Research Consultation as a Propeller for Library Patronage in Academic Libraries in Ondo Town

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Abstract

Research consultation sections are held by librarians and patrons with the aim of assisting the library user with his research work and also help access needed information materials required to satisfy the user's information need. The research consultation also occurs when the librarian helps his patron to identify and select the best and most appropriate research instrument for data gathering and data analysis. This process helps to improve the level of effectiveness and efficiency of the library patrons or researchers. It also helps to increase the level of library patronage as the researchers or library users will see the need to continually engage the library and its services ones their information needs has been meet on a regular bases. This study is an empirical study. Data was gathered with the use of structured questionnaire. It was discovered that research consultation facilitates library patronage. It was therefore suggested that enabling environment should be maintained for these activities to continue.

Keywords: Research, Research Consultation, Library Patronage, Academic Library, Librarian.

Introduction

A library exists to satisfy the information needs of her patrons by selecting, acquiring, cataloguing /classifying, and logically arranging the information materials based on subjects and sections relevant to it to facilitate ease of access and retrieval by the information user. Libraries are considered as vital and the engine rooms of learning and research. The library that serves tertiary institutions is called an academic library. The significant capacity of an academic library is to procure information materials and services that support the attainment of quality research. These library resources must be of high quality to ensure the quest of the information seeker/ researcher is met and quality research is produced by the scholars in the institutions. The library of any tertiary institution is a ware-house of information resources in different forms and format, (Mohammed, Alhassan &Oyedum, 2018).

A library established to serve institution of higher learning/tertiary institution such as universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and colleges of technologies is called an academic library (Akor, 2013). An academic library is a complex institution and as such must have large quantities of materials to meet the demands of the numerous students, lecturers and faculty officers. Library resources are proficient if they can offer accurate, significant and useful information that can satisfy the information needs of the information seeker. Hence, availability and relevant library resources have direct impact on the quality of research produced by tertiary institutions (Ifijeh, Ogbomo&Ifijeh, 2018).

Academic libraries are the nerve center for institutions of higher learning. Academic libraries are central to the academic ecosystem, providing crucial resources, services, and support that contribute to the success and growth of the entire community. They fulfil a wide range of roles and functions that extend beyond traditional book repositories. In essence, an academic library is the beating heart of a higher education institution. It not only provides access to information but also fosters a sense of intellectual curiosity, collaboration, and community engagement (Ameyaw 2022). Through its diverse offerings and dedication of the library professionals, the library enriches the academic experience and contributes to the growth and advancement of the entire institution. Academic libraries are essential partners in education. They offer a diverse collection of materials, including textbooks, reference works, digital resources, and multimedia materials that aid the academic community in their coursework, research, learning, teaching and publishing (Mogale and Bopape 2023). Academic libraries are residential libraries in educational higher institutions of various classes

and types such as universities, polytechnics, mono-technics, specialized institutes and colleges of education among others. These libraries are established to fulfill the knowledge need of the institution community, to boost effective learning and to administer relevant information with the institution curriculum (Omotunde, Ajie, Adefunke, and Adeyemi-Adejolu 2023). An academic library is considered to be the foundation of any higher learning institution, as all activities such as learning, teaching, research and consulting rely on the materials available in the library. The academic library is important because it assists users in obtaining information resources for reading and report writing (Kotoroi 2023).

Obi 2023 asserted that the library patrons must first be aware of the existence of a brand (Information science) or organization (Library). The library patron must have a comprehension of the various information services the library renders and the benefits he/she stands to gain if he/she patronizes the library. The Library patron must arrive at a mental suspicion or conviction to patronize the information service and must be stirred to action that is engaging the library holdings to harness its resources in order to meet pressing information needs.

