

# **A Comparative Analysis of Users' Attitudes Towards Photocopying Services and Availability of Library Resources in Akwa Ibom State Public Library, Uyo and Cross River State Public Library, Calabar**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to compare users' attitudes towards photocopying services and availability of library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar. To achieve the purpose of the study, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Available related literatures were reviewed to provide direction and background information for the study. A four-point scale; "users' attitudes toward library services questionnaire" was trial-tested for the verification of the degree of reliability of the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was then administered to 400 respondents, 200 each in the Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar. The data obtained based on the questionnaire were quantified and statistically analyzed. Independent t-test analysis was used to test each hypothesis. Each of the hypotheses was tested at .05 alpha level. The result of the analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library. The result further revealed that there was a significant difference between users' attitudes toward availability of library resources

**Keywords:** Users' attitudes; photocopying services; library resources; public library; Uyo; Calabar

## **Introduction**

The library according to Collier's Encyclopedia (2000), is considered as a 'communication centre'. The mission of libraries is to make the contents of the world's accumulating literacy, intellectual and cultural heritage available quickly and inexpensively. The library fulfils its mission by collecting, organizing and preserving information and using this information to satisfy the needs of the users through its services.

The public library, which is one of the six types of libraries, is established to encourage members of the public, both young and old to cultivate the habit of reading in order to improve their standard of life by reducing illiteracy and also to read for recreational purposes, is the focus of this study. This library provides access to materials of general interest as it takes care of the needs of its heterogeneous clientele who fall under the following categories; pre-school children, young people, adults and special groups such as; the blind, the physically handicapped and the elderly.

Study clubs, forums, group discussions and similar activities are regularly sponsored by public libraries to arouse in the participants a desire to read. It even goes as far as providing book mobile service as a library outreach.

Busayo (2004) also stated that, the contributions which public libraries can make towards the literacy programme in any country should be stressed. Public libraries are among the few agencies to which adults and children go voluntarily to solve problems, extend their knowledge and broaden their cultural appreciation, especially those who look to books and other materials as tools for self-education.

Further emphasizing the importance of public libraries, Aliyu (2001) stated that, if libraries carefully define their educational objectives, they will be recognized as places where man may go and be educated for life. The public library by all means provide its services in compliance with the 'Unesco Public Library Manifesto (3). According to this document, the public library has the duty to inform and educate the public in all areas of their endeavor. In other words, the public library is supposed to serve as the 'People's University' with accessibility to all members of the public.

If the public library is all these that has been said, what could be user's attitudes towards the services of Akwa Ibom State Public Library, Uyo and the Cross River State Public Library, Calabar? This is the question this study seeks to answer.

The public is expected to make optimal use of these services, but it is surprising to note that the library is underutilized as a very little fraction of the total population use the public library, worse still if one is to consider active users or registered users (Aliyu, 2001). Through observation of activities and interaction with some staff of the Akwa Ibom State Public Library, Uyo and Cross River State Public Library, Calabar, it is confirmed that the number of active users is insignificant in relation to the total population the library is meant to serve. This is regardless of the wide-range and wholesome services these libraries provide.

Njoku (1999), in his study concluded that, "the percentage of those who use public libraries is not as high as expected when the total population is considered". He also attributed the low or poor use of public libraries to poor reading culture and library services.

In the course of this study, the researchers were also to answer the question: What differences existed between users' attitudes toward library services in Akwa Ibom State Public Library, Uyo and Cross River State Public Library, Calabar?

As observed by Tansley (1968), the quality of the library resources is looked at in various dimensions, viz; (1) the number of materials; (ii) the range of human needs covered;

(iii) the size of the building; (iv) the accessibility to the materials, with reference to the cataloguing; (v) the comfortability and proximity of the public library to the users; and (vi) the facilities rendered by the library.

According to Buckland (1988), the library shall collect or provide access to information resources germane to its mission and reflecting the interest of the full spectrum of the population it serves. These information resources shall satisfy a diversity of user needs, through its content, currency, format, organization and quantity. According to Idiodi and Igbiosa (2003), the general unsatisfactory state of public library's stock has also been responsible for some other notable rebufs. The low use of libraries could be better attributable to frustration of users when the libraries fail to provide current materials for its users, he added.

