



SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURE MECHANIZATION (NCAM) LIBRARY

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Abstract

The National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) Library is used as a case study in this study to examine the goals and difficulties of special libraries in Nigeria. The purpose of the study is to define the goals of special libraries, the services they provide, the kinds of library collections they house, and the difficulties they encounter.

The study's findings show that, while 1% of respondents disagreed, 99% of the research team and IT students at the NCAM Library agreed that the purpose of special libraries is to meet the information needs of their parent bodies. Therefore, special libraries' goals include meeting the unique informational needs of their parent organization, fostering research and development, and assisting the organization's decision-making processes.

According to the study's findings, the biggest problem facing special libraries in Nigeria is a lack of funding. The underfunding and neglect of this crucial component of every public institution have resulted from a lack of recognition of the value of library services. Other issues include a lack of staff, inadequate ICT infrastructure, inadequate staff training and development opportunities, and low user awareness. The following recommendations were made to raise the calibre of special libraries in Nigerian public institutions. First and foremost, special libraries require adequate funding. Second, there is a requirement for sufficient staffing

and training options for librarians. Thirdly, adequate ICT infrastructure and electronic resources must be made available. Last but not least, there is a need to raise user awareness of the value of library services and the resources that are available to them.

Keywords: Special Library, Information system, Challenges, NCAM, Library, Nigeria

1.0.INTRODUCTION

In today's world, information is a crucial element that sustains every aspect of human endeavour. To operate efficiently, institutions, businesses, and organizations—public and private need specialized and customized information services (Asghar and Shafique 2012). Libraries play a significant role in providing in offering these services; they are known as special libraries or information centres when they are founded and supported by one of the aforementioned organizations. Special libraries cater to a narrow clientele and offer specialized services and information sources. They are frequently owned by companies that specialize in a particular field (Enwerem *et.al.*, (2020).

Special libraries are present in several industries, including those related to the government, business, law, medicine, news, museums, and educational institutions. They provide services to a specific user base and frequently receive funding apart from the rest of the company. Information systems are essential for gathering, storing, processing, and disseminating information and knowledge, so their significance cannot be overstated. Businesses and organizations in Nigeria rely on information systems to conduct and manage their operations, communicate with clients and vendors, and engage in market competition. Wikipedia.com (CC BY-SA 3.0) (Okeke, *et.al.*, 2016).

The library information system (LIS), an integrated system that includes circulation, the public catalogue, acquisitions, serials management, and bibliographic databases, is crucial for serving library communities. Compared to traditional educational or public libraries, special libraries frequently serve a more niche audience and deal with a more specialized type of information. They are created to support the goals of the organizations that sponsor them and to offer niche products and services that cater to the needs of their clientele (Jegade and Towolani, 2010). This study uses the National Center for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) Library as a case study to examine the goals and difficulties of a special library and information system in

Nigeria. The study focuses on the goals of a special library, its offerings, the kinds of collections it houses, and the difficulties it faces. The study's ultimate goal is to offer suggestions for raising the calibre of special libraries in Nigerian public institutions, particularly in NCAM (Joseph and Carson,2020).

Harrod (2018), showed a special library as a collection of books and other printed, graphic or recorded materials dealing with limited knowledge and provided by a learned society, research organization, industrial or commercial undertaking, government department or even an educational institution. It may also be a special branch of a public library serving certain interests or occupational groups such as a technical library or a special subject library, meeting the needs of all enquirers on that given subject such as a music library.

Bilawar (2013), ascertained from his research that a special library is established to serve a well-defined clientele group such as scientists, economists, statisticians, lawyers, doctors, engineers, traders, entrepreneurs, administrators, bankers, military and para-military members etc. a special library serves a particular population, such as blind and physically handicapped, while others are dedicated to special collections, such as the library of congress or presidential library, or established in places such as corporations, hospitals, the military, museums, law firms, advertising agencies, professional associations, private businesses and government.

