USE OF ONLINE PUBLIC ACCESS CATALOGUE (OPAC) AMONG LIBRARY USERS: A CASE STUDY OF OLUSEGUN OKE LIBRARY, LAUTECH, OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *In this study an attempt has been made to know the purpose of using OPAC, how frequently users use OPAC, the satisfaction derived and the problems faced by users while using OPAC using the Olusegun Oke Library, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso, and Oyo State, Nigeria as a case study. The study adopted the descriptive survey method. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data. 150 questionnaires were distributed to users out of which 130 were collected representing 87% and all found useable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts. Findings of the study revealed that the rate at which users use the OPAC at the Olusegun Oke Library is quite high. The findings also revealed that majority of the respondents (33.0%) use the OPAC in finding journals and other reading materials, while 23.1% use the OPAC to know the availability of books in the library. Some of the problems observed from the study revealed that OPAC is not functioning properly, searching is time consuming, failure rate is more, there is lack of instruction and proper guidance from library staff on the use of OPAC. Therefore, the study suggests that improvement of OPAC functionality and the others as a matter of urgency needs the library management attention for the effective and proper utilization of OPAC.*

KEYWORDS: Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), library users, university library, students, LAUTECH.

INTRODUCTION

University libraries according to Asokan & Dhanavanda (2015) are information gateways of the university that transform the acquired information resources in an organized manner with searchable options which connects the past and future. A university library such as the Olusegun Oke Library, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso serves the information needs of the university community through provision of information resources that supports teaching, learning, research, community services etc. A good number of university libraries in Nigeria have automated their technical operations and services. Lending credence to the above, Ortiz-Repiso and Moscoso (2009) submits that OPAC continues to be an essential tool for providing access to quality information. Online public access catalogue (OPAC) is one of the means that facilitate access to information in university libraries. OPAC is a computerized form of library catalogue which is available online. Online dictionary for library and information science defined OPAC as

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an acronym for online public access, composed of bibliographic records describing books, journals and other materials owned by library system. Most online catalogue is searchable by author, title, subject, keywords and allows users to print, download, or export record to an e-mail account. It is easier and faster in searching and retrieving of bibliographic records. Patrons can use the online library cataloguing software to find out any item under control of a library. It also allows library users to request for materials from another library through inter-library loan service and to view their library registration details. OPAC offers other facilities such as reservation and online renewal and checking borrowers' status. It also allows multidimensional searches and provides much access point such as author, title, subject and keywords. It allows post ordinate searches using Boolean operators and other combination of searches. OPAC has passed through the different stages of development and presently via the Internet with graphical browsers know as web-OPAC. Online public access catalogue also changes the traditional card catalogue system to the new system. Data can be spread within computer and then the required entry can be retrieved immediately through OPAC system in any format. Online public access catalogue which is an important service of the library is not exceptional to computer technology; it acts as an information retrieval for library users. Majority of the libraries in the whole world provide OPAC services to their users in order to find out their needed information and documents. However, it is important that the libraries examine periodically how much comfort the users feel towards the service so that some initiatives could be taken on time to improve the system facilities.

Utilization of OPAC by library users depends largely on the extent to which they are aware of its availability and impact of use (Gana, Ajibili & Dare, 2019). Awareness according to Uche and Udo-Anyanwu (2019) refers to the consciousness of some knowledge about a situation or a fact. Narayanaswamy (2019) submits that OPAC is an information retrieval tool considered by short bibliographic records, mainly books, journals audio-visual and non-book materials available in a library. Utilization of online public access catalogue in university libraries is very important to users. This is why university libraries in Nigeria and particularly Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Ogbomoso subscribe to its use to effectively deliver services to her library users. It is in the light of this, that the researchers investigated the use of online public access catalogue among library users using Olusegun Oke Library, LAUTECH, Ogbomoso as a case study.

Objectives of the study
The main objective of this study is to investigate the use of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) among users of Olusegun Oke Library, LAUTECH, Ogbomoso. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:
1. purpose of the use of OPAC Usage
2. frequency of use of OPAC
3. satisfaction derived by users while using OPAC and
4. to ascertain whether the users face problems while using OPAC

Research questions
This study answered the following research questions:
1. What is the purpose of using OPAC
2. How frequently do users use OPAC
3. What satisfaction do users derive while using OPAC
4. What problems do users face while using OPAC

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher found that there exist a good number of studies on the usage of OPAC hence, some which are pertinent to the study have been presented in order to have an understanding of the study. Fabunmi and Asubiojo (2013) investigated the awareness and use of OPAC by students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria. The study found that majority of the students use manual catalogue to access library resources instead of OPAC and the reason was due to lack of awareness and skills to use OPAC and the problems encountered during usage. Kumar (2015) also studied the use of patterns of OPAC among the faculty members in Great Lake Institute of Management, Chennai. The result of the study clearly indicates that there is persistent need to improve the OPAC of the library. They stated further that users should be taught how to use the OPAC during library orientation and a manual should be developed on how to use the OPAC and it should be placed at the OPAC desk or circulation desk of the library.

