

The Availability and Utilization of Special Libraries in Local Government Area Councils in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability and utilization of special libraries in local government area councils of Delta State Nigeria. The descriptive survey research was adopted as the design of the study with a total population of two hundred and ten (210) respondents who made up the staff of the information unit of the local government areas. 15 local government area councils were studied out of 25 local government area. A self designed questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data were analysed using the mean score and the hypothesis was tested using the chi-square at 0.05 significant level. The study showed that there were no functional special library in all the local government area council but a corner in the information unit and the available information not well utilized. It was recommended above all that the local government area chairman should fund their libraries adequately and provide a functional library for the local government area councils.

Key words: Availability, Utilization, Local government area council, Staff

Introduction

On Tuesday August 29, 1991, Delta State of Nigeria was created out from the former Bendel State by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida who was then the military head of state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. At creation, the state had twelve Local Government Areas, but presently it has twenty-five Local Government Area Councils. The capital of Delta State Nigeria is Asaba. Delta State is bounded to the North by Edo State, the West by Ondo State, Anambra State on the East and Bayelsa State on the South East. (Umukoro, 2000).

All these local government Area councils have the duty to bring information to their grassroots and this they can do through the use of the library. Aguolu & Aguolu, (2002) described libraries as social institutions that have been created to conserve knowledge, under gird and pin research and education, preserve culture and help foster recreation. There are six types of libraries namely National, Academic, Public, School, Private and Special libraries. But the crux of this study is special libraries. Special libraries are libraries established in governmental and private

institutions to help manage information resources for the benefit of the workers and the parent body. They have also been defined as libraries established to exploit specialized information for the benefit of its parent body that sponsors it. (Obaro 2023).

Libraries are established among other things for the promotion of knowledge and preservation of historical documents. In the United States of America, wealthy individuals like Andrew Carnegie, and former presidents like F. D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman have libraries that preserved their personal documents as well as books for use for the public (Brooklyn, 2001).

Therefore it is not only necessary but important that special libraries should be established in local government area council secretariats because they collect, organize, index, distribute manipulate, create, publish and disseminate information. All these skills are needed by local government area councils that recognize that the information held by their employees are of immense value and the information is valuable, hence this study.

Statement of Problem

The local government area council run the government at the local level. They are closest to the grassroots compared to any other government, federal or state. As a governmental organization, they cannot succeed without information. And these information should be provided with exhaustive and expeditious service to their users through selective dissemination of information (SDI) and current awareness services (CAS). Their information resources help to keep the members of the organization/institution abreast of what is happening in their areas. They also serve the information needs of their parent organizations to enable them achieve their aims and objectives. These information especially in this era of information explosion are selected, organized, stored and disseminated in information centres like libraries and this is why this study is set to investigate the availability and utilization of special libraries in local government area councils in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to:

- a. To investigate if Local Government area councils in Delta State Nigeria have special libraries.
- b. Highlight on the utilization of these libraries by the staff of the local government area council

Research Questions

- a. Do Local Government Area Councils in Delta State Nigeria have special libraries?
- b. Are these libraries utilized by the staff of the local government area council?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between availability and utilization of special libraries in local government area councils.

Brief Literature Review

Availability connotes the ability of the user community to access the system. If the system is not accessible, then it is assumed to be unavailable,(Obaro&Ekeno2023).Contextually, utilization can be seen as the extent to which a given resource is made use of to the proper proportion. As the library resources may be available, but not utilized. The concept of availability and utilization in relation to this study examines the ability of the local government staff to store, use, disseminate and retrieve information from their special library. Special libraries are libraries established to obtain and exploit specialized information for the advantage of the organization which provides financial support. (Clarke, 2000). They owe their existence to their parent organization meaning they are maintained by them and provide information resources and services which are of direct relevance to their interest and activities (Edoka2000, Obaro and Okonkwo, 2023). They go all out to provide every information they can muster, to help the activities of their parent organization.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. Delta State Nigeria has three senatorial zones with twenty five (25) local government areas councils. The Senatorial zones are Delta North, South and Central. Delta South and Central has eight (8) local government areas each where as Delta North has nine (9) local government area. Out of the 25 local government area councils, 15 local government area councils were chosen for the study. 5 from each Senatorial zone. The local government areas have information units and the staff of the information unit were used for the study. No sampling was carried out as the total number of staff of the information unit were considered adequate as illustrated.

S/N	Name of Local Government Area Council	Headquarters	No of Staff in the Information Unit
Delta North			
1	Ukwuani	Obiaruku	12
2	Ika North East	Owa-Oyibu	09
3	Ndokwa West	Kwale	10
4	Aniocha South	OgwashiUkwu	14
5	Oshimili South	Asaba	25
		Total	70
Delta South			
6	Warri South	Warri	20
7	Isoko South	Oleh	11
8	Bomadi	Bomadi	17
9	Isoko North	Ozoro	12
10	Patani	Patani	08
		Total	58
Delta Central			
11	Ethiope East	Isiokolo	13

12	Okpe	Orerokpe	13
13	Ughelli North	Ughelli	14
14	Sapele	Sapele	20
15	Uvwie	Effurun	22
		Total	82
		Grand Total	210

The population of the study therefore comprised of 210 staff working at the information unit. A self developed questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents titled “Availability and utilization of special libraries questionnaire “AUSLQ”. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A sought information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section ‘B’ contained “31” questions on the topic studied based on the four point likert modified form for data collection. The instrument was validated by 3 professors from Delta State University Abraka. They scrutinized the items for both construct and content and their comments and corrections ensured the face validity of the instrument. A test pretest corrected version of the questionnaire was given to 10 staff of the information unit of EzinihiteMbaise local government Area of Imo state which ascertained the reliability of the instrument. Using the Cronbach’s alpha, coefficient and internal consistency of $r=0.79$ was obtained. The questionnaire were personally administered by the researcher and her trained assistants at a three weeks interval and all the questionnaire were retrieved for the study. The acceptance point was at 2.50.

