Extended Hours in Academic Libraries: the Experiences of Three Public Universities in South Western Nigeria

Isaac Olugbenga Ajala

Adesoji Adeola Arinola

Ganiyu Ojo Adigun

Thomas Ayinla Ogunmodede

Olusegun Oke Library
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology
Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study investigated the experiences of three randomly selected public university libraries in Southwestern Nigeria with regard to extended hours of library services. The descriptive method was used in carrying out the research. One thousand one hundred and twelve (1112) were returned out of the one thousand one hundred and fifty five (1155) questionnaires randomly distributed to students in the selected sample space. The data was analyzed using frequency tables and percentages. Result from the study revealed that the major reason why students visit the library during extended hours was to do serious studies which have hitherto brought positive impact on students 'academic performances. Although several unruly behaviors abound during these hours. The paper thus recommends the need for adoption of extended hour services throughout the semester alongside adequate security provisions. This paper provides valuable information on the impact of extended hour services in some selected university libraries in south-western Nigeria.

Keywords: Extended Hour, Academic Library, 24 hour service

Introduction

Library opening hours have long been a hot topic for debate on campuses, with groups of students arguing for a 24 hour library service to accommodate the demand of the students who live in or around the campus areas and regularly use the facilities offered by the university library. This issue has always being tabled by the Student Representative Council who sought consultation with management at the library and the school administration. (Saka, 2010)

The case at the university library of LAUTECH (Olusegun Oke) is not different, the library moved to its present main building which then was partially completed in 1999. There was a serious demand for 24 hour library services by the students during the 2004 harmattan semester examination. After series of requests by the students' union body, the university management came up with the idea of the library providing 24 hour extension services during examination period. The library management decided to experiment it since it had a reading room designed to open to users for 24 hours, it then extended its opening hours by a total of 12 hours i.e. from 6pm - 6am while it also offered monetary incentive to staff who participated. Staffs from the Works Department and Security Unit were drafted into the programme to provide maintenance and minimal security services. This was as a result of power outage in the city as well as in the campus. The library has continually been motivated by the university administration to render 24 hour library services to students since then. The 24 hour library extended arrangement which normally last between three to four weeks terminates at the end of the examination with feedback from users and library staff. (Oyewumi and Ajala ,2012)

The University of Ilorin was established by decree of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria in August, 1975. The library was established in May 1976. The desire for extended hours of library services at the University of Ilorin began with the move of the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Business and Social Sciences from a temporary site ("mini-campus") to the permanent site (main campus) and the resulting increase in the number of courses that led to the increase in the number of students.

This put considerable pressure on existing library facilities and services. Study space was in short supply and there was high staff turnover. Library services were in high demand which could not be met. (Saka, 2010) Serious economic problems have forced many institutions of higher learning to prune their services. At the University of Ilorin, the reverse appears to be the case. There has been a gradual expansion of services and facilities. 24 hour services have been introduced and a digital workshop is being set up to digitize resources to create a huge and searchable database that will support administrative and academic work in the university. The demand for information is increasing, so University of Ilorin library cannot afford to close its doors to users' expectations, especially during examination periods.

During the examination period of the 2008/2009 academic session, the library was open 24 hours a day for five weeks. Library users were very happy about this. The 24-hour service included weekends and public holidays, provided students were on campus. The library was motivated to do this as a result of student agitation for extended hours of readings and the need to add value to the services provided in the library. This long awaited move is a direct outcome of months of discussion between library management, the university management team and the Student Representative Council. Saka (2010)

Kenneth Dike Library of the University of Ibadan was established in 1948 simultaneously with the University to serve its teaching, learning and research needs. It is a four storey building located at the centre of the University and close to the Faculty of Arts. It manages all the faculty and departmental libraries of the university. The University of Ibadan confers on the Library the responsibility of providing information resources (books, journals, reports, monographs, electronic based materials etc.) in support of its teaching and research mandates. Pursuant to the actualization of this responsibility, the University maintains a Library System with Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) as the main library or arrow head of the system.

Undergraduate and post graduate students of the university as well as members of staff are the main users of the library. The library is divided into two main sections and each of these sections have units; these include the Readers Services and the Technical Services. The Readers Services Section has the Reference Section and the Circulation Section while the Technical Services section has the Cataloguing, Reprographic, Acquisition / Ordering, Serials and Bindery Sections.