In the same vein, Kumar and Vohra (2011) examined the online public access catalogue usage by the student and faculty members of Panjab university library, Chandigarh. They found out that OPAC, an information retrieval system, has revolutionized access to bibliographic information through search capabilities such as keyword searching, Boolean searching, truncation and proximity searching. A questionnaire based survey on the use of OPAC was conducted for A.C. Joshi library on various categories of users such as faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students, covering different disciplines such as basic sciences, applied sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The paper discussed various aspects of OPAC such as frequency of use, purpose; ease of use, satisfaction level, etc. An attempt was also made to explore the reasons for the least used search option of OPAC. The result of the study revealed that a significant number of users search information regarding library materials through OPAC despite encountering problems. In addition, lack of basic skills among users was found to be the major reason for not utilizing the features of OPAC.

It is suggested that the university library should organize quality instruction programs to improve knowledge and skills of the users. Gohain and Saikia (2013) reported that students were aware that OPAC help users to locate documents by author, title, or by subject on the shelves. Similarly, Thanuskodi (2012) found that a majority of users consulted OPAC to know the availability and location of the requisite documents. Thus, for OPAC to be effectively used by users, they have to be aware of its existence through various awareness programs in the library.

Utilization of resource is the act of exploiting resources to satisfy an information need. Effective utilization of online public access catalogue by users enhances knowledge and quality of research output (Gana, Ajibili & Dare, 2019). The extent of utilization also determines the quantity and quality of information obtained and consequently research output. Uhegbu (2007) asserted that utilization has to do with putting into appropriate use of acquired information. One would therefore define OPAC utilization as actual putting into appropriate use the OPAC of the university libraries in the study area. According to Hornby (2015) satisfaction is good feeling one has when one has achieved something or when something that one wanted happened; something that gives you a good feeling. Therefore, user satisfaction is the result of the outcome of use of a computer application. In this context, extent of good feeling of users in university libraries when they take advantage of the online OPAC as the computer technology available in the library that meets their information requirements or needs. Narayanaswamy (2019) opined that OPAC is designed to satisfy a wide range of users. For example, users who have little knowledge of OPAC to librarians who are experienced in online database searching. The author further reported that, library users were satisfied with the university OPAC facility, and very few users were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. In the same vein, Onuoha, Umahi and Bamidele (2013) revealed that students were moderately satisfied with the operation of OPAC to a large extent.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENT USED

The primary aim of any research is to find out the methods and principle that are broad in their application. The study made use of descriptive research design using the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Questionnaires were administered to users of Olusegun Oke Library and their responses were solicited. Total number of one hundred and fifty questionnaires (150) was distributed to the users. Out of 150 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 130 were returned from the respondents and they were all found useable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One hundred and thirty copies out of one hundred and fifty questionnaires administered were returned and analyzed representing a response rate of 87%. It shows that respondents make use of online public access catalogue adequately.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	90	69
Female	40	31
Total	130	100

The findings in table 1 revealed that 69% were male respondents while 31% were female. It shows that male was more represented than female. The reason that can be given for more male users could be due to the fact that they visit the OPAC section in the university library to make use of it more frequently than female users.

Table 2: Purpose of using OPAC

Purpose of using OPAC	SA	A	D	Total	Percentage
To find journals and other reading materials	25	18	0	43	33.0
To know the availability of books in the library	20	8	2	30	23.1
To know the new arrival list in the library	15	4	1	20	15.4
For the renewal of items borrowed in the library	12	3	0	15	11.6
To know the availability of other documents in the library	10	2	1	13	10.0
To know the location of materials required	6	3	0	9	6.9
Total				**130**	**100**

Table 2 shows that 43 (33.0%) of the respondents chose the OPAC to find journals and other reading materials. 30 (23.1%) of them use the OPAC to find out the availability of books in the library, while 20 (15.4%) of the respondents use the OPAC to know the new arrival list in the library. Also, 15 (11.6%) of the respondents use it for renewal of items borrowed in the library. 13 (10.0%) of the respondents use it to know the availability of other documents in the library, while only 9 (6.9%) use it to know the location of required documents.

