



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY ORIENTED SOFTWARE PACKAGES AMONG UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH CENTRAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 11 March 2014

Final Accepted: 22 April 2014

Published Online: May 2014

Key words:

Library-orientation software packages, university libraries.

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Abstract

The study investigated utilization of library oriented software packages among university libraries in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Descriptive research design was used for the study. The population of the study was made up of fifty seven (57) librarians and system analysts comprising of professionals and non-professionals. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect data from respondents. A total of forty-nine (49) copies of questionnaire were administered to forty nine librarians (excluding four university librarians and four system analysts) while forty-four (44) representing 89.8% were filled and returned and were found usable. Data collected through interview were presented and descriptively analyzed while that of questionnaire was presented in tabular form and analyzed with the use of frequencies, percentages and mean. Findings revealed that none of the packages is in use as a result there is no extent of utilization. The study identified erratic power supply, lack of library staff training as well as lack of enabling environment as the hiccups of library oriented software needs. The study recommends that university administration should see university libraries as a change agent or heartbeat of the university education where all the teaching, learning and research activities of the university education revolves and create an enabling environment that will grant library oriented software packages needs among the university libraries.

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Introduction

The word utilization is derived from the word "utilize" which simply means to make use of something for a particular purpose. Utilization therefore, is the extent to which available resources in an organization are made use of by people who need them. Utilization of library oriented software packages on the other hand means the ability of the user to identify the packages and make judicious use of them. Library oriented software packages may be available and identified as relevant to store and disseminate timely information in university libraries but the user (librarian/system analysts) may not be able to make use of them. Therefore without adequate and non-utilization of library oriented software packages in this modern age, university libraries cannot effectively achieve their objective of supporting their parent institutions. Utilization of library oriented software packages can in no small measure support a wide variety of library functions such as Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), resource sharing, acquisition, cataloguing, public access online catalogues, serial management, bibliography, indexes, retrospective conversion, printing of cards, charging and discharging of books, securing of library materials etc.

Library oriented software packages are set of detailed, designed and coded machine readable instructions or program designed by a human being called a programmer in order to enable the computer to carry out or perform library functions. They play a leading role in the management and timely dissemination of

information in libraries in general and university libraries in particular. Ibrahim (2006) averred that with the availability of several free digital library software packages at the recent time, the creation and sharing of information through the digital library collection has become the alternative and feasible proposition for library and information professionals around the world. Library oriented software packages in libraries has come a long way in a relatively short time. By the end of 1985 according to Mathews as cited by (Nwachukwu, 1998), there were over 300 micro software packages available for libraries and increase of 39 percent over the previous years. These packages could help in managing the local content and institutional repositories of University Libraries. The packages can also help in accessing online public access catalogues.

Drawing from the important of library oriented software packages, libraries in developing nations like Nigeria and in particular Kenneth Dike Library of the University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University Library Zaria, Nnamdi Azikiwe Library of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka among others are enjoying the dividends of utilizing library oriented software packages. In spite of this, it may be observe that while University libraries in other part of Nigeria are enjoying effective services provided by the use of library oriented software packages, University libraries in North Central Nigeria may still be lagging behind in the utilization of the packages and this may affect the efficiency of their services provided to users. It is in regard to this that the need to study the extent to which library oriented software packages are utilized in four selected university libraries in North Central Nigeria becomes pertinent to the researcher.

Statement of the Problem

Library oriented software packages are vital instruments that enable libraries in general and university libraries in particular to choose information resources and manage resources licenses. Effective utilization of the packages will enable librarians to provide access to remote electronic databases that will enable the provision of effective and efficient services. It is expected that librarians will use these packages in their libraries to build and manage their resources as well as offer efficient services.

Non-utilization of library oriented software packages in these libraries may result to ineffectiveness or no improvement in library services and as a result, the libraries may not be fully supporting the objectives of their parent institutions. In other words, the non-utilization of the packages may hinder access to remote electronic databases, thus, making a wider range of services and product available to library users.

