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Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction in Universities of Uyo and Calabar Libraries

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between the Relevance of Law Reports and users' satisfaction with them in Universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The sample consisted of 285 users comprising (194 year 5 law undergraduate students, 39 postgraduate students and 52 law teachers) of the two institutions during the 2009/2010 academic session. Data was obtained using questionnaire titled "Relevance of Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction Questionnaire (RLRUSTQ.) The data obtained was subjected to statistical analysis using percentage, weighted mean scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between relevance of law reports and users' satisfaction with them. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that law librarians should endeavour to acquire relevant law reports which are in high demand as this would ensure the satisfaction of users.

Introduction

The law library is that branch of the university library which caters for the needs of both students and staff of the faculty of law. It is often classified as a special library because of the distinct and noble character of the legal profession.

The law library is a collection of law books such as text books, law reports, journals, pamphlets, government documents and gazettes, statutes, law reference books, theses and projects; and non-book materials such as diskettes, disc, tapes and other computer peripherals containing legal information kept and arranged in a certain order for use.

A law library is an organised collection within the main library collection consisting primarily of legal materials. This is if it is in an academic setting. Other types of law libraries could be found in the Ministry of Justice, Judiciary, private chambers, legislative houses etc. These legal materials are traditionally divided into two distinct parts, namely; primary sources of law and secondary sources of law,

The primary sources of law contain the law itself such as acts of parliaments and reports of decided cases while secondary sources consist of treaties, commentaries, journals and other sorts of publications that deal with legal information (Utor, 2004). However, for the purpose of this study, the research would only be limited to law reports.

According to Anaeme (2008) law reports are published accounts of cases decided upon by the law courts having

jurisdiction over such matters. A law report consists of over 800 pages depending on the number of decided cases reported therein. Law reports, whether published by government, individuals or organizations, local and foreign, will form the basis for this research. Examples are: Nigerian weekly law report, weekly report of Nigeria, all England law report amongst others. Both academic lawyers and students use libraries for a variety of reasons, such as seeking for specific information, conducting legal research, looking for particular document(s), keeping abreast of current developments in law and enquiries. In satisfying their needs, the two categories of users make use of various information materials, one of which is the law report.

The importance of law reports cannot be over-emphasised as it is very crucial to the basic process of knowing the current position of law. The legal profession thrives on books and derives its substance from the power of the written work; and one of such is the law report which users of the law library are heavily dependent on. Without law reports, law students and academic lawyers would perform below standard both in class and in the law courts. Clinch (2001) acknowledges the importance of law reports by stating that "law reports are a primary source of law as it comprises original and authoritative statements of law". Kumar (1993), Akinade and Ogunyade (2002) in support declare that law reports are valuable legal resources required in any law library to meet its objectives.

The American library Association (1996) among others suggests that the library should indicate boundaries such that will assist the staff in selecting library resources, evaluating the collection and maintaining the collections currency, relevance and usefulness. On the other hand, users' satisfaction is an innate expression of contentment by the library user, especially when his needs are adequately met by the library's offering for example, relevant law reports. The user is a major stakeholder in any library system which is why Aina (2007) theorised that the library user is very critical to the services of the library, hence, the user must be consistently asked to assess services and resources provided as this will help the library improve upon its services and no matter how large the stock of a library is if its services or resources are not used the library will end up being a white elephant. Haruna (2002) explains that user satisfaction refers to the extent to which library users' needs are fulfilled with the available services and relevant information resources of a given library. Simmonds (2000) notes that failure of a library to provide for users' needs could lead to dissatisfaction. Users' satisfaction is related to the criteria of relevance of law reports.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of the economic downturn experienced by the Nigerian economy, the law teachers and students are increasingly feeling the pressure of the economic recession in

their daily research. This has led to user dissatisfaction with universities law Libraries. Pre-research discussions with users of the law library in University of Uyo revealed that some relevant law reports were not available.

The probable implication is that lack of relevant law reports has an adverse effect on utilisation as both law students and teachers would perform below standard in their academic pursuits and in the law courts and this would lower the standard of the legal profession. The pertinent question to ask at this juncture is: What relationship exists between relevance of Law Reports and users' satisfaction with them in universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries? This study will therefore, serve as an answer to this question by examining the relationship between relevance of law reports on one hand and users' satisfaction with them in university libraries of Uyo and Calabar on the other hand.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated for this study;

There is no significant relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction with them in Universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries.