The implementation of twenty four hours library services commenced in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan in July, 2011 as a means to expand the scope of information service delivery to all the potential library users.(Adeyemi et al, 2013).

In the developed world, most university libraries do not have 24-hour service for a very long period of time. Most libraries provide extended service for a week or two, while some do not offer at all. Anderson, et al (1991) discovered that evening is the best time in the day for retaining information from reading or studying. For example Students use of the University of Ilorin Library's 24-hour service was far greater than their user of the library during the morning and afternoon in the semester. Saka (2010) opined that extended hours are good for students and helped them to prepare adequately for their examinations.

Statement of the Problem

No academic library can afford to close its doors to users' expectation especially in this day and age when information has gone beyond leaps and bounds. It is pertinent therefore that students require a quite place to study especially during the examination periods where the hours spent in the library will be a great opportunity to focus on their studies. In addition, libraries are too congested during this period due to rush hour preparation by students. Hence, this study aims to investigate extended hour of services in three public academic libraries in the South Western Nigeria (Olusegun-Oke Library, LAUTECH, Ogbomoso, University of Ilorin library, Ilorin and Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan). The complaints of students in these institutions most especially on their poor academic performance made this investigation worthwhile. However, it is the belief that the results and recommendations from this study would assist other academic libraries whenever they wish to render this service to their users.

Literature Review

Academic libraries are libraries established in tertiary institutions, they include libraries in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

The roles of these libraries are similar and that is to effectively support institutions to attain the key functions of teaching, research and community services. These institutions are responsible for the production of middle and higher level manpower for national development.(Okiy, 2012).   The extent to which they are able to effectively accomplish that task depends largely on how well their libraries are equipped with the relevant information resources and made available to users upon demand. According to Adio (2004) information is power and libraries are places where information services are rendered to users in different format. The library more than any other institution in the society opens to the users the treasury embodied in books and all other information resources available in the library (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990),Ighen (1993) is of the opinion that for a library to be functional, the services it provided should correspond in tandem with the needs of its users because the user is the reason for the existence of the library while the library should see that the services so provided are exploited to the maximum.

Meanwhile, the library occupies a central and primary place serving the functions of teaching, learning and research in the creation of new knowledge, promotion of current information in professional practice and transmission to posterity of the learning and culture of the present and past ages (LawaI, 2004).

Teferra (1996), opined that libraries are places where information services are rendered to users in different format. Obajemu (2002) then sums it up that a good library is indispensable if academic excellence is to be achieved in any academic setting because it adds breath to the depth of learning. The library assembles information both print and none print from countless sources and make such available and accessible to every user. It sustains individual freedom of inquiry and opinion and at the same time, it supports educational freedom. Moreover, Adeyemi et al (2013) discovered that "For today's academic libraries to attract value to itself and stay relevant in the current dispensation, it must continue to evolve in order to meet the expectations of the users in terms of comforts and demands because library should be made accessible to students and researchers alike, anytime, any day, particularly during the academic session. They however interpreted extended hours to vary from being open until 2 a.m. during examamination periods to being open twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, and most days of the year.

Furthermore, according to Olorunshola and Awolola (2001) some libraries in Nigeria have started providing extended hour of library service in recent years, although their findings revealed that shift work had made it difficult for staff on extended hours' duty to attend social events, take care of family issues and they also face difficulties in getting home after their working hours.

Darch, (1995) in Saka (2010) reported that Extended hours of library services may be a novel idea in Nigeria but they are not new in many parts of the world, for instance, the representatives of Student Government at The University of Texas at Austin spent their summer vacation working with the administration at the University of Texas Libraries to make good on a campaign promise, the student body president and his vice with support from Student Government staff secured funding for 24-hour service at the Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL) in a pilot period for 2012-13 academic calendar year

The office of the Provost and Student Services Budget Committee, augmented by pledge from Libraries Director were able to meet the financial requirements of extended hours at branches of the library at PCL. The modes of operation of extended hours commence a week preceding the mid-term examination period and continue through the end of final exams during both the fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters. (Texas newsletter, 2012).

Some Africa universities have extended library hours. For instance, in Ghana there are institutions with visiting students during extended hours (Lawoe, 2005). Also, the University of Capetown has extended its library hour services. Extended hour is now a common practice in international academic libraries, hence academics libraries in the developing countries are also trying to trail the blaze in offering this service to its communities. (Adeyemi et al, 2013)

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the experiences of Olusegun-Oke Library, University of Ilorin library and Kenneth Dike Library with regards to extended hours of services.

