efforts made by the State University Libraries and proffered some recommendations among which Universities library management should keep up to date in providing E-mail, fax, telephone, computer and internet services as well as bindery and photocopying services to users as this will enhance the patronage of the library and user satisfaction. Also by extension will help in generating internal revenue for the library for its operation.

Keywords:- University, Library, Standards, CULNU, Readers's Services, State Universities, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities are known for the production of manpower for the society. No society can boast of having reliable, eventful, creative, technological manpower without having university or universities established in its environs. The university system has come to stay as a needed part of the society which is highly looked upon to produce manpower that will keep the society at large moving for maximum productivity and renowned name globally. They form the pillar at which the society rely on to produce intellectuals that can contribute positively to the society at large. To this end, libraries that are established in the universities that is university libraries have major roles to play in assisting the university itself to deliver fairly its aims and objectives. Without a university library, no university can boast of having the will to carry out its activities fully and to actualize its reasons for establishment. This is supported by [25] who in their article expressed that Libraries generally and particularly

those in academic and research institutes are the life wire of the parent organization. A library therefore is to the university, what a kitchen is to a home. University libraries are the single largest academic resource of last recourse. No university can rise above the status and level of services offered by her library. This may be why, though universities are referred to as 'Ivory Towers', the libraries are known as 'Citadels of Learning'. Information is a very indispensable factor for promotion of the development of society, and also an essential part of a nation's resources. Provision of relevant, reliable and speedy information at the nick of time, is directly linked with efficiency and progress. This without mincing words is an essential aspect of university library services. Libraries usually and especially the ones in instructional and studies institutes are the existence cord of the discern organization. A library consequently is to the university, what a kitchen is to a home.

Looking at the nature of a university library and its indispensable purpose and function to the university community, it is in place as it is for standards being recommended especially for university libraries to be implemented for effective smooth running of these libraries and to serve as a medium of check and balance to the university libraries. Standards are some laid down rules used as a measure to determine the success, failure or progress of a program, scheme, organization etc. It brings about quality. According to [2], standards is the degree of excellence required for particular purposes, the nearest of what is adequate, and a socially or practically designed level of performance. At a seminar on "Standards of Practice for West African Libraries" which took place at the then Institute of Librarianship, University of Ibadan, Dean as cited in [26] gave a definition of standard as "an example or rule or basis of comparison established by authority, a general consensus of opinion or custom, it is based upon either a specific description of practice, method, process, construction, etc, a measure of quality required to stated objective". [23] have provided and captured the essence of library standards as:

The criteria by which... library services may be measured and assessed. They are determined by professional librarians in order to attain and maintain the objectives they have set themselves. Standards may be interpreted variously as the pattern of an ideal or model procedure, a measure for

appraisal, a stimulus for future development and improvement and as an instrument to assist decision and action not only by librarians themselves but by the layman concerned indirectly with the institution, planning and administration of library services.(p.7)

In accordance with this, [1] states that standards are intended to help members of library and university administration responsible for determining and evaluating performance to optimize the performance of the library in terms of mission of the university. Standards set forth the process by which expectations may be established. With this regard, [2] posited that assuring quality in libraries mean that there must be a striking balance between what should be and what ought to be. [4] hold the view of standard as “a definite degree of any quality viewed as a prescribed objective of endeavor or as a measure of what is adequate for some purpose”. They further explained that library standards describe the ideal library, which may be in terms of its staff, objectives, information resources, services, physical facilities and budget. In a related development, [23] indicated that libraries may use standards as benchmark so as to improve their services or use standards in justifying acquisitions or activities and projects.

The Committee of University Librarian in Nigerian Universities (CULNU) was founded in 1973 (Constitution of CULNU, 1973). The aims and objectives of the committee is to advise and make recommendations to the National Universities Commission through the committee of vice-chancellors on matters concerning the general development of university librarians in Nigeria; to formulate standards for operations and services in Nigerian University libraries; to promote library cooperation in the country generally and specifically among university libraries; to monitor the work of agencies connected with the development of libraries and librarianship in Nigeria with a view to making recommendations/representations as may be deemed necessary; to consider other matters specifically referred to it by the National University Commission, the committee of vice-chancellors and other relevant bodies; to organize seminars, workshops, and conferences; to promote the welfare and protect the interest of all staff of Nigerian University libraries; and to do any other thing that would enhance the practice of librarianship and information science in Nigerian university libraries (Constitution of CULNU, 1973). Among the standards recommended for university Libraries by the committee was on Readers Services.