The library holding may be difficult for a patron to navigate in his quest to satisfy his information needs. Hence, he requires the assistance of the academic librarian through reference services or research consultation. The research consultation creates an avenue for the library patrons to develop a positive perception about the academic librarians and establish a connection and rapport that facilitates future interactions. The research consultations most accomplish the purpose for which it was established. It helps to improve patron's confidence and also dispels anxiety and naivety while navigating the library holdings. Patron's acquaintance with library resources and services via research consultations validates that librarians are approachable and supportive, while also rectifying any misperceptions that may increase the patron's anxiety. The patron's perception about librarians has a direct influence on their willingness get involved with research consultation (Butler and Byrd 2016).

Information search can be seen as a process, in which people undertake to locate or find specific information to meet an information need (Okon, Effiong, and Ezeibe 2023). Access to adequate library resources is essential to the attainment of superior academic skills. No institution in the society can achieve its solid objective without the effective information resources and services (such as a fully equipped library) supporting such institution (Owushi and Ukaegbu 2023). Easy access to high-quality content is a key foundation for good research. Access to high-quality content remains crucial to research, and its value is recognized by

researchers, and librarians alike. Libraries spend huge amounts to sustain and develop their collections, so that researchers and members of the academic community can now have access to more content than ever before. However the information needs of library patrons is inexhaustible. Specialist staff works in partnership with academic departments. Information specialists, both subject specialists and those with a specific focus on the needs of the researchers form a significant group of the library staff in most institutions. The researchers who make use of them see them as vital. But too often information specialists and researchers are not well connected. Information specialists take a more proactive role, working in partnership with academic departments and acting as consultants. Such developments have been welcomed by heads of departments and researchers (Jubb, Sykes, Town, Wilkinson, and Wright 2011).

Research consultation refers to personalized assistance and guidance provided by library staff to patrons who are seeking help with their research needs. Research consultation offers patrons the opportunity to receive one-on-one assistance tailored to their specific research questions and needs. This personalized approach can enhance the patron's experience and make them feel valued. Librarians and library staff is trained in research methods, information literacy, and accessing resources. By providing expert guidance, librarians can help patrons navigate complex databases, find relevant sources, and refine their research strategies. Regular interactions with patrons during research consultations can lead to the development of positive relationships. Patrons who receive helpful guidance are more likely to return to the library for future research needs and share their positive experiences with others. Promoting research consultation services can increase awareness among library patrons. Many patrons might not be aware of the extent of assistance available to them beyond simply borrowing books, so highlighting research consultation can broaden their perception of the library's offerings (Iroaganachi 2022).

Libraries can use data gathered from research consultations to better understand patrons' needs and preferences. This information can be used to tailor existing services and develop new ones that align with what patrons are seeking. Research consultations can also serve as opportunities for collaborative learning. Patrons can learn valuable research skills from library staff, enhancing their ability to conduct independent research in the future. During research consultations, librarians can introduce patrons to various resources available at the library, including digital databases, journals, and special collections. This can further demonstrate the library's value and relevance. Research consultations provide a platform for

patrons to provide feedback on library services. This feedback can help the library continuously improve its offerings and adapt to changing patron needs.Libraries can use various communication channels to promote their research consultation services. This could include website announcements, social media posts, flyers, and collaborations with academic departments.Incorporating research consultation services as a propeller for increasing library patronage can create a more engaged and loyal user base while also showcasing the library's role as a valuable resource for research and learning (Iroaganachi 2022).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate research consultation as a propeller for library patronage in academic libraries in Ondo town the objectives were to;

  i.   elucidate the technical expertise of the librarians as research consultants.

 ii.   explicate the effectiveness of research consultation.

iii.   ascertain the availability of subject librarians in the academic library.

 iv.   reveal the influence of research consultation on library patronage.

  v.   examine the influence of research consultation on the patrons research skills and prowess.

 vi.   examine the influence of research consultation on user's satisfaction in academic libraries.