The specific objectives were:

1. To determine reasons why students visit library during extended hours
2. To determine the correlation between extended hours of library service and students' performance.
3. To determine whether service delivery during extended library hours meet users' expectations.
4. To find out if there was unruly behaviours among users during the extended hours
5. To make recommendations to assist in the further enhancement of the service in the future

Methodology

This study is a survey research that gathered data from members of the selected population in order to determine the current status of the issue under study from the respective institutions. The following instruments: questionnaire, observation and interview were used by the researchers to collect data. Users from 100 – 500 levels of the institutions found in the libraries between the hours of 10.00pm and 6.00am during the Harmattan Semester of 2012/2013 session were taken as sample for the study. The questionnaire was administered with the help of library officers and library attendants on duties and the questionnaire were collected immediately to ensure high response rates. A total of 1155 copies of questionnaire were distributed equally to Olusegun-Oke Library, University of Ilorin library and Kenneth Dike Library with 385 copies per library while a total of1112 were returned, which represents 96.3 percent return rate. At different times, professional and other library staffs were interviewed while observations were made during the period when the extension of services were on. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: demographic characteristics and twenty (20) item questions which were arranged based on the objectives of the study. Data was analyzed using percentages and frequency counts.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires to Olusegun-Oke, University of Ilorin and Kenneth Dike Library (N= 1112)

Name of Library	Distributed	Returned	
	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage%
Olusegun-Oke Library, LAUTECH.	385	376	33.8%
University of Ilorin Library,	385	381	34.2%
Kenneth Dike Library, U.I	385	355	32.0%
Total	1155	1112	100%

The table above shows that the questionnaire was evenly distributed between the academic libraries understudy.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N= 1112)

GENDER	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	695	62%
female	417	37%
Total	1112	100%
LEVEL	Frequency	Percentage%
100	251	22.5
200	330	29.6
300	226	20.3
400	86	7.7
500	175	15.7
Post graduate	44	3.9
Total	1112	100%
AGE	Frequency	Percentage%
15-20	338	30.3
21-25	321	28.8
26-30	243	21.8
31-35	153	13.7
36 and above	57	5.1
Total	1112	100%

The table above shows that out of the total number of respondents 695 (62%) were male while 417 (37%) were female. That is to say that the male students formed the majority of users during extended hours. The levels 100, 200, and 300 were almost evenly represented while the 400 level and postgraduate students formed the minority probably because majority of the 400 level students were on Industrial Attachment as at the period of carrying out this study. However it was obvious from the findings above that majority of the post graduate students do not patronize the library during extended hours. The vast majorities of respondents are between 15 and 25 years of age (59.2 %.) which is in line with the 86% reported by Saka (2010)

Table 3: To determine reasons why students visit library during extended hours (N= 1112)

S/N	Items	Agree	S/agree	Disagree	S/Disagree	Total no of respondents
1.	I come to the library to write-up my notes.	443 (39.8%)	216 (19.4%)	311 (27.9%)	142 (12.7%)	1112 (100%)
2.	I come to the library to read dailies and magazines.	421 (38.1%)	240 (21.5%)	302 (27.1%)	149 (13.4%)	1112 (100%)
4.	The library is my only study environment so I visit it when I need to do serious studies.	512 (46.0%)	342 (30.7%)	205 (18.4%)	53 (4.7%)	1112 (100%)
5.	I visit library only when examinations are forthcoming.	412 (37.0%)	259 (23.3%)	311 (27.9%)	130 (11.7%)	1112 (100%)
.	I visit library at extended hours to make phone calls, since those hours fall on free calls.	111 (9.9%)	64 (5.7%)	430 (38.6%)	507 (45.6%)	1112 (100%)
10.	To consult journals and obtain other relevant information for my research	456 (41%)	349 (31.3%)	56 (5%)	251 (22.6%)	1112 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2013

Close to 80% of users agreed to the fact that library is their only place for serious studies especially during extended hours. Nearly 60% of the students visit the library to read dailies. Also worthy of note is that above 70% of students come to the library purposely to consult journals and other relevant information for research purposes.