Table 3: Frequency of OPAC usage

Utilization of OPAC services	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	50	38.5
Once in two days	35	26.9
Once in a week	20	15.4
Twice in a week	14	10.8
Once in two weeks	8	6.2
Once in a month	3	2.2
Total	**130**	**100**

It is important to know how frequently the users use the OPAC to locate their required materials. The frequency of using OPAC indicates its value in the library. Thus, a question was asked to find

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the frequency of usage. The results in Table 3 revealed that 50 (38.5%) of the respondents use it daily, 35 (26.9%) use it once in two days. 20 (15.4%) use it once in a week, 14(10.8) use it twice in a week while 8 (6.2%) of the respondents use it once in two weeks. Only 3 (2.2%) of the respondents indicated that they use it once in a month.

Table 4: Satisfaction derived by users while using OPAC

Satisfaction level	SA	A	D	Total	Percentage
Fully satisfied	30	8	0	38	29.2
Satisfied	25	4	1	30	23.0
Very satisfied	38	10	0	48	37.0
Dissatisfied	4	4	1	9	6.9
Very dissatisfied	1	3	1	5	3.9
Total				**130**	**100**

Table 4 shows that 38 (29.2%) of the respondents are fully satisfied with the use of online public access catalogue while 30 (23.0%) of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the use of it. Also, 48 (37.0%) were very satisfied with the use of OPAC while 9 (6.9%) were dissatisfied with the use of OPAC. 5 (3.9%) respondents indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the use of OPAC.

Table 5: Problems faced by users while searching OPAC

Problems faced while using OPAC	SA	A	D	Total	Percentage
OPAC not functioning properly	2	3	30	35	27.0
Searching is time consuming	1	2	22	25	19.2
Failure rate is more	2	2	18	22	17.0
Lack of instruction to use OPAC	1	3	35	38	29.2
Lack of proper guidance from library staff	1	1	8	10	7.6
Total				**130**	**100**

Table 5 indicates that 35 (27.0%) responded that the OPAC was not functioning properly. 25 (19.2%) indicated that the searching is time consuming while 22 (17.0%) responded that the failure rate is more. 38(29.2%) respondents chose lack of instruction to the use of OPAC. 10 (7.6%) indicated lack of proper guidance from library staff.

CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that Online Public Catalogue (OPAC) is a useful tool in the library as it is used easily for the location of library materials. It saves time, money and energy and it is used for reservation placement, to read news/bulletins, check borrowers record among others. In

addition, the findings of this study revealed that the full benefit of OPAC is hindered by little factors. Although, the study is of the opinion that the services of the OPAC could be improved upon, particularly in areas such as users' education which should be done by the library personnel, searching is time consuming, failure rate is more and there is lack of instruction on how to use the OPAC. University libraries should follow the principle of least effort so as to help users to retrieve information from OPAC with little energy within a short time frame. OPAC as a retrieval tool, play an important role for finding the required materials in the library. The search process in OPAC has more or less remained the same as in the card catalogue but with increased access points. From the study, it is evident that OPAC is used by more respondents and this is due to the fact that respondents seek for up-to-date information to augment their research work and they use it to find latest research methods that they can apply to their work. Moreover, academic libraries need to rid themselves of the limitations of current OPACs and configure information to work with the web and social networking tools so as to stay relevant.

Recommendations

Some recommendations are given below for better utilization of OPAC service in Olusegun Oke libraries LAUTECH, Ogbomoso, Oyo State Nigeria:

1. To increase OPAC functionality, more valuable features like auto spell checker, faceted, searching, book review, table of content etc. should be added to it.
2. There is need to train and retrain users to acquire basic skills in searching. Therefore, continuous information literacy program should be organized for library users.
3. Librarian must keep in mind the needs of the present day techno savvy user.
4. Library personnel must ask for library software vendors to develop a user friendly OPAC system that has simplistic search strategies.
5. Librarians should ensure that the OPAC is web-based so that users can have access to it from time to time.
6. There are so many services available on the OPAC therefore; users should be guided properly to use those facilities.
7. To facilitate the users, the librarian should organize quality instruction programs on the use of different techniques and strategies in retrieving information about the documents. In addition to this, printed instructions may be provided to understand the functions of OPAC.

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