Literature Review

Patron's anxiety and perception about librarian being approachable or not has a direct influence on their use of research consultation. Awareness of library research consultation helps patron's to be conscious of the librarian's assistance and avoid frustration during research work which also encourages library patronage. There are instances where librarians are pessimistic about a section feeling they were unable to adequately carter to the research needs of the library patron. Regular library patronage by undergraduates is beneficial to the students and also serves as an indicator of the university library's relevance. However, preliminary investigation, close observation and literature review revealed that library patronage among library users is on the decline (Adenekan and Haliso 2022). The library's performance mostly depends on its ability to meet the needs of its users in terms of research (Ameyaw 2022). Quality of services rendered to library patrons in any library is closely related with the professional skills of staffs. If the library is managed by qualified, experienced and cultured staff, users will always be encouraged to patronize the library more often (Michael and Olayemi 2023). Fournier and

Sikora (2015) averred that effective research consultation therefore occurs when the patron is accurately guided throughout his research process while each research consultation section worth the time of both the patron and the librarian. Effective research consultation is mutually beneficial to both the librarian and the library patron. It is valuable to the librarian in the sense that the librarian is productive during this section and he is able to guide patrons through his research process which would enable the patron to see more reason to patronize the library. Both the librarian and the library patron must be responsible and committed to the appointment. Research consultation make patrons view the librarians to be at par with their counterparts in the departments. The experience and expertise of the librarian avails them the skills required to work in this capacity. Hence the librarians receive the same respect adduced to faculty members. Availability of subject librarians, undivided attention received from the librarian, regular interaction and engagement, quality of content received, an enabling environment coupled experience and expertise are factors germane to the attainment of a functional and effective research consultation. The librarians most interface regularly and also engage the patrons as attention received from librarian's influences the perception of the patrons about librarians and the research consultation services (Vinyard, Mullally and Colvin 2017). Engaging liaison librarians is a proactive approach that can significantly increase library patronage and enhance the overall library-user experience. Liaison librarians play a crucial role in bridging the gap between the academic community and the library resources. Liaison librarians serve as subject specialists who are well-versed in the resources and services the library offers. They can provide personalized assistance to faculty, students, and researchers, catering to their specific information needs. By being embedded within departments and colleges, liaison librarians make themselves easily accessible to users. This is particularly valuable for busy individuals who might not have the time to visit the library in person. Liaison librarians proactively promote library resources, services, and workshops within their assigned departments. They ensure that students and faculty are aware of the available tools and are effectively oriented to use them (Iroaganachi 2022).

The patrons should be introduced to the research consultation services so the recompenses would be garnered early enough and for an elongated period. New intakes that are still really green in the academic system would need a lot of guidance from librarians because they would be new in the system and would have to access many sources and authors which they may find confusing. Whereas patrons that have been in the system for a while will have well-structured queries and better defined information needs, the new bees would need

more undivided and uninterrupted attention and full concentration from the librarian during the research consultation (Reiter and Cole 2019).

Research consultation should enhance the patron's research confidence and it is expected that the older patrons that have been subjected to the rigors and experience of research consultation should have higher level of research confidence. Helpfulness and approachability are the hallmark of patron's perception of librarian in research consultation services. There should be an improvement in the patron's research prowess after a functional and effective research consultation section. Research consultation is a part of research support service in academic libraries. Research consultation is equally used to deliver information literacy and library instruction programs. Research consultations are potentially important "teaching moments" as long as patrons and librarians speak the same language and librarians verify learning outcomes using communication clues during the consultation (Butler and Byrd 2016). The duties and responsibilities of librarians that serve in academic libraries is to provide research consultation services for the research community, which includes both the lecturers and students of that citadel of higher learning (Fournier and Sikora 2015). In actual sense, research consultation and research tool recommendation are the core functions of the reference librarian even though other librarian can also function in this capacity. The research consultation service is an instructional section where the librarian helps the library patron(s) to identify his research needs and helps to find information to meet these needs. Through this medium, patron(s) specific information needs can be brought to bear and addressed. Information proliferation has expedited a drastic change and down turn in library patronage and request for reference services despite the fact that more students enroll in higher institutions. This cataclysmic change is the corollary of information explosion as patrons can now access information over the internet from their comfort zones (Reiter and Cole 2019).