Table 4: Research Objective 2:   To determine the correlations between extended hours of library services and student performance. (N= 1112)

S/N	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total respondents
3.	Extended hours are not a good time for me to study.	209 (18.8%)	156 (14.0%)	346 (31.1 %)	401 (36.0 %)	1112 (100%)
7.	Studying all night is not good for my health.	190 (17 %)	187 (16.8%)	401 (36.0 %)	334 (30.1 %)	1112 (100%)
8.	I assimilate most when I read at night than during the day hours.	354 (31.8 %)	433 (38.9%)	200 (17.9 %)	125 (11.2 %)	1112 (100%)
9.	Added hours have brought improvement in my academic performance.	401 (36 %)	422 (37.9%)	166 (14.9 %)	123 (11 %)	1112 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2013

Over 80 percent of students in the university libraries understudy agreed that extended hours of library services had brought about tremendous improvement in their academic performance. This attest to the nearly 90 percent in Saka (2010)'s findings on extended hours of library services and improved academic performances. However, about one third said reading at night is not good for their health in the table above.

Table 5: To Determine whether service delivery during extended hours meet users' expectations. (N= 1112)

SN	Items	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total no of respondents
11.	Are you satisfied with the way library staff on duty attend to your needs and enquiries during extended hours?	222(19.9 %)	324(29.1 %)	306 (27.5 %)	260 (23.3 %)	1112 (100%)
13.	Do you find the security services provided during the extension hours satisfactory?	231 20.7 %)	187 16.8 %)	365 32.8 %)	329 29.6 %)	1112 (100%)
15.	How would you rate the lighting system provided during the extended hours?	446 (40.1 %)	432 (38.8 %)	110 (9.9 %)	124 (11.1 %)	1112 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2013

Students were almost evenly divided on whether staff on duty attended to their enquiries. However, above 60% of the students attested to poor provision of security services during extended hours. Furthermore a large majority of students (nearly 80%) indicated their satisfaction to lighting system provided during the extended hours which may not be unconnected to the epileptic electricity supply outside the university campuses at night.

Table 6: Research Objective 4:   To find out if there were unruly behaviors among users during the extended hours (N= 1112)

S/N	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total no of respondents
12.	I sometimes use this time to meet with friends, especially the opposite sex.	109 (9.8%)	156 (14.0%)	346 (31.1 %)	501 (45.0 %)	1112 (100%)
14.	Often times I got disturbed with calls from student sitting next to me.	335 (30 %)	403 (36.3%)	127 (11.0 %)	247 (22.1 %)	1112 (100%)
16.	I have lost valuables like book , money etc during extended hours	354 (31.8 %)	433 (38.9%)	200 (17.9 %)	125 (11.2 %)	1112 (100%)
17.	I have witnessed students engaging in act of immoralities during this period.	241 (21 %)	322 (28.3%)	266 (23.4 %)	283 (25 %)	1112 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2013

In the light of this study, it becomes evident as shown in Table 6 above that unruly behavior like indiscriminate use of cell phone was highly pronounced as nearly 70% of respondents complained of being disturbed with calls from other students. Also about 70% indicated that they had lost some valuables to miscreants during extended hours, this corroborate the findings of Adeyemi et al (2013) that "the most frequently faced challenge during the night hours was "theft cases of laptop computers" as well as loss of bags and personal effects", which was reported to be connected to the poor security services rendered as equally found out from table 5 above. However respondents were fairly divided when asked whether they met with friends of opposite sex or engage in immorality practices during these hours.

Table 7: Research Objective 5: To make recommendations that will assist in the further enhancement of the service in the future (N= 1112)

S/N	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total no of respondents
18.	I would prefer the extended hours run throughout the semester.	398 (35.8 %)	578 (51.9%)	85 (7.6 %)	51 (4.6 %)	1112 (100%)
19.	Do you find the security services provided during the extension hours satisfactory?	231 (20.7 %)	187 (16.8 %)	365 (32.8 %)	329 (29.6 %)	1112 (100%)
20.	How would you rate the lighting system provided during the extended hours?	446 (40.1 %)	432 (38.8 %)	110 (9.9 %)	124 (11.1 %)	1112 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2013

To make recommendations that will assist in the further enhancement of library extended hour service in the future, it is evident from table 7 above that the security service was nothing to write home about as more than half of the respondents find it unsatisfactory. Also an overwhelming majority of nearly 90% were of the opinion that the extended service runs throughout the semester as against the examination period alone.