In spite of the importance of library oriented software packages utilization and the danger of not utilizing the packages in libraries, it seems that library oriented software packages are not being utilized. Unfortunately, there may be no tangible effort to the best of the researchers' knowledge to examine the extent of which library oriented software are utilized in the University libraries. It is against this therefore that the researcher seeks to find out the issues affecting the utilization of library oriented software packages in university libraries.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to study the extent to which library oriented software packages are used in the four selected University Libraries in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the extent to which library-oriented software packages are used in these libraries
2. identify the problems affecting the use of library-oriented software packages in the libraries.
3. determine strategies for enhancing the use of library-oriented software in the libraries.

Literature Review

Researches have shown that a good number of library oriented software is used in university libraries. Among the studies are (Nwachukwu, 1998; Igwesi, 2006; Eke, 2009). A good number of libraries tried to use certain library oriented packages in Nigeria such as Nigeria research, academic and public libraries. Oyinloye (2004) in his work revealed that in 1984, IITA library in Ibadan replaced card catalogues with a fully computerized integrated database. The software used was Battelle Automated Search Information System (BASIS). In 1982 Adeniyi (2000) in his work informed that;

A consultant to the library recommended that the library should undertake a five-year automation programme if adequate funding could be obtained. It was also recommended that, in the interim, the library could exploit the functional capability of the Micro CDS/ISIS

software package which the library has already obtained from UNESCO. Micro CDS/ISIS is short for micro-computerized documentation Services/integrated set of information systems. The library obtained version 2.3 of the software from UNESCO IN 1989 (p.69-70).

By 1997 the library had acquired and was using for cataloguing; the fiche copy of the National Union Catalogue produced by the Library of Congress, as well as the LC CD-MARC, the CD-ROM version. Also used for cataloguing was the library automation software package called TINLIB.

Adogbeji (2004) added that Petroleum Training Institute used GLAS (Graphical Library Automation System), followed by X-LIB software, while the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library of Obafemi Awolowo University has used TINLIB and the Kware State Library Board was using X-LIB. The Kenneth Dike Library of the University of Ibadan, which has already gone beyond the initial stages of TINLIB installation, was given an updated version of TINLIB capable of driving 20 workstations in network (Ogunleye,1997). Similarly, Adeniran (1992) reported the use of TINLIB modules for reference services, the catalogue production and online catalogue at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

Other university libraries that use TINLIB software according to Idowu and Mabawonku (1999) are the Ladoko Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) Ogbomoso; University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi; Bayero University, Kano; University of Maiduguri; Ahamdu Bello University, Zaria; Federal University of Technology Minna; and Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos. In a summary of their work, Idowu and Mabawonku (1999) opines that TINLIB software package was used by all the federal University libraries in order to facilitate and ensure uniformity in database management networking and resources sharing. The Nnamdi Azikiwe Library of University of Nigeria, Nsukka later migrated from Tinlib to X-lib which came to limelight in 1996, but today the library uses Lib+ for its operations (Eke, 2009).

In spite of the ability of library oriented software packages in facilitating uniformity in database management, networking and resources sharing, providing instant access to local databases, managing the local content and institutional repositories, university libraries still face a number of problems are still recorded in the utilization of the packages. Nwachukwu (1998) revealed the problem of Tinlib utilization in Nigerian University libraries as management styles and ideologies, poor funding, lack of staff training, and cultural setting. In another development, Mahmood (1998) listed the following problems in the utilization of CDS/ISIS as installation error, system hangs, abnormal termination data corrupted, inverted file remove, errors in inverted file generation, incorrect search results, errors in printing/sorting, errors in import/export. The decision to accept or dispute that there are problems militating against the effective utilization of library oriented software packages with empirical findings is that which the study seeks to achieve. In summarizing the review.