➤ *Standards for Library Readers Services*

University libraries support the academic programmes of their institutions. This is done by providing different readers services to their users. [2] in his study stated that the nature of services rendered by a library determines the status of the library. That the more and varied the services are, the more the library can be assumed to be developed. The performance of a library is measured by the quality services it provides and this shows the efficiency and effectiveness of the library [15]. Similarly, [9] noted that the patronage of the library to a great extent depends on the services rendered and attitude of library staff to users. In the same vein, [15] opined that user

satisfaction could be examined in terms of the services offered. Readers services is all about a library. It is the overall activities of the library. As it is well known that a library can only exist when there are users demand to meet. It involves a lot of services in the library to satisfy the clientele unending needs. To this, [25] is of the view that readers’ services involves:

- Circulation services: user registration, charging and discharging of books, overdue check and fines issues.
- Shelve management.
- Coordination of user education programme in form of use of library education or orientation.
- Provision of information services.
- Reservation services
- Current awareness services and selective dissemination of information (SDI).
- Formation and enforcement of rules and regulations to use of library materials.
- Publication and dissemination of library guides.
- Security services.
- Inter library loan services.
- Reprographic services.
- Readers’ records/statistics keeping services.
- Readers’ enquiry services.
- Library materials exhibition and display.

In another development, [28] in a paper titled ‘Standards for Readers Services’ suggested some standards to be applied to services in academic libraries. In line with this, [7] revealed that most procedures and services which librarians perform are prescribed and influenced or derived from established standards. Furthermore, they reiterated that almost all the writings in the literature which discusses standards are focused on the relationship standards have with library processes.

In the light of the above, considering the need for library services in the attainment of the objectives of the library as well as that of the parent organization Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian [12] recommended some standards for readers services which its first part is almost same with [28] suggestions as standards for readers services in Nigerian universities. According to him, the university library should provide the following services to its users:

Reference and information services; Specialized and in-depth assistance to readers in exploitation of library resources; Bibliographic instruction programs at levels appropriate to the needs of clients; Facilities for consulting non-print media; Services which enable library users to benefit from the resources of other libraries; and Services which will facilitate access to machine readable database.(p.18)

Also, among the recommendation of CULNU on library readers services is catalogue services, access to library materials and library co-operation services Similarly, [1] in their standard for higher education recommended that libraries in higher education should establish, promote, maintain and evaluate a range of quality services that support the

institution's mission and goal. Catalogue services are one of the essential services rendered in university libraries.

The role of the library is to organize information resources in a way that supports user needs. [20] is of the view that an information institution or a library tends to be prominent or popular for its organized rich collection and services. According to [11], the library catalogue is an essential tool. It is an index or a key to the collection, containing an entry representing each item in the library. He expressed further that it is important to both library users and library staff in its functions which include giving a comprehensive record of materials owned by the library, listing what the library possesses by a certain author on a given subject, and with a certain title, and also enabling library materials to be located easily. In line with this, [6] identified the objectives of the catalogue as: "to enable a person to find a book of which either: the author, the title, the subject, the category is known; to show what the library has: by a given author, on a given subject, in a given kind of literature; and to assist in the choice of a book as to its edition (bibliographically), as to its character (literally or topical)". Similarly, [20] stated that "the catalogue also tells where in the library a book is located". Also, "a catalogue is a record or list of books, periodicals, journals, pamphlets, monographs, audio-visual aids and other materials of a particular library, or a group of libraries (when union catalogue), or a private collection containing specified items of bibliographic information, viz. arranged in classified or alphabetical order according to any standard catalogue code or rules, i.e. AACR, LC, etc". [20] In essence, a library catalogue is a register of all bibliographic items found in a library. It also serves as an inventory or bookkeeping of a library's contents. Apart from catalogue services, one of the services recommended by CULNU as earlier mentioned is library co-operation.

There is no library in the world that can boast of having all library materials-books and non-book it patrons needs. No matter how large or big is the stock of the library; there would still be a lack in certain areas [22]. To be able to satisfactorily meet user demands, libraries within the same geographical location could agree to share their resources. This is called library co-operation [24]. Similarly, [20] stated that no library is able to satisfy all the needs of information resources and that most libraries did not, do not and will not have all the information resources that their patrons need. According to [20] libraries have been cooperating and collaborating on collection building and resources for many years. He revealed that the main objective of library cooperation and resource sharing is to maximize the availability of and access to information and services at a minimal cost.