Users' Excesses during the Exercise

It was discovered from observation and interview conducted that most of the students complied very well especially when supervised during this period, nevertheless some problems like report of thefts of money, cell phone, including note books, and textbooks belonging to the library abounds. There was also the threat that the library might be providing hide out for cult activities during the late night hours. As pointed out by Agboola (2001) in his article "Uncontrolled 24 hour library services". There were some removal and rearrangement of library furniture, especially chairs, which created excess workload for library staff in the morning. Furthermore, library chairs were damaged as a result of students converting them to sleeping bed. Another prominent abuse of this exercise was that the cleaner as well as other library staff had to contend with remnants from foods and drinks brought in by the students, during the extended hours.

Summary of Findings

Arising from this research are the following findings:

1. The male respondents were more than their female counterparts.
2. The respondents between the age ranges of 21-25 years were highly populated compare to others.
3. Majority of the respondents were 200 level students
4. The major reason adduced to visiting the library by the respondents was to do serious studies.
5. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents perceived that extended hours of library service had made a great impact in their academic performances.
6. Respondents were not really satisfied with the service delivery during extended library hours especially as regards to their information needs and provision of security services.
7. Unruly behaviors like indiscriminate use of cell phone, theft of users' valuable were highly pronounced.
8. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the provision of security service should be beefed up and also that the extended service runs throughout the semester.

Conclusion

The inevitable conclusion that the researchers have arrived at in this study is that library was considered to be the best place to study on campus, but effort should be made to provide air conditionals to make readings more comfortable. The study also suggests that academic Library should consider making the extended hour runs throughout the semester. However because of the abuse characterized by the exercise, the university administration should improve on the provision of security and other related services during the period of library extended hours.

Recommendations

While extended library hours are popular with students, reading all night in the library may not be the best for health sake. Sufficient rest will more likely produce better performance. Adequate personnel should be provided for security of lives and library properties. There is also the need to ensure a back-up supply of electricity to the library at night. If the electricity supply is interrupted, users might be tempted to bring flammable materials such as lanterns, candles, lighters and matches into the library, which, if carelessly handled, might result in fire outbreaks. Extended hours of library service have an impact on the work schedules of staff, as such adequate number of staff should be recruited to ensure normal rotation of shift. However, more researches are welcome on the effect of extended hours of library services on supervision, readers' services, cataloguing and classification, and all other library activities for they become huge challenges during this period. More research should be conducted in these areas to add to the available literatures.

References

Adeyemi, B .M., Ojo R. A, and Adekunjo O.A. 2013,Twenty-Four Hour Library Services in Kenneth Dike Library: Challenges and Prospects, *The Official Journal of the Pacific Northwest Library Association*. Available online: http://www.pnla.org/assets/pnlaq77

Adio, G. O., 2004, The Role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) In the Dissemination of Information: A New Challenge for Librarians. *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review.***11**,(1 & 2):37-42

Agboola, A.T., 2001, Uncontrolled 24 hour library services: The experience of University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. *Nigerian Libraries 35* (2): 6-7.

Ighen, M. J.,1993, Use of Selected Services in the Polytechnic Ibadan Library: *Nigerian Library and Information Science Review.***11**, (1 & 2): 11-17

Lawal, 0.0., 2004, Libraries as Tools for Education Development: Paper presented at the National Conference and Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association, Akure, Nigeria.

Lawoe, M.A., 2005, managing information resources for distance education: University Library, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. *Journal of Science and Technology***25** (1): 9

Obajemu, A. S., 2002, Assessment of School Library Service in a Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria: A Case Study. *African Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science*. **12**,(1): 59-67

Okiy, R.B., 2012, Towards Accelerated Development of Academic Library Services in Nigeria for National Development in the 21st century: *Library Philosophy and Practice* Available online: http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/

Olorunishola, R., & Awolola, J.O., 2001, Shift work in Nigerian Academic Libraries: *Library Management* **22**(4/5): 230.

Oyewumi O.O and Ajala I.O., 2010, 24 hour Library Services to Users of Olusegun oke Library, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology. Ogbomoso, Oyo State. *International journal of African culture and arts.* **6**,(2):64-73

Saka H.T., 2010Extended Hours in Academic Libraries: A Case Study of the University of Ilorin: *Pacific Northwest Library Association*. Available online: http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/PNLA%20Quarterly/saka75-2.pdf.

Teferra, B., 1996, Security Management of Collection in Ethiopian Academic Librarians. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science*. **4**,(2): 121-127

Student Efforts Result in Extended Library Hours: News and information from the University of Texas. Libraries Newsletter August 29, 2012 6:40am