

ELECTRONIC AND NON- ELECTRONIC FEE -BASED SERVICES FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

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Abstract

This paper examined the electronic and non-electronic fee-based services in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, (NAL) University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The work is a survey design study with population of 129 professional and non-professional librarians. A total of 124 professional and non-professional librarians were used for the study. Interview, observation and questionnaire were used as instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was developed using Google Form to collect data for the study. The results were analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) of frequency and mean to analyze the data. Result revealed that electronic and non-electronic fee- based services offered in NAL include printing, lamination, photocopying, binding services, library pass fee, levying charges for lost or over-due books, and replacement of lost library cards for all categories of students and staff including clearance fee for lost library cards for grandaunds. However, it was discovered that NAL is yet to implement some fee-based services such as laptop lending, information repackaging, digital reference services among others Also, the study showed that these services have contributed in no small measure to increase revenue generation, increases library users' patronage and visibility among others. Lack of fund was fund and poor planning and lack of policy were found to be among the major challenges confronting fee-based services in NAL. Adequate planning and formulation of fee-based service policy, equipping staff with marketing skills and provision of quality services that will arouse the interest of library users were all strategies found that will enhance fee-based services for effective service delivery in NAL.

Introduction

Information provision is becoming a difficult commodity for libraries to provide to it's users. This is due to poor financial support to libraries by government and other stake holders.

This has necessitated the need for libraries to introduce multiple source of financial backing so as to meet up with the new trends in educational, social, technological and research fields. These developments have resulted to the need for fee based library services in our libraries. According to Anyaoku (2012), Fee-based services in the library context is the demand for financial payment for services and products offered to users. The nature of library determines the type of services they render in relation to the needs of the clients. The concept of fee-based services is now practical globally. Obodoeze (2007) state that fee-based library services would help library users appreciate the services being rendered by libraries and information centres.

This shows that fee-based library services will boost the image of both libraries and librarians since patronage will be high. The emergence of ICT, according to Ilo, Idaerefama and Fufuri (2016), has created more avenues through which funds can be raised in university libraries. One such avenue is the internet, with its browsing services and digitization. The authors are of the view that the university library management can equip its ICT unit with internet facilities and charge a token from users who visit the unit to have access to online information resources and services.

Fee-based library services were presented as one of the strategies to improve library finances and meet the challenges brought by technological innovations (Anyaoku, 2012). All libraries aim to meet their users' information requirements and expectations, which, according to Idiegbeyan and Esse (2013), necessitate the provision of relevant information and services to meet those demands. Users get unsatisfied if a library's resources and services fall short of their expectations. However, they will be satisfied if the resources and services meet their

expectations (Bua and Yawe, 2014). The major aim of a library is to serve its users better. This requires the library to collect a little token from its users to consolidate the crippled allocation it received to procure IT equipment and to subscribe to more resources that will meet the information needs of its users.

Furthermore, fee-based services can effectively become the right channel for meeting the existing demand for library services from users, generating income for the library and establishing new library services for all users. In the process, services will help reinvent and reshape the library of the future. Thus, fee-based services in the library are crucial as they will enhance innovation thereby encouraging users and increasing opportunities for improved usage. These and many more compelled the authors' enthusiasms to examine the electronic and non-electronic fee based services adopted by Nnamdi Azikiwe library as an alternative sources of income in order to support the dwindling library finances.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of electronic and non-electronic fee- base services offered by NAL library
2. To ascertain the contribution of electronic and non-electronic fee- based services to NAL, UNN .
3. To Identify Challenges militating against electronic and non-electronic fee- based services in NAL Library

4. To determine strategies for improving electronic and non-electronic fee -based services in NAL library

Literature review

Types of fee based services in the university libraries

Many studies have been conducted on the fee based library services more especially in this technology driven age. Anyaoku (2012) stated that full internet access and internet subscription is still an expensive expenditure for many people in Nigeria and advocated that libraries can provide a highly subsidized internet services for her teaming users. This will help reduce cost for user who are currently contending with high cost of access in cybercafés. Other areas according to the author that can yield funds for libraries in Nigeria include membership cards, bindery services, digital access, when a library digitizes her collections, fees can be charged for use of the digital collections and renewable annually. Such library should ensure that the collection is up dated continuously. Digital repositories are capable of earning foreign currencies for libraries and training and workshop among others. Okeke, Urhiewhu and Nwafor (2015) conducted a study on fee-based library services in private university libraries in Nigeria. It was also discovered that libraries already offered bookbinding, photocopying, internet access, computer typesetting, membership registration fees, and late fees for overdue books. In the three (3) private university libraries, Madonna University Library-Okija Campus, Tansian University Library-Oba and Paul University Library-Awka, the authors reported that here is no written fee-based library services policy in place.

