

# Library Resources and Information Needs of Students and Staff: Experience in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Library is regarded as the nerve centre of any institution. This paper, therefore, points out information needs of academic community, objectives and organisation of university libraries. Library resources, facilities and services that are relevant to research activities are also examined in the work. This paper also discusses categories of staff in the university library as well as eligible users of university library.

**Keywords:** Library resources, Resources development, Resources management, Library services, Library facilities, Library organisation, Information needs, Library users, Olabisi Onabanjo University.

## 1. Introduction

A university is an institution of higher education which grants academic degrees in various subjects. A university typically provides undergraduate and postgraduate education. The major functions of universities are teaching, research, public services and the conservation of knowledge and ideas. University education, according to Ayeni (2008), is an avenue created for the development of the mind, the individual person, the provision of quality human capital and the development of society. A system of education without a well-equipped library with current, relevant and adequate resources is not complete. Traditionally, the universities and their libraries represented physical knowledge centre which individuals will have to visit to receive the information they needed (Emmanuel and Jegede, 2011). The university library is also referred to as academic library. The library could be regarded as a reservoir of information where large amount of facts or knowledge is being supplied to information seekers. A university library therefore, is the nerve centre of any university. Aina (2002) expressed that the major objective of the university library is to provide materials and services which will currently and in the future best contribute to the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the university. For effective teaching and learning activities, the library is expected to be a pulsing heart that quickens all learning activities. It is thus easily the first accessible mentor to whom every student should turn to, for guidance. This was why Anunobi, Nwakwuo and Ezejiofor (2010) expressed the view that access to information is primarily through the university library. Thanuskodi (2012) pointed out that information provides the core for the development of knowledge, the basis for innovations, the resources for informed citizenry and as a result, becomes a key commodity for the progress of a society. Thanuskodi (2012) emphasised further that several of the resources are expensive, complex or difficult for individuals to acquire and use; and that the role of libraries, therefore, becomes vital in meeting the information needs of individuals in the society.

The university or academic library provides relevant print and non-print resources for undergraduates, post-graduates, academic and non-academic staff as well as other members of the university community to satisfy information needs, personal development needs and other needs depending on the individual user. Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2008) regarded library as a source for acquiring required information resources such as reference books, general books, monographs, serials, theses, manuscripts and archives, audiovisuals, electronic databases and others. Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2008) revealed that library resources are used for teaching, research and general knowledge. University library, as puts by Loho (1992), interacts with the users in order to identify resources users want and to provide them with the relevant information needed. Loho (1992) expressed further that for effective use of the library and its materials, users need to visit the library for self-registration which paves way for subsequent use of the library. Users could also be alerted of information available in the library by operating current awareness services (CAS) through the use of various information and communication technology tools and services.

## 2. Brief History of the Olabisi Onabanjo University (O.O.U.)

Olabisi Onabanjo University is a state government university located in Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. The University was founded on the 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1982 as Ogun State University and was later renamed Olabisi Onabanjo University on the 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2001 in honour of a great citizen of the State, Chief (Dr) Olabisi Onabanjo whose efforts as the then Governor of Ogun State gave birth to the University. The University operates multi-campus system. The University has five campuses: Main Campus, Ago-Iwoye; Aiyetoro Campus; Ibogun Campus; Sagamu Campus; and Ikenne Campus.

At present, the University has three Colleges: College of Agricultural Science, Aiyetoro, College of Engineering and Technology, Ibogun, and Obafemi Awolowo College of Health Science, Sagamu; and six Faculties: Faculties of Basic Medical Science (Ikenne), Arts, Social and Management Science, Law, Education

and Science as well as one School: Postgraduate School and a befitting Library. All the faculties, Postgraduate School and the University Main Library, except Faculty of Basic Medical Science that is located in Ikenne, are in the Main Campus, Ago-Iwoye. The University has about sixty (60) academic Departments running undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Members of the University community comprise teaching (academics) staff, non-teaching staff and students. Presently, the students' population of the University is about Nineteen Thousand (19,000) while the staff strength is about Three Thousand, Five Hundred (3,500) (Adesanya, 2016).