In summarizing the literature review, availability of library oriented software packages, problems and strategies were given more attention by various authors. This indicated that the availability and usefulness of library oriented software packages is not to be overemphasized. The general review however, shows that library oriented software packages underutilized in university libraries in North Central Nigeria and this create a gap that this study is centered on. It is hoped that this study will fill the gap which has been created as a result of the absence of the studies on utilization of library oriented software packages in university libraries in North central Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The population of this study consists of eleven university libraries (federal, state and private) in the six states of the North Central Zone of Nigeria. However, in order to get an overall coverage, a total of four (4) universities libraries comprising of one university of Technology library, one university of agriculture library, one state University library and a private university library were purposively used. The population of these university libraries is made up; of fifty seven (57) libraries and system analysts comprising of professionals and non-professionals. Questionnaire and interview was used to collect data. A total of forty-nine (49) copies of questionnaire were administered to forty nine librarians (excluding four university librarians and four system analysts who were interviewed) while forty-four (44) representing 89.8% were filled and returned and were found usable. Data collected through interview and observation checklist were descriptively analyzed while that of questionnaire was presented in tabular form and analyzed with the use of frequencies, percentages and mean.

Findings

Extent of Library Oriented Software Packages Utilization in University Libraries

In view of eliciting relevant data on the above research question, the subjects were subjected to indicate the extent of library oriented software packages utilization in their libraries. Below is a tabulated and analyzed result of the above research question

KEY: N = Number of questionnaire returned; NE = No Extent.

1.83 Mean (\bar{x})

From the results presented in the above table, none of the packages is in use in the libraries under study. This is clearly noted as KOHA which is the most rated packages among the thirteen items presented with 2.4 mean fell below the average of 2.5. This means that library-oriented software packages are not utilized in these libraries.

In the same vein, interviewees indicate that in spite of the extent of librarian's awareness of library oriented software packages none of the packages are in use in these libraries. However, the study further reveals that the packages available will soon be accessible as adequate arrangement are being made for the installation of the available software packages in these libraries. In conclusion, what could be deduced from cluster four (4) is that, though librarians are aware of library oriented software packages, they need the packages and the packages are made available but there is no extent of utilization meaning that the packages are not being made use of.

What are the Problems of Use of Library Oriented Software Packages in these Libraries

In order to collect data relevant for this research questions, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on the problems affecting the use of library oriented software packages in their libraries. Their views are presented below.

From the result presented in table 3, it is clearly shown that respondents attested to all the items except difficulties in integration with a mean of 2.27 which fell below the average of 2.50. However, the result reveals that the major problem of utilization of library oriented software packages in these libraries is lack of conducive environment with a mean of 3.70, wrong choice of software with 3.58, virus attack with 3.57, lack of the funds with 3.54 and lack of compatibility with 3.45 respectively. The interviewees on the other hand pointed out that the problems of library oriented software packages utilization in these libraries are not far different with other library automation problems. The interviewees in their own part identified inadequate fund, incessant power supply, lack of technical manpower training, lack of conducive environment and lack of information and communication technology culture of the present institution.

In an attempt to summarize responses in research question 2, it should be noted that utilization of library-oriented software packages in these libraries is hindered by erratic power supply, lack of library staff training and lack of conducive environment, wrong choice of software, virus attack and lack of compatibility, inadequate fund, incessant power supply, lack of technical manpower training among others.

Strategies to Enhance the Use of Library Oriented Packages

In view of this research questions, respondents were requested to point out the strategies for enhancing the use of library-oriented software packages in the libraries. Their responses were indicated in the table below for easy comprehension.

From the results presented in the above table, none of the scores fall below the average mean of 2.50. The highest scores however, are 3.87 indicating that the University administration should be interested in the use of library- oriented software and 3.81 which represents fund meant for library oriented software should not be diverted. This is then followed by a mean response of 3.79 indicating that libraries should be guided by the features of the software and not the cost, software acquisition should be done with one vendor for easy integration with 3.73, computer analysts and operators be involved in the selection with 3.73 and proper insight on software capabilities before procurement 3.71 respectively.

Similarly, the interviewees strategized that adequate fund should be made available, manpower training be encouraged, conducive working environment be provided, the parent institutions should inculcate the culture of information and communication technology, funds should be made available, Libraries should be guided by the features of the software and not the cost, Software acquisition should be done one vendor for easy integration, Proper insight on software capacities before procurement and the use of anti-virus be encouraged, Etc. Conclusively it is clear from respondents that these libraries are seriously in search of strategies for enhancing the problem of availability and utilization of library oriented software packages to as to derive its benefits.