According to a survey conducted by Kwadzo and Amekuedee (2007) as quoted by Nuhu and Aliyu (2022) online bibliographic searching, photocopying, email, CD-ROM searches, and training were among the fee-based services given by libraries in agriculture-related special libraries in Ghana. The fee-based services were offered for a variety of reasons, according to them. The primary motivations are to compensate for a deficiency in government subsidies, increase service quality, and recoup service costs. Ishiola (2014) conducted research on financial issues in Nigerian university libraries, concluding that fee-based libraries and information services can help solve the problem, with a focus on pricing policy. Students pay to access and use library services in the following areas: registration fees, interlibrary loan services, online services, usage of computer systems, Internet connectivity, CD-ROM services, reprographic services, and so on. He also advised that librarians should continue to fight for increased university financing, and vice-chancellors should respect the 10% allocation for library development and allow librarians to spend the funds on library development without undue intrusion.

Likewise, university librarians should be bold to introduce fee-based services as necessary but must guarantee that the appropriate pricing regulations are in place for any fee-based library services so that the fundamental role of university libraries is not jeopardized. Again, Okeke, Urhiewhu and Nwafor (2015) conducted a study on fee-based library services in private university libraries in Nigeria. It was also discovered that libraries already offered bookbinding, photocopying, internet access, computer typesetting, membership registration fees, and late fees for overdue books. In the three (3) private university libraries, there is no written

fee-based library services policy in place. As a result, the existing fee-based library services are organized and managed haphazardly. Fee-based library services are run by the library staff in the same way as regular library services are run. It also resulted in the library's management being unable to provide appropriate decisions about fee-based library services' operations and guideline

Contributions of fee based services

In today's world where economic stagnation and recession have taken a central stage, all institutions irrespective of the nature of their services should look for alternative sources of funding their organizations. Affirming to this fact, Idhalama and Krubu (2018) stated that, it is no longer a hidden fact that in Nigeria today, government at all levels have jettisoned the library as an institution of social change; housing myriad of information resources. The library and librarians should not be either perturbed or demoralized, they should "think out of the box" and encourage fee-based services because of its numerous benefits. Latimer (1996) as cited by Anyaoku (2012) reported on the Fee-Based Service at Queen's University library. The author enumerated the various benefits that accrued to the library through fees.

Charging fees helped the library to offer a service to outside users that they would not otherwise have been able to provide. It brought in useful amount of extra income that was ploughed back into the library service. It raised their profile both within and outside the University and it caused them to reevaluate the various services they offer and at staff training and management. Cloutier, (2005) reported on fee-based service of the Gallagher Library of Geology and Geophysics. The revenue generated helped the Gallagher Library, to normalize its hours of

operation and to hire additional student assistants. The library and the institution's image were enhanced within the community and non-university clientele can access important local research collections. The author summarized that the benefits of offering fee-based service far outweigh the risks. Because of this, the primary motive should not be about generating a profit but adding value and relevance to its user community.

Fee-based services will not only generate additional income for the library but according to Obodoeze (2007) will help library users appreciate the services being rendered by libraries and librarians. What this connotes is that fee-based library services will boost the image of both libraries and librarians since patronage will be high. Similarly, Idhalama and Krubu (2018), stated that fee-based services will enhance effective library service delivery. Furthermore, they maintained that fee-based services can effectively become the right channel for meeting the existing demand for library services from users, generating income for the library and establishing new library services for all users. In the process, such services will help reinvent and reshape the library of the future.

