

Evaluation of Public Library Services in Nigerian Public Libraries: A Case Study of Anambra State Public Library Board

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ABSTRACT

The paper is on Evaluation of Public Library Services in Nigerian Public Libraries A case study of Anambra State Public Library Board. The research design used for this study was descriptive survey design method. The population of the study is 114 in the whole branches. All the professional and para-professional staff in the Anambra State Public Library was involved in the study. The structured questionnaire was employed to collect data. The data from the retrieved questionnaire copies will be evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings shows that these services were user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service. Thus, shows that services are been committed to users in the public library. The extent of are services available in the public library. The items responded to user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service. Thus, shows that level of adequacy of the resources provided by the public Library in Anambra State Public Board is very low. Recommendations were made by the researcher.

KEYWORDS: Evaluation, Public Library, Services, Nigerian, Libraries and Anambra.

INTRODUCTION

A public library is a library that is accessible by the general public and is usually founded from public sources, such as taxes. It is operated by librarians and library paraprofessionals, who are also civil servants. There are five fundamental characteristics shared by public libraries: they are generally supported by taxes (usually local, though any level of government can and may contribute); they are governed by a board to serve the public interest; they are open to all, and every community member can access the collection; they are entirely voluntary in that no one is ever forced to use the services provided; and they provide basic services without charge(Jaeger, 2017).

Ram (2016) viewed public libraries as one that is accessible to the public and is generally funded from public sources and operated by civil servant. Public libraries are libraries that provide unrestricted access to library resources and services free of charge to all residents of a given community district or geographical region. A public

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library provides services to the general public. If the library is part of a countywide library system, citizens with an active library card from around that county can use the library branches associated with the library system (Nielit, 2016).

Uwaifo (2010) opined that public libraries are those which are established and maintained by individual state government. Every public library caters for a wide range of readership. In other words, public library clientele are served irrespective of their age, level of education, social status, political inclination etc. therefore, all categories of people (including illiterates) are user of public libraries. Hence the library has often been referred to as the “People University”. Koontz and Gubbin (2010) stated that a public library provides access to knowledge, information and fictional works through a range of services that are available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, physical and mental limitations, economic, and employment status as well as educational attainment.

Public libraries exist in many countries across the world and are often considered an essential part of having an educated and literate population. Public libraries are distinct from research libraries, school libraries, and other special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public's information needs rather than the needs of a particular school, institution, or research population. Public libraries also provide free services such as preschool story times to encourage early literacy, quiet study and work areas for students and professionals, or book clubs to encourage appreciation of literature in adults. Public libraries typically allow users to *borrow* books and other materials, i.e., take off the premises temporarily; they also have non-circulating reference collections and provide computer and Internet access to patrons (Zickuhr, 2013).

Akanwa (2013) citing Emenalor defined the public library as a library that provides information resources, services and recreational outlets for the generality of the citizenry, namely, the young, old, literate and non-literate. It is operated by librarians and library paraprofessionals, who are also civil servants. There are five fundamental characteristics shared by public libraries: they are generally supported by taxes (usually local, though any level of government can and may contribute); they are governed by a board to serve the public interest; they are open to all, and every community member can access the collection; they are entirely voluntary in that no one is ever forced to use the services provided; and they provide basic services without charge.

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The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access to all regardless of age, sex, race, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot for whatever reason use the regular services and materials for example, linguistic minority, peoples with

disabilities or people in hospital or prison. The same manifesto gave the key missions that should be at the core of public library services as follows:- creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age, supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all level, providing opportunities for personal creative development, stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people, creating awareness of cultural heritage, appreciating the arts/scientific achievements and innovations,, providing access to cultural expression of all performing arts, fostering inter – cultural dialogue and favoring cultural diversity, supporting the tradition, ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information, providing adequate information services to local enterprises/associations and interest groups, facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills, and also supporting and participating in literacy activities and programs for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary (Edoka, 2000). Therefore, satisfaction is a judgment on whether a user was satisfied with the service provided at the level of consumption. Satisfaction with library services is therefore a feeling of fulfilment on the part of library users.

In spite of the above, no effort has been made to assess public library services in Anambar Public library board and this affect the educational, political, and social development of the populace greatly. In the light of the above, researcher want to know whether why public libraries are not employed library services for the public citizens? It is against this background that the researcher wants to investigate an evaluation of public library services in Nigerian Public libraries a case study of Anambra State Public Library Board.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Public libraries are established to support teaching, learning, research and recreations by procuring resources and services designed to meet the latest information needs of all professionals in their various organization and beyond. There is need for public library to provide services and resources that will effectively meet the information needs of their users. Exhaustive search of the literature reveals that no previous researches has been conducted on this with respect to the public library of Anambra State Board under study and answers to these questions will certainly fill the gap in our knowledge of the public services provided by the Anambra State Board.

In the light of the above, researcher want to know whether public library services are fully utilized by the users? It is against this background that the researcher wants investigate an evaluation of public library services in Nigerian Public libraries a case study of Anambra State Public Library Board.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study include to-

- 1 Identify the types of services provided in the Anambra State public Library Board
2. determine the resources employed for the provision of service in the public library Anambra State Board
3. ascertain the level of adequacy of the resources for services in the public library.

Research Question

1. What are the types of services provided in the public library of Anambra State Board?
2. To what extent are these services available in the public library?
3. What is the level of adequacy of the resources provided by the public Library in Anambra State Public Board?