Ashikuzzaman (2013) in his study showed that a special library collects updated and comprehensive information on the subject concerned with the parent organization and disseminates the information promptly to the people associated with the organization on demand and in anticipation. The special library started when a few large enterprise-private, public and quasi-public organizations began to offer interest and employment to skilled persons to gather and arrange printed materials, out of which they began to supply their parent organization with the latest information and relevant activities.

Madu and Chris-Israel (2019) in their research ascertained that if special libraries in public institutions must function effectively in their expected roles, adequate funding, ICT facilities should be provided, engagement of professionals for the management of the library and adequate and adequate recognition be accorded to special libraries by management of public institutions because the non-acknowledgement of the importance of library services has been responsible for the negligence and gross underfunding of this vital unit of every public institution.

Public institutions in Nigeria have been criticized for inefficiency and poor performance, leading to a need for specialized information to enhance service delivery. This study aims to identify the role and challenges facing special libraries in Nigeria, with the NCAM library as a case study. Objectives include identifying the role of NCAM library to its parent body, assessing its information dissemination, identifying challenges, and providing recommendations for improvement.

2.0. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Study Area

The National Center for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) is a research institute in Kwara State, Nigeria, focused on promoting agricultural mechanization and research and development in Nigeria and Africa. The centre, established in 1990, maintains a well-stocked library containing both print and non-print research materials in every field of agriculture, mechanization, sciences, engineering, management, and social sciences, including textbooks, journals, research reports, publications, and other non-print and printed materials. The library, which is divided into both virtual and physical sections, is classified using an in-house scheme that covers various areas of study such as land and water engineering, farm power and machinery, processing and storage, mechanics, general agriculture, sciences, workshop technology, chemical engineering, and electrical engineering. The NCAM library is an invaluable resource for researchers, academics, and anyone interested in the advancement of agriculture and mechanization in Africa.

2.2. Research Methodology

In this study, a questionnaire-based method was used to obtain data. Structured questionnaires were administered to research staff and students undertaking their industrial training in various departments at the National Center for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM). A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed for the study, and 65% of the total questionnaires distributed were completed and returned. The data collected through the questionnaire formed the basis for analysis and discussion in this study. The questionnaire method was chosen as it allows for the collection of data from a large number of participants in a relatively short period, and it ensures that the data collected is standardized and easily comparable. The research staff and students were selected as participants because of their expertise and experience in the field of

agriculture and agricultural mechanization. The questionnaire contained structured questions designed to elicit specific information about cassava processing centres and their operations, including the types of processing equipment used, the level of mechanization, the challenges faced, and possible solutions. The completed questionnaires were carefully analyzed and the findings were presented in the study.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the returned questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, which involved frequency counts and percentages. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to compute the data captured. Descriptive statistical analysis provides a summary of the data collected, enabling the identification of patterns and trends in the data. SPSS is a commonly used statistical software package that enables researchers to analyze data and draw meaningful conclusions from it. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in tables and charts to facilitate easy interpretation and understanding of the data.

3.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the sex distribution of the respondents, where 51 of them were male and only 14 were female. This indicates that a majority of the respondents were males. The statement further suggests that this result is consistent with the findings of a previous study conducted by Oyeniyi et al. in 2014, which also observed a significant difference between male and female researchers.

Table 2 showed that a total of 65 respondents, comprising both male and female research staff and students on industrial training, were used for the study. The information provided an essential understanding of the characteristics of the sample size and the distribution of the respondents.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Female	Male
14	51

Table 2: Department of Respondents

DEPARTMENT	
Agro-Industrial Extension and Engineering	7
Engineering and Scientific Services	15
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	6
Farm Power and Machinery	18
Land and Water Engineering	9
Processing and Storage Engineering	10

Table 3 shows the percentage of respondents who believe that the NCAM library is fulfilling its role as established by its parent body. The table indicates that the vast majority of respondents, 99%, believe that the library is fulfilling its purpose, while only 1% think otherwise. This result is consistent with the idea put forth by Jegede and Towolawi (2010) that special libraries are established and funded to provide specialized and tailored information services based on the needs, objectives, goals, services, functions, and interests of the parent body. The information provided by the NCAM library is considered to be up-to-date and significant to the mandate of its parent organization.