Similarly, [18] opined that cooperation among libraries is absolutely not a new concept, but it has undergone a series of revolutions in recent years under influence of the cooperation model, the evolution of library services, and

recent progress in information technology. He viewed the concept of library cooperation as collaborative activities among libraries by sharing resources in a cost-effective manner, which aims to supply better services to patrons, improve the efficiency of library operations, and utilize resources effectively. Also, Line [30] defined library co-operation as "transactions or arrangements between bodies that have an element of goodwill and mutuality of interest in order to ensure that library and information resources are used as fully and cost-effectively as possible to provide all citizens (users) with equal access to library information materials and information." He also examined six principles of co-operation as follows:

Co-operation must serve a clearly defined purpose; it has no virtue in itself; Other means of achieving any desired objectives should be explored; The justification of any means chosen must lie in its cost-effectiveness; Co-operation should not be undertaken unless it is likely to produce better results than would be achieved by other means; Co-operation should be looked in a global context; and Over-planning should be avoided, and top-down planning is almost always undesirable. In a rapidly changing world, not only may the old answers no longer suffice: the question may be changing.(p.445)

In a related development, [32] gave a detailed definition of the term 'library cooperation' as:

"the creation and operation of equitable, that is mutually 'fair', collaborative arrangements between libraries and information providers which enhance the common good through making information available to all potential users (without obstacle to access by reason of cost) which is more extensive or more valuable to the user and/or is of lower cost to the collaborating providers. It represents a comparatively small, but vitally important, part of total library and information activity".(p.1)

According to her, the purpose of library cooperation inclines the need of participating libraries to know what is available for sharing from other libraries through union catalogs, bibliographic listings, OPACS, indexes and other bibliographic utilities; to avail of expedited library loans and document delivery services; and also to build complementary collections of materials on which to draw. Therefore, library co-operation refers to a reciprocally beneficial sharing of resources developed or pre-existing by two or more libraries. It is also an umbrella term for a wide spectrum of co-operation processes and mechanisms for libraries.

II. METHODOLOGY

Survey method was adopted for the study using questionnaire as the major instrument for data collection in addition to interview and observation checklist.

Table 1:

Checklist results of accessed implemented CULNU guidelines on standards on readers services in the state university libraries in North West, Nigeria															
S/N	ITEMS	KSUST, Kebbi		SSU, Sokoto		KSU, Kaduna		UMYU, Kastina		JSU, Jigawa		KUST, Kano		OVERALL	
		I	NI	I	NI	I	NI	I	NI	I	NI	I	NI	I	NI
1	Complete catalogue record		×		×	√		√			×	√		3	3
2	Union catalogue		×		×		×		×		×		×	0	6
3	Email		×		×		×		×		×		×	0	6
4	Fax		×		×		×		×		×		×	0	6
5	Telephone		×		×		×		×		×		×	0	6
6	Internet service		×		×	√		√			×	√		3	3
7	Bindery service		×		×	√			×		×		×	1	5
8	Reprography service		×		×	√		√			×		×	2	4
	TOTAL		8		8	4	4	3	5			2	6	9	39

KEY: Implemented (I), Not Implemented (NI)

Kebbi State University of Science and Technology (KSUST) Library,
Sokoto State University (SSU) Library;
Kaduna State University (KSU) Library;
Umaru Musa Yar'adua University Library, Kastina (UMYU)
Jigawa State University Library (JSU)
Kano University of Science and Technology Library (KUST)

The checklist results of the above table shows that only three (3) of the six (6) universities under study has implemented the complete catalogue standard. However, all the state university libraries do not have union catalogue, email, fax and telephone in their libraries. Finally, bindery services are available only in KSU Kaduna and reprography services is available in KSU Kaduna and UMYU Kastina only.

III. RESULTS

Table 2

Mean ratings on extent of the implementation of CULNU standards on readers' services in state university libraries in North West, Nigeria									
SN		VGE	GE	ME	LE	Mean	SD	R	D
1	Specialized and indebt assistance services to users in the exploitation of library resources	89	49	16	26	3.12	.97	1 ST	GE
2	Bibliographic instruction programmes at levels appropriate to the needs of the clientele	78	55	35	12	3.11	.94	2 nd	GE
3	Facilities for consulting non-print media	74	38	39	29	2.87	.92	3 rd	GE
4	Reference and information services	75	20	60	25	2.81	.83	4 th	GE
5	Library Co-operation	59	39	22	59	2.55	.95	5 th	GE
6	Complete catalogue record	42	46	38	54	2.42	.95	6 th	ME
7	E-mail, fax, telephone, computer and internet services	45	38	28	69	2.33	.92	7 th	ME
8	Extensive holdings of books, journals, microforms, audio-visuals, print and non-print materials	36	34	48	62	2.24	.93	8 th	ME
9	Maximum access to collections	35	34	45	66	2.21	.94	9 th	ME
10	Bindery, reprography, etc.	24	26	49	76	1.99	.97	10 th	ME
	OVERALL					2.57	.63		

KEY: Very Great Extent (VGE); Great Extent (GE); Moderate Extent (ME); Low Extent (LE); Remark (R); Decision (D)