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Research methods

The research design used for this study was descriptive survey design method. The population of the study is 114 in the whole branches. These are professional and para-professional staff in public library in the Anambra State Public Library. They are all staff providing services to users in both headquarter and branch libraries in both urban and rural areas of the state. The researcher used the simple sampling technique to sample the population of 114 of the staff in headquarter and town Anambra State, All the professional and para-professional staff in the Anambra State Public Library were involved in the study. The structured questionnaire was employed to collect data.

The researcher was able to examine evaluation of public library services in Nigerian Public libraries a case study of Anambra State Public Library Board is a two-part structured the relevance of the instrument's to the content, purpose, and language (whether it was adequate or ambiguous) to make sure it would elicit the required information. The data from the retrieved questionnaire copies will be evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. All of the research questions will be answered using descriptive statistics. The following will be the final decision:

SA/VHE	= 3.50-4.00
Agree/HE	= 2.50-3.49
Disagree/LE	= 1.50-2.49
Strongly disagree/VLE	= 1.00-1.99

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Question1: What are the types of services provided in the public library of Anambra State Board?

Table 1: Responses to Research Question

S/N	Strategy	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	User education	60	162	54	34	2.80
2	Mobile library service	78	152	46	34	2.86
3	Inter library loan service	96	108	56	50	2.81
4	Lending service	110	82	62	56	2.79
5	Internet service	72	94	64	80	2.51
6	Reprographic service	86	80	68	76	2.57
7	Reference service	78	82	68	82	2.50
	Average mean (x)					2.49

The results presented in table 1 shows that staff committed some of the above types of services provided in the public library. The services were user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service. The Mean score of the aforesaid were 2.80, 2.86, 2.81, 2.79, 2.51, 2.57, and 2.50. Thus, the grand Mean of 2.49 shows that services are been committed to users in the public library.

Research Question 2: To what extent are these services available in the public library?

S/N	Services	VHE	HE	ME	VLE	Mean
1.	User education	142	134	24	10	3.32
2.	Mobile library service	158	114	32	6	3.66
3.	Inter library loan service	138	116	40	16	3.21
4	Lending service	128	134	34	14	3.21
5.	Internet service	90	116	74	30	2.86
6.	Reprographic service	64	132	86	28	2.75
7.	Reference service	142	134	24	10	3.32
Average mean (x)						3.16

In table 2 above showed the extent are these services available in the public library. The items responded to user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service.. There Mean score were 3.32, 3.66, 3.21, 3.21, 2.86, and 3.32 respectively thereby having an average Mean score of 3.16 which is above the cut-off point 2.50. These showed that extent are these services available in the public library of Nigeria.

Research question 3: What is the level of adequacy of the resources provided by the public Library in Anambra State Public Board?

S/N	Resources	VHL	HL	LL	VLL	Mean
1.	Textbooks	142	152	12	4	3.39
2.	Reference materials	168	132	6	4	3.50
3.	Serials/journals	114	122	60	14	3.08
4.	Audio visuals	11	51	104	144	1.77
5.	Government publications	16	64	88	142	1.85
6.	Electronic information resources	82	54	94	80	2.45
7.	Foreign publications	10	38	156	106	1.85
Average mean (x)						2.49

The table 3 showed the responses to the questions that were presented to answer the research question 3. The mean scores for the level of adequacy of the textbooks, reference materials, Serials/journals. 3.39, 3.50 and 3.08 for questions 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The average mean score for the questions is 3.32 which is above the decision mean 2.50. While mean score of audio visuals, government publications, electronic information resources and foreign publications which are 1.77, 1.85, 2.45, and 1.85 respectively with a total average Mean score of 1.98 which is less than the cut off score. Thus, the grand Mean of 2.49 shows that level of adequacy of the resources provided by the public Library in Anambra State Public Board is very low.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Staff provides some in the public library. These services were user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service. Thus, shows that services are been committed to users in the public library. This finding is in line with the Ozioko and Usman's (2019) findings which indicate that the services offered to school library users (teachers and students) are lending services, provision of seating and study facilities and user education. Also the dominant public relations practices in school libraries in the state include readers 'services, use of library's notice board, book talks, library displays and exhibitions. These services are significantly related to use of print media tools.

The extent of are services available in the public library. The items responded to user education, mobile library service, inter library service, lending service, internet, reprographic service, and reference service. These showed that extent are these services available in the public library of Nigeria. Also, Bala and Asabe (2018) study results agreed with this study that the library employs signage, exhibition and bulletin as major public relation and publicity strategies which affect service delivery therein.

The mean scores for the level of adequacy of the textbooks, reference materials, and Serials/journals very high respectively. While audio visuals, government publications, electronic information resources and foreign publications which are which is less than the cut off score. Thus, shows that level of adequacy of the resources provided by the public Library in Anambra State Public Board is very low. Anyalebechi and Udo-Anyanwu's (2016) research report is in line with this finding that the main areas of need of the respondents for using the public library are for information, education, social and reference materials, government publications, serials/journals and textbooks which aid in actualizing service delivery objectives. The recorded similarities among the findings above could be attributed to the use of similar correlation statistics.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study appraised the evaluation of public library services in Nigerian Public Libraries a case study of Anambra State Public Library Board. Objectives were formulated and research questions drawn from the objectives. Consequently, the objectives of the study were achieved and the research questions answered. This research questions guided the study. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that: Public library Staff/users are not satisfied with the services. Public library users often are ignorant of the services provided in their libraries. From the observation made, the researcher noticed that most reference information materials are outdated, and again that the section is mostly empty because the staff are not skillful enough and the users do not actually hunger for the services rendered there. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that;

- The library management should ensure that adequate resources for library services.
- The library management should see that made service available to enhance library service delivery.
- Librarians should be exposed to conferences and workshops by the library management and government to enhance service delivery in libraries are taught to them.

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