Results

Research Question One

Availability of special libraries in the local government area councils in Delta State.

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remark
1	Your local government area secretariats has an information unit	210	-	-	-	4.00	Accepted
2	In the information unit there is a library	200	10	-	-	3.95	Accepted
3	A functional library	20	30	130	30	2.19	Rejected
4	A room where information materials relating to the establishment are kept	140	25	35	10	3.40	Accepted
5	Manned by certified librarian	40	10	120	40	2.24	Rejected
6	Has reading tables/carrels	20	30	130	30	2.19	Rejected
7	Has current information	50	50	60	50	2.48	Rejected
8	Has varieties of information like serials/News papers	190	20	-	-	3.90	Accepted
	Books	20	20	150	20	2.20	Rejected
	Gazzeltes	70	80	30	30	2.90	Accepted
	Other Government information	140	50	10	10	3.52	Accepted
9	Fully automated	-	-	180	30	1.86	Rejected

10	All information related to the local government area are kept there	30	30	90	60	2.14	Rejected
11	The library has a separate building	-	-	-	210	2.00	Rejected

Research Question Two

Are these libraries utilized by the staff?

Utilization of special libraries in the local government council.

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remark
1	Materials therein are loaned out	40	30	100	30	2.33	Rejected
2	The staff are expected to use it	210	-	-	-	4.00	Accepted
3	Most staff do not use it	90	80	20	20	3.14	Accepted
4	Staff of other local government areas council use it	10	10	180	10	2.09	Rejected
5	Non local government Area council staff/outsideers utilize it	10	10	180	10	2.09	Rejected
6	The library promotes the activities of the local government area within the community where it is situated	150	30	20	10	3.52	Accepted
7	The library needs improvement	210	-	-	-	4.00	Accepted
8	There should be current materials	210	-	-	-	4.00	Accepted
9	Old materials to be weeded away	200	10	-	-	3.95	Accepted
10	The library needs a better accommodation	180	10	10	10	3.71	Accepted
11	Materials are routinely loaned out to the staff when necessary	190	20	-	-	3.90	Accepted
12	The library should be properly funded	210	-	-	-	4.00	Accepted

Discussion of Findings

From the data collected, it was found out that there are information units in all the local government areas in Delta State. And in this unit, there are libraries. Though the libraries are not very functional because they are more or less like store houses and most of them are not manned by certified librarians. There are also no reading tables and carrels and most information resources are not current but Newspapers. The libraries are also not automated, though available not all information related to the local government area councils are kept there. This buttressed the work of Adomi (2009) when he wrote that a library building should house the personnel, collections, equipment, facilities, furniture and other information resources of the library. He continued when he opined that the facility must respond to the needs of its services. It is also a place where patrons visit to use the resources and services to meet their information needs. Similarly, Obaro and Umusor (2021) ascertained that availability means the ability of the user community to access a system, and where this is not possible then the facility is assumed to be unavailable.

Similarly the study showed that there are information resources in the local government area council libraries, but they are mainly Newspapers, gazettes and government documents which are expected because the library belongs to the local government council. The study showed that though all the staff are expected to use the library, but most of them do not utilize it. Staff of other local government area councils rarely use it and outsiders also do not have access to it. This implies that the library though available is not well utilized. And as opined by Obaro and Ekeno (2023) who wrote that utilization means the extent to which a given resources is made use of to the proper proportion.

Edakarabor, (2021) has the views that the library and its resources may be available but not utilized. Edoka(2000) supported this view when he opined that special libraries owe their existence to their parent organization who provide information resources and services of diverse relevance to their parent organization to be utilized.

Testing of Hypothesis

The hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between availability and utilization of special libraries in local government Area councils in Delta State.

Table

Chi-square showing responses on the relationship between availability and utilization of special libraries in local government Area councils in Delta State.

Responses	Frequencies	X ²	Df	Critical value	Remark
Strongly Agreed	116 (55.2%)	119.3	3	7.82	Significant
Agree	47(22.4%)				
Disagree	40(19.09%)				
Strongly Disagree	7(3.3%)				
Total	210(100%)				

X² = 119.3, df = 3, p =0.05, critical value = 7.82

The table reveals the calculated X² value is 119.3, df 3, at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is rejected since the calculated X²value 119.3 was greater than the critical value of 7.82. this means that there is a significant relationship between availability and utilization of special libraries in local government Area councils in Delta State.

Conclusion

Conclusively, local government area councils in Delta State do not have functional special libraries and the available libraries are not well utilized. This becomes imperative since libraries are information units, and they need information to work with, for no system thrives without information.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to help the system.

- a. The local government area chairman should fund the library adequately.
- b. The libraries should have a befitting library building than the ones sandwiched in the local government office units
- c. Certified librarians should be employed in the local government who can generally help the council to streamline their information.
- d. Reading equipment like shelves, furniture, carrels and other necessary facilities should be provided for the library.
- e. Current information resources should be provided and the obsolete ones weeded away. At the same time, there should be availability of varied information.
- f. The library should be made conducive enough to attract users like the staff and staff of other local government area councils and even outsiders.
- g. In this time of information explosion, the library should be fully automated.

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