However, the academic librarians (mostly the reference librarians) are still a step ahead of their patrons as they are trained information professionals with retrieval tools and knowledge of library resources that can help access and retrieve needed information that can adequately meet the information needs of the library patrons. Although the importance of the reference services is reducing gradually, the academic librarians can offer personalized, in depth research consultation helping the patrons with their research work from problem identification and topic selection to conclusion. The academic librarians guide their patrons every step of the way. The guide might entail suggesting the right research tools that is most appropriate for the study. The librarians guide the patrons through the research process. To attain effective research

consultation, the information and guide provided by the librarian must be accurate, the patron must be satisfied and the librarian should be friendly and approachable throughout the process. The academic librarian most be able to answer the patrons questions correctly and provide accurate guides for the researcher and the patron should derive maximum satisfaction from the research consultation that is the meeting should not leave the patron more confused than they were before the meeting (Butler and Byrd 2016).

Research consultation is akin to reference interview which brings out the art in library and information science. Research consultation occurs when a library patron approaches a librarian with research queries to enable him retrieve the most relevant and appropriate information martial for his research work. The research consultant who doubles as a librarian will first of all accommodate the patron by creating a friendly atmosphere, conducive enough for the patron to pose his queries, allows the patron to ask his questions, ensures that the research query posed by the patron is explicit enough, then the librarian assists the patron by either helping him to retrieve the information material or directing him/her on how to go about the search to navigate the library resource. It could also include advising the patron on the best analytical tool required for his/her research. Research consultation helps to improve the quality of the research queries posed by the user. This is done with the aid of retrieval tools and the expertise and the research tools available at the librarian's disposal. Finally the librarian enquires whether or not the information resource retrieved adequately caters to the information needs of the patron, if not the whole process will be repeated. Research consultation is the interaction that transpires between the library patron and the librarian in order to help the user identify and retrieve the information material relevant to his/her research or information needs (StapletonCarter and Bredahl2020).

Research tool recommendation entails the research consultant or librarian recommending the most appropriate tools needed for gathering and analyzing research data. During research consultation and research tools recommendation, the consulting librarian must have adequate reference, retrieval and research skills and a whole lot of expertise so as to attain improved library patronage which is in turn is a corollary for maximum user satisfaction. An ineffective research consultation technique leads to misinterpretation of research query, inability to identify the actual user need and problem, incapability to identify retrieval tools or skills required to help retrieve the needed information material which would leave the user disgruntled and thereby lead to decreased library patronage. Individuals keep using a product or service if they derive maximum satisfaction from it hence, the library users will keep

patronizing the library if their information needs is meet. The research consultant can gesticulate, repeat, paraphrase, the user's queries so as to decipher the patron's actual research query or information need (Vinyard, Mullally and Colvin 2017).

Oboh (2021) averred that an information need must be expressed verbally or in written form before a search can be done. The expressed information need is called a search request and it is usually presented in natural language. Natural language is the diction of the user. The research consultant transforms the search request into a query using controlled vocabulary or the thesaurus. Controlled vocabulary is the words and phrases that are carefully selected or used to describe information resources for easy retrieval. That transformation process is called query representation. The search request can then be transformed into a query using controlled vocabulary. Oboh (2021) further stated that query representation is an intellectual process or exercise and it consist of the following steps:

- Conduct a concept analysis of the search request by breaking it down into concept groups.
- Itemize the synonyms, border term, narrow term, and related term of the identified concepts.
- Translate these terms into controlled vocabulary.
- Use Boolean logic to OR all the synonyms (terms) in every concept group AND relevant groups and then NOT out unwanted groups
- Apply other retrieval techniques where needed.

The prominence of the query representation during research consultation cannot be over emphasized as any mistake at this point has a ripple effect and a detrimental consequence on library patronage. Misconstruing the query means that the search request was not properly understood and the needed information material will not be retrieved, which can be frustrating for the user. There is a need for capacity building of the librarians so as to ensure that the research consultation is effective. There is also the need to create awareness about this service as some patrons might not be privy to this service.