According to "The Public Library Inquiry" (a major study by social scientist issued in 1950), there are more than 10,000 public libraries in the United States and Canada, and in addition, more than 6,700 branch libraries that are operated as part of library systems. This publication also stated that, the book collection of these libraries vary greatly in size, from only a few hundred volumes in the very small libraries to millions in the large urban systems. Collections of periodicals in the big urban systems often are larger than those found in all but the biggest university research collections.

Ikhizama and Oduwole (2000) stated that, it is pertinent to highlight the fact that the use made in any library is dependent on the resources stocked and the services offered. Insufficient library stock prevents people from using the library and prevents the library from realizing its full potential as a contributor to the reading experience.

Gessesse (1997) stated that, the sheer bulk of materials, print and non-print, published each year is daunting. By the same token, the kind of information for which people seek assistance at the reference desk has changed significantly. Therefore, meeting these demands in one form or another is a pertinent part of the reference librarian's responsibility. Alemna and Badu (1994) also stated that, as scholarly output rises, as materials budgets fail to keep pace with inflation in publishing, and as the economics of scale in managing large libraries collections diminish, the 'collection' must be considered to be whatever provides access to and delivers as much of what is needed as possible. They further stated that, in an attempt to have a well-rounded and balanced collection, the librarian needs to keep abreast of the current changes in format and cost factors affecting databases and current materials on the market. He or she needs to train and retrain himself/herself about literature selection tools, electronic products and the trade bibliographic available on the market.

Omoriwa (1985) stated that, the collection of the public library should reflect the role of the public library which includes the following:

- a) The provision of materials to facilitate informal self education;
- b) Meeting the information needs of the society;
- c) Supporting the cultural and civil education of group and individuals;
- d) Encouraging wholesome recreation, and constructive use of leisure time.

Okorie (1979), in his contribution to Nigerbiblios titled 'objectives and standards of practice for public libraries in West Africa', the most important component of a library is an adequate book supply and related materials that will actually be useful to its patrons. Poor federal funding, little or absence of state aid has greatly affected negatively, the number, size, role and availability of materials in the few existing public libraries.

Aguolu (1982) in his book, 'selecting materials for libraries in a developing society' stated that, libraries should avoid a situation where libraries are converted to stores and a

parade of scanty collections of out-dated and obsolete materials which may even confuse the reader instead of enhancing their educational awareness for wider scope of knowledge.

Public libraries should select materials bearing in mind the aims and objectives of the library, the target audience, the cultural background and the environmental factor of the people intended to service. Dada (1989) also stated that, before any material is acquired, it has to undergo some serious examination in order to ascertain its relevance and comprehension level, such as content, lexis, vocabulary, grammar, concept and linguistic.

In fulfilling the functional role of the public libraries to the users, Udofia (2012), pointed out that the public library collection must include the needs of the community as a whole, it follows therefore that the collection must be general in nature.

To support this assertion, Aguolu (1982) noted that for any library to render services effectively, it must put into consideration a careful selection of materials considering the diversity in human, economic, psychological, sociological and developmental factors of the user thereby promoting independent learning. He added that, also to be considered is the age, interest, reading habits and social background of the users as well as the environment.

### **Methodology**

Data for this research work were collected through survey method. The population of the study was made up of all users of the Akwa Ibom and Cross River States Public Libraries. The population of the study consisted of registered users of the two libraries. According to the statistics obtained from these libraries in the year 2008, a total of 2,023 were registered users. Out of this number, the Akwa Ibom State Public Library had 818 registered users while the Cross River State Public Library had 1205 registered users

The sampling for the study was done through the use of simple random sampling technique. A total of 400 registered library users were randomly selected for the study. A break-down of the figure showed that 200 representing 50% were randomly selected from users of Akwa Ibom State Public Library, Uyo while another 200 representing 50% were randomly selected from users of Cross River State Public Library, Calabar. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. section A gave information on personal data of respondents. Section B gave respondent's reaction about users' attitudes towards lending and reference services. Test-retest method of reliability was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instrument. The reliability estimate of the sub-scales range from 0.74-0.83, these values were considered high enough to justify the use of the instrument for the study.