Thus, fee-based services in the library are crucial as they will enhance innovation thereby encouraging users and increasing opportunities for improved usage. Akidi and Chukwueke (2019) conducted a study on the effects of fee-based services on library service delivery in federal university libraries in Nigeria concerning Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria. Although only a few fee-based library services have been implemented, the study found that they had a wide range of positive effects on the federal

university library, including higher revenue, improved library services, goodwill, and patronage, among other things.

Challenges of fee base services

There are quite a number of issues that accompany the introduction of fee-based services in libraries. For instance, Ifidon (2005) cited Veazi who analyzed the American Library Association (1967) standard which stipulates that the rights of the individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, nationality or social and political views. Veazi further argued that charges affect use in most cases, that some of the clients would drop the service altogether while others would reduce the use they make of them. In a country like Nigeria where ICTs is slowly but surely and steadily gaining acceptance, it may be a herculean task to introduce fee based services in a library and expect effective patronage. Sequel to this, Anyaoku (2012) argued that looking at the situation of Nigeria, it will be difficult to convince users to pay for services not considered very useful due to the availability of the internet which has contributed to the existence of numerous information houses. Many people have gone into the job of information provision for instance, cybercafés, content creation and online mobile business services. Anyaoku however concluded by saying that the lack of funds is at the root of these problems in many libraries in Nigeria.

It is however, sad to note that some librarians' attitude show that they are not ready to implement the concept of library fee-based services; this can be seen from their in-action and nonchalant attitude towards this laudable concept. This is also extended to the appearance of

librarians in their offices, some come to work looking so unkempt, unpromising, haggard and beggarly {Idhalama & Krubu 2018). Of course, this will go a long way in discouraging prospective users who ordinarily would have wanted to pay for services rendered. On his part, Nwofor (2009) reported that librarians have not been prepared to make economics of generating these needed funds from library services to support the dwindling library finances. Ifidon(2005) further reported that even the existing fee-based library and information services in Nigeria are not well and adequately managed. She stated further that library staff offers fee-based services just as routinely as any other ordinary library services, not maintaining the records of the transactions in such a way as to assist management in their decision making process. Pitiably, where fees are charged, there is little or no planning element to make it contribute meaningfully to library development.

In the same vein, poor planning and pricing strategies, lack of quality services, and widespread opposition to the concept of fee-based services were identified as hurdles to fee-based library services and their efficacy in federal university libraries (Idhalama & Krubu 2018). The study suggested that efforts be made to make fee-based library services more affordable, to build a strong relationship between the library and its users, and to introduce digitized services as a way to further strengthen and make fee-based library services more effective in federal university libraries.

Strategies for enhancing fee-based services

Obviously, problems militating against fee-based services in the libraries are surmountable. Ojedokun and Ola (1994) cited by Anyaoku (2012) posit that “library administrators must not shrink from the idea of fee-based services at the risk of damage to the library system.” Initial planning can help determine services that can be developed for fee, libraries with poor resources can start with basic services that are less capital intensive e.g. interlibrary loans, document delivery and bindery services. On the issue of competition posed by existence of numerous information houses, Anyaoku maintained that librarians are embedded with information skill that are unique to the profession which that cannot be replicated in the numerous information houses. Research results show that despite the wide availability of internet facilities, the unique information handling skills of the librarian is still very important for information delivery and expert searching, remains an important role for librarians (Volk 2007).

Libraries are under pressure to think out of the box by looking at the possibilities of fee-based, cost recovery and profit potentials for their perpetual survival (Ishola, 2014). Libraries are change agents therefore; they should change according to changing market conditions. Anyaoku (2012) agreed firmly that fee-based library service is presented as one of the strategies to improve library finances and meet the challenges brought by technology innovations. Ifidon (2005) submitted that even the existing fee-based library and information services in Nigeria are not well and adequately managed because of lack of adequate planning and formulation of fee based policies and therefore recommended for good planning and formulation of fee-based policy if actually library administrators want the venture to thrive and flourish in their libraries.