Methodology

This is a survey based study. The research instrument employed in data collection is the questionnaire, which was designed by the researcher. Due to time and financial constraints (and also one of the proposed respondents institutions was on break) the respondents of this study was limited to the academic community in the other two institutions in Ondo town. The

researcher used the random sampling technique to select respondents for the study. The researcher administered the questionnaires personally to the respondents. The questionnaires were collected on the spot. Descriptive analysis was done using frequencies, percentages and mean scores.

Data Interpretation

Demographic Variables of the Respondents.

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	16-20	14	46
	21-25	5	17
	26-30	2	7
	30 - 35	6	20
	36 - 40	-	-
	41 – 45	2	7
	46 - 50	1	3
	51 - 55	-	-
	56 – 60	-	-
	61 - 65	-	-
	Total	**30**	**100**
Sex	Male	6	20
	Female	24	80
	Total	**25**	**100**
Marital Status	Single	22	73.3
	Married	8	26.7
	Divorced	0	0.0
	Widowed	0	0.0
	Total	**30**	**100**
Years of Experience	Below 5	6	20

	5 -10	4	13.3
	11 - 15	-	-
	16 -20	0	-
	21 - 25	-	-
Year of Study			
	Year 5	2	6.7
	Year 4	6	20
	Year 3	3	10
	Year 2	2	6.7
	Year 1	7	23.3
	Total	**30**	**100**

The Table above depicts the different demographic characteristics of the respondents. The age of 46.0% of the respondents was between the ranges of $16 - 20$, while the age of 17.0% of respondent was between the ranges of $21 - 25$. 20.0% of the respondents where male while 80.0% of the respondents where female. 26.7% of the respondents were married while 73.3% of the respondents where single. From the table above it is evident is 20.0% of the lecturers had worked for five years and below while 13.3% had worked between 5-10 years. 20% of the student respondents were in their 4th year while 10% were in their 3rd year. Therefore, the age, sex, marital status year of study and years of experience of the lecturers would have a balanced influence on library patronage.

B	Technical Expertise of the Librarians as Research Consultants	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Mean x	Decision Rule
1	I perceive the librarians in this institutions have in-depth understanding of research	14	13	3	-	3.37	Agreed
2	I am satisfied whenever I take my research questions to the librarians	5	24	1	-	3.31	Agreed

| 3 | I perceive the librarians lack adequate research skills. | 1 | 3 | 19 | 4 | 1.8 | Disagreed |
| 4 | I am usually more confused whenever I consult the librarians for my research work. | 2 | 3 | 15 | 9 | 1.8 | Disagreed |

Key: SA=4, A=3, D = 2, SD=1

Decision rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Disagreed
          2.50 – 4.00 = Agreed

The table above revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that librarians in their institutions have in-depth understanding of research ($x = 3.37$), and the respondents are satisfied with the results derived from the research consultation sections ($x = 3.31$). Conversely, the table revealed that the respondents disagree that the librarians lack adequate research skills ($x = 1.8$), the respondents also disagreed that they were usually more confused whenever they consult the librarians for my research work ($x = 1.8$). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 2.56 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which fall within the decision value for Agreed, it can be inferred that the librarians have technical competence and expertise in research which makes the research consultation sections productive.

C	Research Consultation	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean *x*	Decision Rule
1	The librarians are usually very helpful whenever I need assistance with my research	8	23	-	-	3.37	Agreed
2	The librarians ensure I get the information material I need to satisfy my information need.	7	21	-	-	3.03	Agreed
3	The librarians are usually distracted and preoccupied with other assignment during research consultation.	-	3	21	6	1.9	Disagreed

| 4 | The librarians talk down on me and expect me to know where and how to find the information materials I need myself. | 4 | 2 | 13 | 7 | 1.8 | Disagreed |

Key: SA=4, A=3, D = 2, SD=1

Decision rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Disagreed

2.50 – 4.00 = Agreed

The table above reveals that the respondents agreed that the librarians are usually very helpful whenever the respondents need their assistance with their research ($x = 3.37$), the respondents agreed that the librarians ensure the respondents or users get the information material they need to satisfy my information need ($x = 3.03$). However, the respondents disagreed that the librarians are usually distracted and preoccupied with other assignment during research consultation ($x = 1.9$), the respondents equally disagreed that the librarians talk down on them and expect them to know where and how to find the information materials they need themselves ($x = 1.8$). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 2.47 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which fall within the decision value for Agreed, it can be inferred that the research consultation sections are usually effective.