Discussion of Major Findings/Conclusion

From the result of the major findings, it is interesting to understand that even though with the availability of library oriented software packages in these libraries, none of these packages are in use (being utilized). This is in line with Haneefa (2007) who posit that while libraries automate their activities and procure

expensive electronic resources, there are not optimally used. This is the main concern of libraries around the world. However, it is surprising that at this age which information and communication technology is radically redefining the age long concept of librarianship; these libraries are still left of the decision to harness changes to advance their services. The question now is how can users of the libraries get access to remote electronic data bases to advance their research in this kind of environment.

The study found out that the non-utilization of the packages is as a result of lack of conducive environment, wrong choice of software, virus-attack and lack of compatibility, erratic power supply, lack of library staff training and inadequate fund. This is in line with the findings of Adegbeji (2005) which revealed the constraints of software utilization to the erratic power supply, finance, working environment, maintenance etc. It is also in line with Nwachukwu (1998) who revealed the problem of Tiblib utilization in Nigerian University Libraries as management styles and ideologies, poor funding, lack of staff training, and cultural setting.

The study further revealed that these libraries are seriously in search of strategies for enhancing the use of library oriented software packages. Following this, the study suggested that manpower training be encouraged, conducive working environment be provided; the parent institutions should inculcate the culture of information and communication technology. Libraries should be guided by the feature of software and not the cost, Software acquisition should be done with one vendor for easy integration, proper insight on software capabilities before procurement and the use of anti-virus be encouraged. The findings carries with those of Nwachukwu (1998) which are summarized as more fund be generated, training programmes be restructured to accommodate fair and just employees training, conducive work environment and system that will boost the morale of the workers be designed etc. Thus, the major strategy for enhancing the effective utilization of library oriented software packages in university libraries is that manpower training should be encouraged and libraries to be guided by the features of software and not the cost. This is because when the librarians are trained especially on software, acquisition, installation and use, they will be able to identify the features of a particular package which will match the following components that the library has.

Table I: Extent of Library Oriented Software Package Utilization In University Libraries

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	NE	X	DEC
1	KOHA	2	6	3	4	2.40	No Extent
2	AFW	5	-	19	2	2.30	NE
3	Micro CD/ISIS	-	25	2	15	2.23	NE
4	Greenstone	1	?	21	3	2.10	NE
5	Bookwhere	7	10	4	22	2.07	NE
6	Dspace	4	5	2	10	2.04	NE
7	X-lib	-	3	19	8	1.96	NE
8	Tin-lib	5	-	19	2	1.83	NE
9	Lib+	2	6	4	20	1.68	NE
10	MINISIS	-	1	12	24	1.37	NE
11	Mastalib	-	2	9	27	1.34	NE
12	BASIS	-	3	7	32	1.30	NE
13	GLAS	-	4	2	36	1.23	NE

N = 44

Table 2: Problems affecting the Use of Library Oriented Software Packages

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision	
1	Lack of conducive environment	30	5	0	2	3.70	Accepted	
2	Wrong choice of software	24	7	2	1	3.58	Accepted	
3	Virus attack		25	6	3	1	3.57	Accepted
4	Lack of fund		28	4	2	3	3.54	Accepted
5	Lack of compatibility		25	7	2	3	3.45	Accepted
6	Unreliability of the vendor	4	15	5	20	2.0	Rejected	

KEY: N = Number of questionnaire returned; Acc = Accepted = 3.31 Grand Mean (x)

Table 3: Strategies for Enhancing Utilization of Library Oriented Software Packages in University Libraries

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	X	Dec
1	Libraries should be guided by the features of the software and not the cost.	30	9	-	1	3.79	Acc
2	Wrong choice of software	26	6	2	1	3.73	Acc
3	Proper insight on software capacities before procurement	30	5	3	-	3.71	Acc
4	Enabling environment be provided	30	7	1	1	3.69	Acc
5	More fund be made available	36	2	4	2	3.63	Acc
6	Use anti-virus be encouraged	31	3	2	3	3.58	Acc

KEY: N = Number of questionnaire returned; Acc = Accepted. Grand Mean (x) = 3.31

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