Table 4, on the other hand, indicates the total number of respondents who believe that the NCAM library disseminates updated and significant information. The table shows that 46.2% of respondents believe that the library disseminates updated and significant information very often, while 23.1% claim it is done often or non-often. Only 7.7% of respondents stated that the library never disseminates updated and significant information. This finding is in agreement with Ashikuzzaman (2013), who posits that a special library collects updated and comprehensive information on the subject concerned with the parent organization and disseminates the information promptly to the people associated with the organization on demand and in anticipation.

Table 3: The Role of The Library To NCAM

Does NCAM library play a role in why it was established by its parent body?	
YES	64
NO	1

Table 4: Disseminated Updated and Significant Information

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	30	46.2%

Often	15	23.1%
Not often	15	23.1%
Never	5	7.7%
Total	65	100%

Tables 5 and 6 present the challenges faced by the NCAM library and the recommended ways to tackle them. According to Table 5, poor funding is the major challenge faced by the library, as confirmed by 25 (38.5%) of the respondents. Poor power supply, inadequate manpower, outdated collections, and inadequate ICT facilities were also identified as challenges faced by the library, but to a lesser extent.

Table 6 shows that the majority of the respondents, 40 (62.4%), recommended adequate funding as the best way to tackle the challenges facing the NCAM library. This aligns with the findings of Madu and Chris-Israel (2019) that adequate funding is necessary for special libraries in public institutions to function effectively in their expected roles. Provision of ICT facilities, training and retraining of staff, and adequate power supply was also identified as recommended ways of tackling the challenges facing the library, but to a lesser extent.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that NCAM library faces significant challenges in providing effective services due to factors such as poor funding, inadequate manpower, and outdated collections. The study recommends that the library should be adequately funded and equipped with necessary ICT facilities to enhance its services. Additionally, staff training and retraining should be provided to improve their skills and knowledge in managing the library effectively.

Table 5: Challenges Facing NCAM Library

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate manpower	10	15.4%
Poor funding	25	38.5%
Poor power supply	15	23.1%
Power maintenance-culture		
Outdated collections	10	15.4%
The attitude of the parent body		
Inadequate ICT facilities	5	7.7%

Total	65	100%
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Table 6: Recommended Measures

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate funding	40	62.4% %
Provision of ICT facilities	15	23.1%
Training and retraining of staff	5	7.7%
Adequate power supply	5	7.7%
Adequate manpower	-	-
Total	65	100%

4.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

Special libraries are crucial units in research institutions, government agencies, ministries, parastatals, and private institutions due to their provision of tailored information services to users. Their distinguishing characteristics include specialization in a particular field or profession, a small size, a well-defined group of users, and establishment in the environment where their parent body operates, usually away from public access. These libraries select, acquire, and organize information material and provide services such as literature search, indexing and abstracting services, document delivery services, and subscriptions to online journals and databases. However, inadequate manpower, outdated collections, poor funding, poor power supply, and a poor maintenance culture are some of the challenges affecting most special libraries in Nigeria.

To enhance their services, special libraries should explore new opportunities and keep up with the latest trends and needs of the people they serve. Therefore, the following recommendations were made based on the findings of this research work:

a) Allocate funds to purchase and procure adequate working tools and facilities (ICT) to ease library housekeeping duties for effective service delivery.

b) Create large spaces for the special library and equip it with modern library and aesthetic facilities such as furniture, shelves, chairs, tables, lighting facilities, restrooms, signage, floor

plans, piped water, air conditioners, and fans.

c) Conduct community analysis frequently to determine users' information needs for tailored service delivery by librarians.

d) Organize workshops and library programmes to sensitize the management body and users about the library's functions, activities, roles, and efforts to ensure effective information service delivery using new facilities, tools, and programmes.

e) Recruit only qualified library professionals who are registered with the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) in a special library.

f) Allocate funds yearly to acquire new and current information resources.



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