D	Availability of Subject Librarians In The Library	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean x	Decision Rule
1	There are some librarians who have background knowledge in my field of study hence; they easily understand my research needs and how to resolve them.	7	19	4	-	3.1	Agreed
2	The librarians with background knowledge in my field of study are able to retrieve quality and more relevant information materials than their counterparts from different fields.	10	15	4	1	3.1	Agreed
3	It is more productive to interact regularly with the librarians for research purpose.	7	18	3	-	2.9	Agreed
4	I feel anxious working with librarians on my research work.	3	12	10	1	2.3	Disagreed

5	I sometimes feel even the subject librarians do not understand my expressed information needs	1	10	13	5	2.1	Disagreed
6	Sometimes I don't achieve anything during the research consultation sections.	2	5	11	9	1.8	Disagreed

Key: SA=4, A=3, D = 2, SD=1

Decision rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Disagreed

2.50 – 4.00 = Agreed

The table above revealed that the respondents agreed that the presence of subject librarians in the library makes it easier to understand and solve the respondent or research needs ($x = 3.1$), the respondents agreed that the subject librarians are able to retrieve quality and more relevant information materials than their counterparts from different fields ($x = 3.1$), the respondents agreed that it is more productive to interact regularly with the librarians for research purpose ($x = 2.9$). Conversely, the respondents disagreed that they feel anxious working with librarians on their research work ($x = 2.3$), the respondent disagreed they sometimes feel even the subject librarians do not understand my expressed information needs ($x = 2.1$), the respondents equally disagreed that sometimes they don't achieve anything during the research consultation sections ($x = 1.8$). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 2.6 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which fall within the decision value for Agreed, it can be inferred that subject librarians are available in these academic libraries which is advantageous to the research consultation process

E	Influence of Research Consultation On Library Patronage (A)	SA(4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean x	Decision Rule
1	Research consultation has helped me to be more productive with my research work hence I now visit the library more regularly.	11	18	1	-	3.3	Agreed
2	The information materials retrieved during research consultation is of high quality and I achieve better result than I would have being able to on my own.	8	21	-	-	3.1	Agreed
3	I do not patronize the library at all	1	3	17	7	1.8	Disagreed

4	I prefer to do my research work all by myself	3	17	9	10	2.0	Disagreed

Key: SA=4, A=3, D = 2, SD=1

Decision rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Disagreed

2.50 – 4.00 = Agreed

The table above revealed that most of the respondents agreed that research consultation has helped them to be more productive with their research work which has made them patronize the library more often (x =3.3). So also, the respondents agreed that the information materials retrieved during research consultation is of high quality and they achieve better result than they would have being able to on their own(x =3.3). Conversely, the respondents disagree that they do not patronize the library at all (x = 1.8), the respondents also disagreed they preferred to carry out their research work all by themselves. Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 2.55 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which fall within the decision value for Agreed, it can be inferred that of research consultation is advantageous to library patronage.

