Examine students opinion on the services of Ahmadu Bello University Library. Specifically examines the extent of students satisfaction with the university library services and reason(s) for dissatisfaction. Uses questionnaires distributed over a period of 31 days. Results reveal that a few students, 1,079 students (28.6%) were completely satisfied. Student dissatisfaction with the library centred largely on issues like "books not in the library" (64.2%) or "no current periodicals" (64.4%) respectively. Suggestions were offered for the improvement of library collection and services.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populous black nation on earth with a population of about 115 million. It is endowed with vast and abundant natural and human resources. It came into being in 1914 when the British colonial masters merged the protectorates of Southern Nigeria with the protectorates of the Northern Nigeria. It attained political independence from the British in 1960 [1].

University education started in Nigeria in 1948 with the establishment of University College, Ibadan. Since then, the development of university education has been dramatic and rapid. Presently, there are 25 Federal Universities and 12 State Universities [2]. All the Universities in Nigeria accept the need to make basic library provisions for their members.

The university libraries have been assigned a wide range of roles. Both librarians and academicians regard the library as the "heart" of the university, the apex on which the intellectual life of the university rests, such statements are based on the fact that from the very origins of the university, the library has supported teaching, research and cultural extension activities which are fundamental to any university. It is a well known fact that countries will be what their universities are and that universities will be what their libraries and research facilities are [3].

In most of the developed countries, students, teachers and researchers have many other libraries they may use in addition to their university library; but, in Nigeria, students and other researchers are hampered by the scarcity of bookshops and other libraries as well as vast distances between the existing few libraries [4].

In such a situation, the need to make each university library to be self-sufficient cannot be over-emphasized. The purpose of this study is to examine students opinion on the services of Ahmadu Bello University Library. More specifically, the study will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the extent of students' satisfaction with university library services?

2. What are the reason(s) for students' dissatisfaction with the university library services?

Ahmadu Bello University Library is selected for the study because it is one of the first generation universities of Nigeria. In addition, Ahmadu Bello University is one of the largest in terms of building, collection and staff strength.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has contributed to knowledge and the information obtained could be useful to administrators, users, students and library staff.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to student users of the Ahmadu Bello University Library. More specifically, the study is limited to the main library of Ahmadu Bello University Library. In essence, all branch libraries such as institute libraries, research and faculty libraries are excluded from this study. In addition, the study is limited to only those students who used the library between May 1-31, 1998. The study thus excluded all those students who did not use the library during the period of investigation.

PROCEDURE FOR GATHERING DATA

In order to gather data for the stated objectives, a short questionnaire was designed, validated and pre-tested before a final draft was prepared. The questionnaire was largely a check-off type with a few open-ended questions. The questionnaires were distributed and the filled in questionnaires were collected at the main entrance of Ahmadu Bello University library from May 1 to 31, 1998. As a result, 3,766 usable questionnaires were received and analysed.

Students' satisfaction with university library services

The elements of library services are readers, library staff and library materials. The quality and depth of any service depends on the extent of staff involvement in the effort to make library resources useful to the readers. The reader's satisfaction directly depends upon the kind of books available for their use.

Literature Review

Aside from occasional 'armchair' opinion - papers and general articles in the newspapers and library science periodicals, studies on students' opinion on the services of Nigerian university libraries are very few. Three decades ago, Plumb showed some interest in the students' opinion on Ahmadu Bello University Library [5].

There has been so many societal changes since Plumb's study as the number of registered students, departments, faculties and programmes have presently increased to a large extent. Similarly, Osundina [6] found that majority of the students favoured open-shelf reference service.

Oyewole [7] discovered that students of Ibadan University and Polytechnic libraries failed to consult professional librarians even when they (students) were in difficulty.

As useful as all these studies were, they failed to tell us whether library users were satisfied or not with the library services provided. The present study aims to bridge that gap.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria were asked to indicate the extent of their satisfaction with the university library services (Table 1). It is interesting to note that 1078 students 28.7% were completely satisfied with the library services. Few users in all the faculties were also completely satisfied with the library services. It is important to note that a large number of students, ie, 1489 (39.5%) were "partially satisfied" and 1199 students (31.8%) were "not satisfied".

The above result is not surprising because Nigerian university libraries have problems even in maintaining core collection which represents the universities' curricula and activities because of lack of money and inflation. Local production of university level books remains low and the libraries continue to depend on imported books to satisfy more than 90% of their needs. Foreign currency has become scarce as earnings from oil exports have dwindled and high inflation makes imports very expensive in local currency. Universities have often complained to the federal and state governments regarding lack of adequate funding than recommended by their governing councils. This results in inadequate provisions for many departments including university libraries.

Table 2 shows reasons for students dissatisfaction with library services. It is disheartening to note that students dissatisfaction centred largely on "Books wanted not in the library, 1726 students (64.2%)."
### Table 1

**Extent of Users’ Satisfaction with Library Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts &amp; Social Sciences (N = 870)</th>
<th>Education (N = 1,200)</th>
<th>Science (N = 962)</th>
<th>Applied Science (N = 734)</th>
<th>Total (N = 3,766)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extent of Users’ Satisfaction</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely satisfied</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially satisfied</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not satisfied</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

**Reasons for User’s dissatisfaction with library services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason(s) for dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Social Sciences (N = 583)</th>
<th>Education (N = 792)</th>
<th>Science (N = 773)</th>
<th>Applied Science (N = 540)</th>
<th>Total (N = 2,688)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books wanted were out</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books wanted not available</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No current periodicals</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library too crowded</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library too hot</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor photocopy services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library staff not friendly</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents were asked to tick as many answer as possible.*
"No current periodicals" 1732 students (64.4%) and "Books wanted were out" 1506 students (56.0%).

The result is expected because the bookstock of Nigerian university libraries is in a deplorable state. The universities can no longer support the academic programmes of their institutions. The issue of minimum standards is a further justification for the National Universities Commission to refurbish the University libraries... All university libraries have been forced by prevailing circumstances to reduce their annual subscription drastically ... (And yet) the high prices of books and journals have made both lecturers and their students to depend more and more on the library for their book needs." [8].

In addition to the above the students are also frustrated as there are many universities in Nigeria without any other library in the neighborhood. For example, Universities of Nsukka, Ekpoma, Jos, Ife, Zaria, Sokoto etc have no other library nearby. The fact is that Nigerian university students have no other alternative to the university library. Book markets are few and books are very expensive. The necessary funds are not available to the students because most of the parents are poor.

It is interesting to note that 335 students (12.7%) indicated "Library staff not friendly." This result is encouraging and it may be attributed to the fact that both the professional and para-professional libraries are exposed to regular in-service programmes.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysed above, the following conclusions may be drawn:

Quality education is impossible without a quality library. There is thus an urgent need for the university libraries in Nigeria to increase their collection substantially. Among the possible solutions to the problems of making books available in Nigeria, drastic improvement in the quality and quantity of the publications produced by the indigenous publishing industry and removal of unrealistic measures imposed on the import of books is required.

References


6. OSUNDINA (Openiyi). Improved accessibility and undergraduate use of the academic library. Int. Lib. Rev. 7, 1; 1975; 77-81.