### 3. Brief About Olabisi Onabanjo University Library (O.O.U. Library)

Olabisi Onabanjo University Library formerly known as Ogun State University Library was established together with the University in 1982. The Library is made up of the Main Library at the Main Campus, Ago-Iwoye and six other branch libraries. The branch libraries are: Law Library, Main Campus, Ago-Iwoye; Medical Library, Sagamu; Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Library, Ikenne; Sopolu (Special) Library, Ikenne; College of Agricultural Science Library, Aiyetoro; and College of Engineering and Technology Library, Ibogun. None of the branch library is autonomous. They are all under the control of the Main Library and supervision of the University Librarian. The Library is automated and adopts Koha Software Package for its automation. The University Library has databases in various disciplines. In addition to the electronic resources of the University Library, the Library also has collections of about Ninety-Eight Thousand (98,000) volumes of books and Two Thousand, Three Hundred and Ninety-Seven (2,397) titles of Twenty-Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred and Thirty (27,730) volumes of scholarly journals. The staff strength of the University Library is about Ninety (90).

### 4. Set-up of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library

The O.O.U. Library is made up of the Main Library and branch libraries spread across the campuses of the University for effective operation of the university and library activities. The Main Library is however made up of the following departments:

- **Administrative Department:**  
This is the centre of administration or administrative activities in the library and is usually referred to as the Office of the University Librarian. The University Librarian, an academic who is also a Principal Officer of the university, is the administrator responsible for the effective management of human and materials resources of the Library.
- **Collection Development Department:**  
This department is made up of two sections and these are the *Acquisitions Section* and the *Gifts and Exchanges Section*. The acquisitions Section selects, orders and purchases new books for the library while the Gifts and Exchanges Section solicits for resources as well as exchanges of materials relevant for the University's programmes. Newly acquired books are checked, accessioned, stamped and listed here before being passed to the Technical Services Department for further processing.
- **Technical Services Department:**  
Accessioned books from the Collection Development Department are checked, catalogued, classified, processed and dispatched to the Main Library, branches and the various campuses of the university library for actual use. The university library adopts classified catalogue and the Library of Congress Classification Scheme to process books for shelves. The *Library Security Unit* and *Data Maintenance Unit* are under the Technical Services Department. The *Library Security Unit* is responsible for the safe-keep of the Library buildings, personnel (human) and material resources (books and other library facilities).
- **Readers' Services Department:**  
*Reading Areas*, *Reference Section*, *Circulation Section* and *Reserved Book Room* as well as the *Bindery* and *Reprographic Section* are under the Department.  
-The *Reading Areas* are usually areas where readers/users are expected to sit and read while making use of their own materials or library materials in the library. This is made up of the postgraduate and undergraduate Reading Areas.  
-The *Reference Section* houses the library's reference collections and provides reference services by giving readers' advice services in addition to keeping reference materials. The reference collections are made up of dictionaries, encyclopaedias, handbooks, guides, manuals, research reports, technical reports, atlases, directories, indexes, abstracts, and so on. The university library has both the general reference and subjects reference collections to satisfy the information needs of staff, students and other categories of users.  
-*Circulation Section* is responsible for registration of library users, such as, the researchers, academic staff, non academic and students at different levels; charging in and out of the library books; collection of book over-due fines from the borrowers; packing and shelving of newly processed books, consulted

books and returned books. This Section is also responsible for shelving and shelf-reading of materials on the shelves.

*-Reserved Book Room* is a place where study materials in short supply but in constant and extensive demand are kept for in-house use.

*-Bindery and Reprographic Section* is responsible for the repairs of damaged library books from excessive use.

- **Serials Department:**

This is where all serial publications, such as, journals, magazines, newspapers and others alike are being acquired, processed, organised, preserved and maintained for use by readers, most especially, the lecturers and postgraduate students.

- **Multi-Media Department:**

This is the section of the library where media, such as, computers, laptops, printers, and photocopiers as well as the Internet connectivity tools/facilities are housed and maintained for use. Also contained are the CD-ROMs and scholarly databases, such as, AGORA, HINARI, JSTOR, EBSCO HOST, LEXIS NEXIS, Science Direct, JSTOR, INASP Collection and some other non-subscription databases.