Literature Review:

The Concept of User Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined in Oxford Dictionary (2001) as the good feeling that you have when you have achieved something or when something that you wanted to happen does happen. From this definition, satisfaction entails a feeling of comfort and sense of gratification or comfortable experience by users. According to Haruna (2002), user's satisfaction refers to the extent to which a library user's needs are fulfilled with the available services and information resources of a given library. User satisfaction is, therefore, regarded as a function of information availability, accessibility and relevance. In other words, it is not enough that the information is made available to the user but it should be relevant to his needs with backup instruments of accessibility, availability and relevance to satisfy a user at all times. Dissatisfaction among academic library users can be a combination of many things ranging from one encounter in the library to a series of encounters producing positive or negative results.

It is on the basis of the foregoing concept of user satisfaction that the first expectation of a library user is to locate needed material with ease, if that is not the case, the user expects to find the necessary succour from a relevant library staff that is familiar with the environment. The assistance expected could be either to receive materials personally from library staff or be directed to a section of the

library where the material is located. The failure of the encounter to satisfy the user's needs could lead to dissatisfaction with the service while a successful outcome of the search will result in satisfaction.

Altman and Hernon (1998) assert that satisfaction is a product of an encounter or series of experiences the user goes through in library. Thus by inference, satisfaction emanates from a number of transactions or encounters that an individual experiences with a particular organization and these fuse to form an impression of service quality. This implies that high satisfaction signifies high quality service and dissatisfaction, poor service.

The academic law library is in every respect different from other types of law libraries because the academic law collections are provided mainly for law teachers, undergraduate and postgraduate students. The law reports selected and acquired by the law librarian need to be relevant and current so as to meet the information needs of the users and ensure sustained users satisfaction.

Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction

The second law of library science states: "every reader his book". Here the emphasis is on the reader. According to Ranganathan (1998) a user of the library is the prime factor. His requirements must be satisfied. Wikipedia (2010) definesrelevance to mean a term that is used to describe how pertinent, connected or applicable something is to a given

matter and it goes further to state that in the context of information science and information retrieval, relevance denotes how well a retrieved set of documents (or a single document) meets the information needs of users. Relevance of materials in academic libraries implies their authoritativeness, accuracy of facts, high standard of quality and effective expression (Aboyade, 1981).The above statement is equally true about law reports as they have to be authoritative and accurate so as to satisfy the information needs of the users. According to Ukpanah (2009), the utilisation of the available legal resources in law libraries depends to a large extent on the relationship between the available information sources and the students' needs with regard to relevance, accuracy and timely provision of these sources.

As noted earlier, law reports constitute primary sources of law and as long as they are relevant to meet the research requirements of the users, they would be satisfied. Haruna (2002) cautioned that if quality assurance of information resources is not continued, satisfaction with information resources will be reduced. The author advised that, there should be continued process of examination and re-examination of the needs of users by which satisfaction can be met, adding that such quality assurance can be achieved via evaluation of information resources in view of its relevance, accuracy of facts, currency and coverage in content analysis. The above premises applies to law reports in that,

there is a plethora of law reports nowadays and the law librarian would have to relate the criteria of relevance with users satisfaction before selecting and acquiring such law reports. The law librarians must have already been acquainted with the information needs of the users before knowing how to satisfy them.

Xishi, Patricia and Peter (2004) in their study of satisfaction formation processes in library users confirm that quality factors in form of relevance, currency, precision and reliability of information resources increase the performance of information resources and consequently yield satisfaction to the library users of such information resources. This also applies to law reports. Tefko (1970) studied this concept and found that there is a formal relationship between quality of retrieved materials and their relevance. In the context of collection, information material served as the medium of communication between collection patrons and collection. The effectiveness of communication depended on the quality or relevance of the information concept. In regards to the present work, users are not likely to consult the law report collection which cannot supply them with relevant information. By implication, this means that users of law libraries will be satisfied if the law reports which they utilise are relevant to their immediate research need. This according to Udofia (1998) suggests that "the library collection should bear direct relevance to its tertiary level in all curriculum fields". Thus, when the above premises are applied in

building law reports collection, this would go a long way to ensuring that the users remain satisfied.