F	Influence of Research Consultation on Library Patronage (B).	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean x	Decision Rule
1	Librarian's advice on the best tools to use for my research work have been of great help	12	16	-	1	3.2	Agreed
2	The consultation sections with librarian have helped me greatly to improve my skills in data gathering and data analysis.	8	19	2	-	3.2	Agreed
3	I am always eager to seek the librarian's help whenever I need it.	12	18	4	-	3.7	Agreed
4	The research consultation and research tools recommendation has helped to improve my research productivity, hence I am always enthusiastic about utilizing other library products and services.	10	11	4	12	3.1	Agreed

5	I know what works best for my research hence I don't need any help with that.	2	9	15	4	2.3	Disagreed
6	The librarians are not approachable and are usually very busy	4	2	12	10	1.9	Disagreed
7	I prefer to work with the information I get from the internet, hence I see no need to patronize the library or request for help.	4	8	13	3	2.3	Disagreed
8	The research consultation and research tools recommendation for me, has always been unproductive hence, I would rather work on my own.	3	2	15	8	1.9	Disagreed

Key: SA=4, A=3, D = 2, SD=1

Decision rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Disagreed

    2.50 – 4.00 = Agreed

The table above revealed that the respondents agreed that librarian's advice on the best tools to use for their research work and this has been very helpful ($x = 3.2$). The respondents also agreed that the consultation sections with librarian have helped the researchers to improve my skills in data gathering and data analysis ($x = 3.2$), and this make the patron's eager to seek the librarian's help whenever there is a need for that ($x =3.7$). Conversely, the respondents disagreed that the librarians are always so busy and not approachable ($x = 1.9$). In the same vein the respondents disagreed that the research consultation and research tools recommendation sections are, unproductive (x= 1.9).Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 2.7 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which fall within the decision value for Agreed, therefore, it can be inferred that research tools recommendation facilitates library patronage.

Discussion of Findings

It was discovered from this study that the librarians have technical competence and expertise in research which makes the research consultation sections productive. This is in consonance with the assertions of Reiter and Cole (2019) that research consultation and research tool recommendation are the core functions of the reference librarian even though other librarian can also function in this capacity. In the same vein Fournier and Sikora (2015)

averred that the duties and responsibilities of librarians that serve in academic libraries are to provide research consultation services for the research community.

This study revealed that research consultation sections are usually effective which validated by the assertion of Fournier and Sikora (2015) that effective research consultation occurs when the patron is accurately guided throughout his research process while each research consultation section worth the time of both the patron and the librarian.

It was discovered from this research that subject librarians are available in these academic libraries which is advantageous to the research consultation process. This correlates with Vinyard, Mullally and Colvin (2017)'s opinion that the availability of subject librarians, undivided attention received from the librarian, regular interaction and engagement, quality of content received, an enabling environment coupled experience and expertise are factors germane to the attainment of a functional and effective research consultation.

This study elucidated the fact that research consultation enhances library patronage this was also affirmed by Oboh (2021) who opined that the level of satisfaction derived from each research consultation section has a direct influence on library patronage.

In the same vein it was equally reveled in this study that it that research tools recommendation facilitates library patronage as stated by Vinyard, Mullally and Colvin (2017) who pointed out that during research consultation and research tools recommendation, the consulting librarian must have adequate reference, retrieval and research skills and a whole lot of expertise so as to attain improved library patronage which is in turn is a corollary for maximum user satisfaction.

Summary

The objective of the study was to examine the technical expertise of the librarians as research consultants (i.e the research skills the librarians possess), to discover the effectiveness of the research consultation and majorly to elucidate the influence research consultation and research recommendation has on library patronage. Convenient sampling technique was used in administering questionnaires to thirty (30) respondents which comprised of twenty (20) students and ten (10) lecturers that were randomly selected two higher institutions in Ondo town. Literature was reviewed on research consultation and research tools recommendation. The summary of the findings indicated that librarians have technical competence and expertise in research which makes the research consultation sections productive and that that research consultation enhances library patronage so also, research consultation sections are usually

effective.The study was conducted using the simple survey research design; relevant data were collected by means of structured questionnaire. Frequencies percentages and mean scores were used to analyze the data.