In each of the Branch Libraries are the Departments except the Administrative Department, Collection Development Department and the Technical Services Department. Control of the branch libraries; acquisition of books, journals, facilities and other resources; and their processing are centrally done in the Main Library.

## 5. University Library Resources

Library resources are typically print and non print resources. The O.O.U. Main Library and its branches spread across Ogun State essentially stock both the print and non print resources to fulfill the information needs of students and staff as well as other members of the university community. The resources cover programmes in Agriculture and its related fields, Law, Arts, Education, Sciences, Social and Management Sciences, Engineering, Technology, Basic Medical Sciences, Medicine and Pharmacy. The print resources of the Library are classified into:

1. **Text Books and Monographs:** All relevant text books and monographs especially on the discipline taught in the university.
2. **General Reference Books:** Dictionaries, Who is Who, Encyclopaedias, Yearbooks, Almanacs, Handbooks, Atlases, Maps, Globes, Calendars, Reports, Bulletin, Directories, Bibliographies, Indexes, Abstracts, Past Examination Question Papers, Essays, Thesis and Dissertations.
3. **Serials Publications:** These are the Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, and others alike.
4. **Non-print resources of the Library are the:**
  - a. **Electronic Resources:** Databases including CD-ROMs on different and relevant subjects.
  - b. **Audio Visual Materials:** Maps, Photographs, Filmstrips, Tape-Recordings, Video Cassettes, Disc, Television, Sound Films, Computers, Transparencies, Slides and their Equipment.

## 6. University Library Services

The university library offers a wide range of services including the following:

*Inter Library Loans:* Where the material required is not available in the library stock, it is possible to obtain a photocopy or soft copy of the materials from holding library.

*Reservations:* Books that are in constant use and with limited copies are placed on reserve on request.

*Reference and Readers Advisory Service:* This is offered by the Readers' Services Librarian and all professional staff of the library.

*Inter-Library Cooperation:* The library introduces the users to other libraries for research or vacation reading in those libraries.

*Exhibitions:* The library periodically holds exhibitions and displays either as a contribution to subjects of topical interests, or to draw attention to some of the library stock. The library also assists Departments and Faculties in planning and staging of exhibitions. At times, publishers and book dealers are invited to exhibit their stock under the auspices of the university library, as a means of helping both students and staff to select books for their personal collection.

*Bindery Service:* The university library with well-equipped Bindery Section also offers bindery service to users and outsiders at a moderate charge.

*Current Awareness Services:* The university library adequately inform the users of new additions of materials to the library by way of displaying them; pasting of book jackets on the notice-board, and through writing to the appropriate Heads of Department, Deans of Faculty, and Provosts of College.

## 7. University Library Facilities

Besides the provision of the aforementioned resources and services, the University Library also provides

comfortable physical facilities such as Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), public card catalogues and other finding-aids to the resources of the Library; reading facilities like reading areas equipped with reading tables and chairs, fluorescent strip light, fans/air- conditioners; private reading carrels; well-equipped offices for staff of the Library; cloak room facilities for the users; separate toilet facilities for both male and female library staff and users; suggestion boxes; sign-boards; sign and guides to the Library; book shelves; journals, magazines and newspapers racks; file cabinets; circulation desk; computer facilities; exhibition gallery; preservation facilities just to mention a few.

## **8. University Library Staff**

The university library is equipped with qualified and competent professional Academic Librarians; para-professional Librarians (Library Officers' cadre); Library Assistants; Secretarial Staff; Technical Staff; Porters; Drivers; Messengers and Cleaners. This discourse will talk only on the first three categories of library staff because they are more directly involved in library operations and routines. The other categories (Secretarial staff; Technical staff; Porters; Drivers; Messengers and Cleaners) even though are indirectly involved in library operations and routines, but perhaps are absent, the library will not run effectively.