Table 2 above shows the mean ratings of the respondents on the extent of the implementation of CULNU's guidelines on standards on collection development in state libraries in northwest Nigeria. Using the principle of real limit of numbers, the results of the data analysis reveal that six (6) items namely, Specialized and indebt assistance services to users in the exploitation of library resources Specialized and indebt assistance services to users in the exploitation of library resources (3.12); Bibliographic instruction programmes at levels appropriate to the needs of the clientele (3.11) ; Facilities for consulting non-print media (2.87); Reference and information services (2.81) and Bindery, reprography, etc (2.55) had an overall mean score of 2.50 showing that they are implemented to a great extent which is positive while Complete catalogue record (2.42); E-mail, fax, telephone, computer and internet services (2.33); Extensive holdings of books, journals, microforms, audio-visuals, print and non-print materials (2.24); Maximum access to collections (2.21) and Bindery, reprography, etc. (1.19) has an overall mean score that is below 2.50 showing that they are implemented to a moderate extent which is negative.

Also, the overall mean showed that Specialized and indebt assistance services to users in the exploitation of library resources (3.12) is ranked highest, while Bindery, reprography, etc. (1.99) is ranked lowest as extent of the implementation of CULNU's guidelines on standards on readers' services in state university libraries in North West Nigeria.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study as regards to research question 3 showed that implementation of CULNU's standards on readers' services in state libraries in northwest Nigeria is implemented to a great extent in the areas of specialized and indebt assistance services to users in the exploitation of library resources, bibliographic instruction programs at levels appropriate to the needs of the clientele, facilities for consulting non-print media, reference and information services, and Library Co-operation.

The finding is in agreement with opinions of [9] noted that the patronage of the library to a great extent depends on the services rendered and attitude of library staff to users. In the same vein, [21] opined that user satisfaction could be examined in terms of the services offered. Further supporting the findings of this study is [2] who stated in his study that the nature of services rendered by a library determines the status of the library. That the more and varied the services are, the more the library can be assumed to be developed. The performance of a library is measured by the quality of services it provides and this shows the efficiency and effectiveness of the library.

This study finding collaborates with the suggestions of [28] for Nigerian universities library standards on readers' services. According to him, the university library should provide the following services to its users: Reference and information services; Specialized and in-depth assistance to readers in exploitation of library resources; Bibliographic

instruction programs at levels appropriate to the needs of clients; Facilities for consulting non-print media; Services which enable library users to benefit from the resources of other libraries; and Services which will facilitate access to machine readable database. However, implementation of CULNU's standards on readers' services in the area of bindery, reprography etc was discouraging having 1.99 mean score which is negative. This shows that the state university libraries under study disregard or do not pay much attention to this aspect of services to be rendered to users which was recommended in the standard.

The findings have an overwhelming supports from many scholars. This is not far from the fact that the users' satisfaction is the end product of effective library system. Thus an effort which is targeted at fulfilling these objectives are held in high esteem. The role of the library is to organize information resources in a way that supports user needs.

This study reveals that state university libraries in North West pay much attention in assisting users utilize their resources, but, lack behind in provision of amenities like E-mail, fax, telephone, computer, internet services, bindery and reprography. The implication of this is that in this jet age of digital globalization, the users might not be able get fully acquainted with how to use the internet to fully source and maximize the avalanche of online resources that is available for them to use.

V. CONCLUSION

Standards being measures are very important to check and balance a program or organizations. Without standards in our society today, many things would have gone out of place. Therefore, the need for the implementation of set standards cannot be overemphasized.

From the findings of the study, it can clearly seen that State university libraries in north-west Nigeria have implemented about 50% of CULNU guidelines on standards on readers' services. The areas implemented to a great extent are specialized and in-depth assistance services to users in in the exploitation of library resources, bibliographic instruction programme at levels appropriate to the needs of the clientele; facilities for consulting non-print media; reference and information services; library co-operation. However, complete catalog record; Email, fax, telephone, computer and internet services; extensive holdings of books, journals, microforms, audio-visuals, print and non-print materials, maximum access to collection; bindery, reprography etc. are implemented to a moderate extent. It will not be out of place to applaud State University Libraries in the North Western part of Nigeria for how far they have gone in the implementation of CULNU recommended standards on readers' services. But however, they still need to attend to the ones that have not be fully implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Universities library management should keep up to date in providing E-mail, fax, telephone, computer and internet services as well as bindery and photocopying services to users as this will enhance the patronage of the library and users satisfaction. Also by extension will help in generating internal revenue for the library for its operation.
2. Government and other stake holders should improve their attention to state university libraries. For instance, a standing committee should be inaugurated to see to partner with the school administration in running the library.
3. State university libraries should be innovative in their services to users. They can come up with creative means of meeting readers' services demands even the ones not specified by CULNU in their recommended standards.

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