Research Methods

Ex-post facto design was used for the study. The population of this study comprised 285 registered library users, 194 final year undergraduate law students; 39 postgraduate law students and 52 law lecturers. (University of Uyo 2010; University of Calabar 2010)

The entire population of 285 targeted library users in the two universities served as the study sample. Purposive sampling technique was used in the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled: Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction with Questionnaire (LRUSTQ) designed to collect relevant data on relevance of Law Reports and users' satisfaction with them in the two universities. The scores generated were used in determining the relationship between relevance of Law Reports and users' satisfaction with the available law reports in the two universities. However out of the 285 copies of the questionnaire distributed only 280 users returned properly completed questionnaires hence there was a 98.2% return of the instrument. Data obtained from the completed and valid copies of the questionnaire were analysed using percentages, weighted mean scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) analysis (PPMC). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was chosen since the study sought to determine

the relationship between Law Reports and users' satisfaction with them in the two universities. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance.

Findings

The Findings in the Study are outlined below:

- Comparing the Mean Rating of the Respondents on Collection Evaluation Criteria and Users' Satisfaction with Law Reports.
- What is the relationship between relevance of law reports and users' satisfaction with them in Universities of Uyo and Calabar Libraries?

Table 1: Mean ($\bar{X}$), Standard Deviation (S) and Correlation Coefficient (r) for Relevance of Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction.

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	Item mean	R
Relevance of law reports	17.31	3.04	4.23	
User's satisfaction	16.93	4.13		0.45

N = 285

The value of r (0.45) in table 1 shows that relevance of law reports has positive relationship with users' satisfaction and also, the value of the item mean (4.23) indicates that the

respondents were in strong agreement with the items on the average.

Testing of Hypothesis

In this subsection, the hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 alpha level. The Data was analysed using PPMC.

There is no significant relationship between relevance of law reports and users' satisfaction in Universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries. In this hypothesis, the independent variable is law reports and users' satisfaction with them in universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries is the dependent variable. The hypothesis was tested using the results of PPMC analysis summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of PPMC Analysis of Scores on Law Reports and Users' Satisfaction

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	*r-cal*	*df*	*r-crit*	*Decision*
Relevance of law reports	4933	87865	85628	.45	278	.11	s
Users' satisfaction	4826	85050					

S = Significant at p < .05 alpha

In Table 2, the results show that the calculated (observed) correlation index, r-cal, for the relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction with them in the libraries of Universities of Uyo and Calabar is 0.45 while its

corresponding tabled value, r-crit, at df of 278 and 0.05 alpha, is 0.11. The r-cal, 0.45, is greater than the r-crit, 0.11. This shows that the r-cal is statistically significant. That is, there is a significant relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction with them in Universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

With regard to the relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction in Universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries, the results in Table 2 indicated a significant positive relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction with the reports. The findings agree directly with the findings of Xi shi, Patricia and Peter (2004) in their study of satisfaction formation processes in library users as it confirmed that quality factors in the form of relevance, currency, precision and reliability of information resources increase the performance of information resources and consequently yield satisfaction to the library users of such information resources. The effectiveness of communication depended on the quality or relevance of the information concept. By implication, users are most likely to consult the law reports collection which can supply them with relevant information and this in turn means that users of law reports will be satisfied if the law reports which they consult in the library are relevant to their immediate needs.

Considering the null hypothesis which guided this study, the results displayed in Table 2 yielded the findings that; there is a significant positive relationship between law reports and users' satisfaction in universities of Uyo and Calabar libraries.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the findings and interpretations in this study, it is concluded that Law Reports is a significant determinant of users' satisfaction with them in universities' law libraries.

Consequent upon the findings and conclusion the following recommendations are made:

- Law reports should be regularly updated as current law reports would ensure and sustain users' satisfaction.
- Law librarians should endeavour to stock the library with both foreign and local law reports which are in high demand as this would lead to increased patronage and utilisation.
- The law library should be computerised and networked accordingly as this would enable students to access and download both relevant local and foreign law reports in electronic formats.

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