She further argued that library staff offer fee-based services just as routinely as any other ordinary services. Nwofor (2009) reported that librarians have not been prepared to make economics of generating these needed funds from library services to support the dwindling library finances. The author further asserted that Libraries should provide quality services that will arouse the interest of library users and also that libraries should equipped its staff with marketing skills that will enable them to be adequately prepared to make economics of generating this needed fund to support dwindling library finances.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The total population is 144 professional and non- professional librarians. This comprises of 17 males and 27 females of professional librarian and 29 males and 56 females of non-professional librarians. Interview, observation and questionnaire were used to collect the data. The researchers gave the questionnaire to two lecturers from the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria Nsukka, who are well-versed in research to ensure face validity. They scrutinized the sets of questions to ensure that they were clear and appropriate for the variables being studied. Their constructive critique resulted in the instrument's modification and refinement. The questionnaire was developed using Google Form to collect data for the study The researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for data analysis. The results obtained from the analysis were presented in tables using frequency and the mean.

Findings of the study

Characteristics of the respondents.

The study showed that 16 males (38%) and 26 (61%) females professional librarians and 28 males (34%) and 54 females (65%) of non-professional librarian fully completed the questionnaire. Analysis of years of working experience in the library shows that twelve (12) have worked 1-5 years, twenty two have worked for 6-10 years, thirty one (31) have worked for 10-15 years, thirty eight (38) have worked for between 15-20 years and twenty one have worked for 21-25 years and above.

Table 1: Electronic and Non-Electronic Fee-Based Services offered in NAL

Items	Offered (O)	Not Offered (NO)
1 Internet Access		x
2 Digital Reference Services		x
3 Audio and Video Conversion		x
4 Subscribed Database Access		x
5 Laptop Lending		x
6 Printing	√	
6 Information Repackaging		x
7 CD-ROM Database Access		x
8 Electronic SDI		x
9 Electronic CAS		x
10 Lamination	√	
11 Photocopying	√	
12 Binding services	√	
12 Library Pass fee	√	
13 Levying charges for lost or over-due books	√	x
14 Scanning		
15 Replacement of lost library cards for final year student	√	
16 Clearance fee for lost library cards for grandaunts	√	
17 Cover page block press printing	√	

The result presented in table 1 indicates that the electronic and non-electronic fee-based services offered in NAL include: printing, lamination, photocopying, binding services, library

pass fee, overdue charges, replacement of lost library cards for final year students and clearance fee for lost library cards for grandaunts

The study agrees with the work of Okeke, Urhiewhu and Nwafor (2015) who conducted a study on fee-based library services in private university libraries in Nigeria. Their study revealed that libraries already offered bookbinding, photocopying, printing, internet access, computer typesetting, membership registration fees, and late fees for overdue books to help complement what get from government. Anyaoku (2012) agreed with the findings of this study that membership cards bindery services, photocopying, digital access can yield funds for libraries in Nigeria.

However, the result shows that fee-based services like internet access, digital reference services, audio and video conversion, subscribed database access, laptob lending, information repacking, CD-ROM database access, electronic SDI and electronic CAS were not offered in NAL. The finding is in contrast with the work of Ishiola (2014) that conducted a research on financial issues in Nigerian university libraries and concluded that fee-based libraries and information services can help solve the problem, with a focus on pricing policy. He maintained that Students pay to access and use library services in the following areas: online services, usage of computer systems, Internet connectivity, CD-ROM services, SDI and electronic CAS services, and so on.

Table 2: The Contribution of Electronic and non-electronic fee- base services for effective service delivery in NAL

S/n	Items	N	Mean	Rank	Remarks
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1	Enables the libraries to generate more income	124	3.45	1 st	Agreed
2	Increases library users' patronage	124	3.44	2 nd	Agreed
3	Enables library to be self-sufficient and carry out its projects independently	124	3.40	4 th	Agreed
4	Helps to provides Quality Services Delivery in the Library	124	3.39	5 th	Agreed
5	Serves as a means of increasing library services	124	3.30	6 th	Agreed
6	Increases library visibility	124	3.41	3 rd	Agreed
Cluster mean:			3.39		

In table 2, based on the analysis of data collected through questionnaire and interview, it was found that the respondents agreed that fee based services enable libraries to generate more income, increase library users' patronage and increase library visibility among others. The result collaborates with Akidi and Chukwueke (2019) who conducted a study on the effects of fee-based services on library service delivery in federal university libraries in Nigeria concerning Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria. Although only a few fee-based library services have been implemented, the study found that they had a wide range of positive effects on the federal university library, including higher revenue, improved library services, goodwill, and patronage, among other things. Similarly the result confirms Idhalama and Krubu (2018), findings, that fee-based services will enhance effective library service delivery. Furthermore, they maintained that fee-based services can effectively become the right channel for meeting the existing demand for library services from users, generating income for the library and establishing new library services for all users.