### **Hypothesis 1**

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar.

In order to test this hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used on the scores measuring the difference between users' attitudes toward photocopying services in public libraries in Uyo and Calabar. The result obtained is shown in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

Result of the independent t-test analysis showing difference between users' attitude toward photocopying services in public libraries in Calabar and Uyo.

Public libraries used	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo	193	53.21	3.72	
Cross River State public library, Calabar	189	52.63	4.21	
				1.426

$t_{cri} = 1.960$  Decision: Not significant at 0.05 alpha level.

The result of the independent t-test as shown on Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of 1.426 is less than the critical t-value of 1.960 at .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. It therefore follows that the users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Akwa Ibom State public library are not significantly different from users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Cross River State public library.

Although the mean of users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Akwa Ibom State public library (i.e  $X_1 = 53.21$ ) is greater than the mean of users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Cross River State public library (i.e  $X_2 = 52.63$ ), the difference is not enough to be significant.

### Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between users' attitudes toward library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar.

In order to test this hypothesis, independent t-test analysis was used on the scores measuring the difference between users' attitudes toward library resources in public libraries in Uyo and Calabar. The results obtained were as shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**

Result of the independent t-test analysis showing difference between users' attitudes toward library resources in public libraries in Calabar and Uyo.

Public libraries used	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo	193	56.28	4.32	
Cross River State public library, Calabar	189	54.13	3.84	
				5.143

$t_{cri} = 1.960$  Decision: significant at .05 alpha level.

The result of the independent t-test analysis as shown on Table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of 5.143 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.960 at .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. This means that, users' attitudes toward library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library and Cross River State public library are significantly different.

Since the mean of users' attitudes toward library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library (i.e  $X_1 = 56.28$ ) is greater than the mean of users' attitudes toward library resources in Cross River State public library (i.e  $X_2 = 54.13$ ), it therefore follows that the direction of significance is in favour of Akwa Ibom State public library. This implies that library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library are perceived to be better than the library resources at the Cross River State public library.

The result of the first hypothesis showed that users' attitudes toward photocopying services in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar is not significantly different. Photocopying service is one of the popular services offered by public libraries in view of the fact that some of the materials cannot be loaned out to

individuals or users, for example, reference and serial materials. Encyclopedia (2001) states that photocopying is a valuable aid to librarians and library users because it enables them to make copies of books, magazines, journals, newspaper and pamphlets. People doing major research projects may need materials from parts of dozen of books. These people can make copies of the information they need from each book. Udofia (2012) stated that, photocopying is a service through which portions of books or periodicals may be photocopied for members or users of the library at subsidized rates, subject to copying restrictions. He added that, through inter library co-operation, photocopies of materials not available in the library can be obtained from other libraries in Nigeria or from abroad.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that users' attitudes toward availability of library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar is significantly different. This finding supports Aguolu (1983) which stated that the provision and availability of library and bibliographic resources, both published and unpublished, either print or non-print, availability of audio-visual, materials and other laboratory equipment especially from science based faculties have positive bearing toward users' attitudes to the library.

The findings of this study also agrees with, Olanlokun (1983) whose findings indicate that the success in teaching, learning and research depends on the quality of the library, which determines the attitude of the users. He argued that the ideal library resource/resources and satisfaction derived by users attribute positive or negative attitudes of users are usually toward library use.

The provision of photocopying services by public libraries under study was rated high 73% by respondents while in a study by Akinola, et. al. (2013) was rated low by respondents, showing that Calabar and Uyo public libraries have made every effort to fulfill photocopying services.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the study findings, it was generally concluded that, although there was a general positive users' attitudes toward library resources in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State public library, Calabar, users' attitudes toward photocopying services in the two public libraries were not significantly different. However, there were statistical evidence to show that there were significant difference between users' attitudes toward library resources and facilities in Akwa Ibom State public library, Uyo and Cross River State Public Library, Calabar.

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