### *(a). Professional Academic Librarians:*

Professional academic librarians by virtue of their professional qualification, they are regarded as Librarians. They are superior to Library Officers and Library Attendants/Assistants. The major duty of the professional academic librarians is to acquire, process, organise, store, preserve, maintain, manage, retrieve and disseminate information. Besides, the librarians teach and direct the users on the importance and use of the library with enlightenment on the cataloguing, classification and general organisation of materials in order to enable them make the best and fullest use of their study and research opportunities. The academic librarians in the library, like their counterparts in the faculties, also engage in research, publication of books, articles, reviews, and reports of scholarly nature.

### *(b). Library Officers:*

Library Officers are regarded as para- professional librarians. Library Officers are subordinates to professional academic librarians and superior to Library Attendants/Assistants. They assist the professional academic librarians and also attend to clients.

### *(c). Library Attendants/Assistants:*

Library Attendants/Assistants are neither professional nor para-professional librarians. They are subordinates to the professional academic librarians and Library Officers. They attend to clients and perform duties assign to them by the professional academic librarians and Library Officers.

## **9. University Library Users and their Information Needs**

The major users of the O.O.U. Library are the students of the university, academic staff and non academic staff. Other categories are the members of the University Governing Council, literates around the university community as well as students and researchers from other institutions. This paper will focus only on the information needs of students, academic and the non-academic staff.

(a). University students: These are made up of the pre-degree students, undergraduates and the postgraduates. The information needs of these students revolve around textbooks, monographs, journals, newspapers, magazines, reports, reference materials, past examination question papers, essays, dissertations, theses, records and the University publications for their studies, training, assignments, examinations, researches, projects and write-ups.

(b). Academic staff: These are basically the lecturers, who are teaching the various categories of students spread across the disciplines the university offers. They are also involved in project research conduct and publication and some form of university community services or outreach programmes. Among the lecturers are those that are already professors, those aspiring to be; those that have bagged their doctoral degree, those currently pursuing theirs and those yet to embark on Ph.D programmes. Basically, because the nature of these people differs, their information needs will also differ. This is why the university provides textbooks, monographs, serials, reference materials, multi-media resources and databases in the Library for their leisure, study, teaching and research activities.

(c). Non-Academic Staff: This group is the non-teaching arm of the university. They are made up of different categories of people from primary six school leaving certificate to university degree certificate. The information needs of this group of people will be different because there will be some of them aspiring to move to higher levels. The administrative officers in this category use information in newspapers, magazines, records, reports and the University publications for decision taking.

All regular users are registered at the Circulation Desk before they can be allowed to make use of the library and its resources. Registration is valid for the current academic year only, and must be renewed thereafter. All registered users are issued with library cards which admit them into the library together with borrower's tickets.

It should be noted that library cards and borrower's ticket are not transferrable as books issued on them remain the responsibility of the person whose name appears on the ticket. When a member ceases to be a member of the university or loses his membership, he must surrender the library cards and borrower's tickets upon which he is cleared. Lost library card or borrower's ticket may be replaced on request through written application and payment of specified fine. Library users are expected to contribute their own quota to the development of the library by making useful suggestions as to suitable information materials in their areas for acquisition. Information from the patrons on the use of resources, as pointed out by Olanlokun and Momoh (1994), would no doubt make the library feel the pulse of the users. Nwalo (2003) averred that the more the library's objectives are best achieved the more its materials are exposed and utilised.

Library users should participate in library orientation programmes on librarianship so as to be able to know the librarians in the library; the importance of library; organisation of the library and its resources; the facilities and services of the library; as well as organisation and location of materials in the library.

The lecturers are expected to use the library regularly, and at the same time encourage students to use the library regularly. The library is the second classroom and laboratory for teachers and learners. It is a place where students teach themselves, search for more information to augment whatever they might have been taught by their lecturers. A good teacher invariably teaches his students the independent learning practice. The results of Emmanuel and Jegede (2011) study revealed that the MBA graduate students' information needs and information seeking behaviour and use of information resources is influenced primarily by the demand on their course requirement, availability of information sources, ease of access and use, in addition to other students, colleagues and university library services.

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