Table 3: Challenges of electronic and non- electronic fee-based services in NAL

S/n	Items	N	X	Rank	Remarks
1	Lack of funds	124	3.42	1 st	Agreed
2	Poor Planning and policy	124	3.39	2 nd	Agreed
3	User Dissatisfaction	124	3.27	5 th	Agreed
4	Inadequate expertise and skills for marketing the services	124	3.38	3 rd	Agreed
5	Negative perception on fee-based services by the library users	124	3.25	6 th	Agreed
6	Problem of Accountability/ Remittance	124	3.28	4 th	Agreed
Cluster Mean			3.33		

Table 3 shows that the mean ranges from 3.25 to 3.42 indicating that items were regarded by respondents as challenges militating against electronic and non-electronic fee-based services in NAL. Lack of fund has the highest mean while negative perception on fee-based services by the library users has the least mean.

This finding supports the view of Anyaoku (2012) who noted that lack of funds is at the root of these problems in many libraries in Nigeria. Other challenges found in the study are poor planning and policy, user dissatisfaction inadequate expertise and skills for marketing the services, negative perception on fee-based services by library users and problem of accountability and remittance. It is unfortunate that NAL is currently experiencing these challenges, more especially now when libraries are sourcing for alternative means of funds, in order not to depend solely on government funds and interventions.

Table 4: Strategies for enhancing Electronic and Non- Electronic fee-based Services in NAL

S/n	Items	N	X	Rank	Remarks
1	Adequate planning and formulation of fee-based service policy	124	3.42	1 st	Agreed
2	Provision of quality services that will arouse the interest of library users	124	3.39	3 rd	Agreed
3	Equipped its Staff with Marketing Skills	124	3.41	2 nd	Agreed
4	Fixed Affordable Service Charges to its Users	124	3.36	4 th	Agreed
5	Feedbacks to measure users satisfaction with the services rendered to them	124	3.26	6 th	Agreed
6	Proper accountability/ remittance	124	3.30	5 th	Agreed
Cluster Mean			3.33		

Table 4 shows that all the items were highly scored. Adequate planning and formulation of fee-based service policy has the highest mean score while feedback to measure users satisfaction with the services rendered to them had the least mean.

The strategies pointed out by professional and non-professional librarians agree with the view of Ishhola (2014) when he submitted that Libraries are under pressure to think out of the box by looking at the possibilities of fee based, cost recovery and profit potentials for their perpetual survival. Furthermore, the findings is also in line the views of Anyaoku (2012) who agreed firmly that fee-based library service is presented as one of the strategies to improve library finances and meet the challenges brought by technology innovations

Recommendation/ Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- More Emphasis should be on electronic fee-based libraries especially now that everything is turning digital
- Librarians should create avenues for training themselves on the marketing skills to enable them keep abreast with the current trends on library fee based services
- Records of all the business activities in order to ensure proper accountability and remittances
- The NAL should look beyond their present status-quo and embrace what other university libraries have adopted that is yielding money for them.
- Seminars and conferences should be organized to enlighten the stakeholders of Nigerian federal university libraries on the benefits of electronic and non-electronic library fee-based information services for effective service delivery.
- There should adequate planning and policy formulation for fee-based services in NAL

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the result of the study, it is evidently clear that, fee-based services in NAL is more of non-electronic than electronic. A few of the electronic fee-based are partially implemented. This implies that NAL has not yet implemented electronic fee-based library services to their full context. Incidentally, some of the identified fee-based services do not function as they should and as a result of this development, there is low patronage, despite their positive impact on effective library service delivery, particularly in NAL where financial allocations are insufficient.

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