Conclusion

Research consultation creates a learning experience through which patrons are able to develop their research skills and get acquainted with library holdings and how to navigate these collections in order to harness its resources in the patron's quest to meet his research and information needs. Familiarizing patrons with subject librarians in their field of specialization brings about a drastic reduction in research anxiety and subtly rectify any misconceptions the patrons have about the roles of academic librarians.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that;

1. Academic librarians should put machinery in motion to build and maintain a sustainable model to support the management of research consultation as this would positively influence the library patronage. Enabling environment should be maintained for these activities to continue. The librarians should attend capacity building seminars or workshops to enable them acquire new research skills and improve on the older research skills.

2. Needed equipment and facilities (such as computers and research software packages or application) should be made available and maintained regularly so as to ensure that the research consultation sections are effective and result oriented. One-on-one and small-group consultations expedite a positive dramatic shift in research confidence while also reinforcing library personnel as approachable and helpful. This justifies the time invested in research consultation service.

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A SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT
Department of Information Management
Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences (FCIS)
Lead City University,
Ibadan.

Dear Sir/Ma,

Research Consultation and Research Tools Recommendation Questionnaire.

This questionnaire is designed to examine the influence of research consultation and research tool recommendation on library patronage in academic libraries in Ondo town. The information derived from this questionnaire will be used strictly for research purpose. Thank you for your assistance. Please tick right ( ) the appropriate session.

Section A.   Demographic Characteristics

1. **Age:**   30 -35 years ( ), 36- 40 years ( ), 41-45years ( ),

46 – 50 ( ),

51 – 54 ( ), 55 – 60 years (   ), 61 -65 (   ).

2. Sex: Male ( )   Female ( ).

3. Marital Status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed ( ).

4. Number of Years on the Job: Below 5 years ( ) 5 – 10years ( ) 11- 15years ( )

16 - 20 years ( ) 21 – 25 years ( ).

Note:SA   = Strongly Agree; A= Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree.

B	Technical Expertise of the Librarians as Research Consultants	SA	A	D	SD
1	I perceive the librarians in this institutions have in-depth understanding of research				
2	I am satisfied whenever I take my research questions to the librarians				
3	I perceive the librarians lack adequate research skills.				
4	I am usually more confused whenever I consult the librarians for my research work.				

C	Effective Research Consultation	SA	A	D	SD
1	The librarians are usually very helpful whenever I need assistance with my research				
2	The librarians ensure I get the information material I need to satisfy my information need.				
3	The librarians are usually distracted and preoccupied with other assignment during research consultation.				

4	The librarians talk down on me and expect me to know where and how to find the information materials I need myself.				

D	Availability Of Subject Librarians In The Library	SA	A	D	SD
1	There are some librarians who have background knowledge in my field of study hence; they easily understand my research needs and how to resolve them.				
2	The librarians with background knowledge in my field of study are able to retrieve quality and more relevant information materials than their counterparts from different fields.				
3	It is more productive to interact regularly with the librarians for research purpose.				
4	I feel anxious working with librarians on my research work.				
5	I sometimes feel even the subject librarians do not understand my expressed information needs				
6	Sometimes I don't achieve anything during the research consultation sections.				

E	Influence of Research Consultation On Library Patronage (A)	SA	A	D	SD
1	Research consultation has helped me to be more productive with my research work hence I now visit the library more regularly.				
2	The information materials retrieved during research consultation is of high quality and I achieve better result than I would have being able to on my own.				
3	I do not patronize the library at all				
4	I prefer to do my research work all by myself				

F	Influence of Research Consultation on Library Patronage (B).	SA	A	D	SD
1	Librarian's advice on the best tools to use for my research work have been of great help				
2	The consultation sections with librarian have helped me greatly to improve my skills in data gathering and data analysis.				

3	I am always eager to seek the librarian's help whenever I need it.				
4	The research consultation and research tools recommendation has helped to improve my research productivity, hence I am always enthusiastic about utilizing other library products and services.				
5	I know what works best for my research hence I don't need any help with that.				
6	The librarians are not approachable and are usually very busy				
7	I prefer to work with the information I get from the internet, hence I see no need to patronize the library or request for help.				
8	The research consultation and research tools recommendation for me, has always been unproductive hence, I would rather work on my own.				