

ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND USE OF LEGAL DEPOSIT MATERIALS BY LIBRARIANS FOR EFFECTIVE USER SUPPORT IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA, LOKOJA

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Abstract

The paper examined the assessment of management and use of legal deposit materials by librarians for effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja. Four (4) research questions were formulated based on the purpose of the study to guide the work. Questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents that consisted of librarians and library users who formed the total population of respondents. Major findings of the study showed that legal deposit practice is available in the National Library, Lokoja. It was also revealed that legal deposit helps the library to fulfil international goals of universal bibliographic control, through the local bibliographic control, helps the users in their various disciplines, allows the library users to gain access to the information resources and services, current information resources can be accessed easily. Problems identified include the inability of the National Library to enforce the legal deposit laws, poor attitude and lack of stringent enforcement of penalties, low patronage by users. The study concluded by recommending timeliness of legal deposit laws and the introduction of annual award to the best publisher of the year.

Introduction

Different libraries exist for different purposes. These purposes include functions, type of users and the reason for establishing the library. These account for the major difference in libraries. Okoy in Tinuoye (2010), asserted that the main reason is to provide the right material to meet the information needs of their users. The types of users of a library, the type of services rendered by it, the type of collection it has and the general intention of those who establish the library, clearly distinguish one type of library from the other. The types of library include: the national, public, school, academic, private and special libraries.

National libraries are regarded as the apex libraries in a country. Uwaifo (2010), acknowledged that national libraries are established and maintained by the national government of countries. They serve as the permanent repositories of information for that country. Unlike public libraries, these rarely allow citizens to borrow books. Often, they include numerous, rare, valuable or significant publications published in the country and forthcoming as a deposit library, either by law or under other arrangements. They also perform some of the following functions: produce a national bibliography, hold and keep up-to-date, a large and representative collection of foreign literature, including books about the country, act as a national bibliographical information centre, compile union catalogues and publish the retrospective national bibliography.

Legal deposit materials therefore, are those acquired by law by some libraries for permanent preservation, proper processing and dissemination to the public. These materials are mostly indigenous and they emanate from authors and publishers within a geographical area. Some libraries are designated by law to receive and preserve these materials (Edoka, 2000). These libraries are called depository libraries. Legal deposit, according to (Prytherch 1995), is a method whereby certain libraries are entitled by law to receive one or more copies of every publication which is printed or published in a country.

Statement of the Problem

The legal deposit materials form a large constituent in the collections of the National Library, Lokoja. They are of great benefit in bibliographic control research, study, learning

entertainment and knowledge transfer from one generation to another. They are also veritable authority during litigation, subpoena and authentication to Certified True Copy (CTC). They showcase the nation's cultural heritage. They draw a lot of users to the library. These include lawyers, students, researchers, civil servants, legal practitioners, tourists, etc. however, it has been pre-observed by the researcher, through on the job experience, that legal deposit materials are not user friendly as their accessibility and effective utilization by the users are inadequate and restricted.

Additionally, effective legal deposit management and practice guarantee the citizens and researchers nationally and globally access to collection of the nation's published researches. This is not possible and cannot be successfully implemented without the positive and committed management of the legal deposit materials by publishers and authors, as stakeholders. However, it has been noted that legal deposit law is not effectively implemented while publishers and authors have not been effectively complying with their legal obligations. This pitfalls therefore significantly affect the user support and experience in the use of legal deposit materials in National Library, Lokoja. Thus the problem of this study can therefore be put in the form of a question: what is the assessment of management and use of legal deposit materials by Librarians for effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja?

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

- 1 What are the legal deposit practices available in the National Library, Lokoja?
- 2 What are the uses of legal deposit materials that promote effective user support in National Library, Lokoja?
- 3 What are the factors affecting effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja?
- 4 What are the strategies for enhancing effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja?

Literature Review

The National Library is established by law to carry out the functions of legal depository. It is the library of libraries. It serves as the national information bank as rare, valuable and all published work are presented in it. According to (Adewunmi, 2008), the objectives of the National Library of Nigeria Decree include:

- a) Providing necessary support for intellectual efforts in all activities directed at progress and development.
- b) Ensuring a free flow of knowledge between the nation and others, thereby securing a place for the nation in the comity of nations that depend on recorded knowledge and information for survival in a world of rapid advancement and competition of ideas.
- c) Ensuring availability of comprehensive and as near complete a collection of resources as possible, materials on existing knowledge in the world ensuring full access to such resources both within and outside the nation's boundaries.

They are of different types which include printed materials while access to the password is given to the National Library by the publisher into the digital or electronic copies. They are lawfully acquired free of charge from publishers and authors of any intellectual work. The materials include books, magazines, journals, films, newspapers, government publications, oral recording and documentaries, etc.

The National Library of Nigeria through its managerial efficiency provides also access points to the legal deposit materials. These, according to (Owen, 2007), include consultation with staff, indexes, library catalogue and abstract, with the sole aim of satisfying the users. However, the guarantee of access to legal deposit materials depends on factors affecting legal deposit libraries (Nsibinwa, Hoskins and Stilwell, 2011). These factors, as identified by these authors, include implementation of the Legal Deposit Act, other legislations affecting access to legal deposit collection and preservation of materials and methods of managing the materials.

Legal deposit is a law that makes for publishers to deposit specific number of each title published with the National Library of Nigeria. Decree No. 29 section 4(1) – (4) provides that publishers should compulsorily deposit their published materials at the National Library. Publishers in this category include Federal, States and Local Government and Private

Companies. The law provides that the Federal Government will deposit 25 copies and the States 10 copies of their publications. Publishers are to deposit 3 copies of each published materials to the National Library at their own expense. Out of the three copies, one is to be sent to the University of Ibadan Library to update its collection. In case of default, the publishers are charged 50 pounds (Osunkoya 2009).

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey technique was adopted for the study. The study covered 44 professional and 56 para-professional library staff in the National library, Lokoja. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and was based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2); and Strongly Disagree (1); which was used in measuring the responses to the items. A sample size of 100 respondents was drawn from among the staff of the National Library, Lokoja. The data collected were analysed using statistics ie frequency, percentage and mean score. Items with mean score of 2.50 and above are regarded as accepted while mean score less than 2.50 is rejected.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Legal deposit practices available in the National Library, Lokoja.

S/N	Items	AV	NA	Decision
1.	Storage of rarebooks available in other libraries in the country	65	35	Available
2.	Provision of legal deposit resources to address the information needs of users	62	38	Available
3.	Preparation of the union Catalogue	54	46	Available
4.	Provision of access points to legal deposit materials	64	36	Available
5.	Provision of library services trousers in the nation	80	20	Available

6. Issuance of International Standard Book Number (ISBN)	85	15	Available
7. Issuance of International Standard Serials Number (ISSN)	85	15	Available
8. Regulation of publications	45	55	Available
9. Identification of publications and authors	75	25	Available

Research question one indicates that issuance of International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has 86%, Issuance of International Standard Serials Number (ISSN) has 85% respectively, provision of library services throughout the nation has 80%, identification of publications and authors has 75%, storage of rare books in other libraries in the country has 65%, provision of access points to legal deposit materials has 64%, provision of legal deposit resources to address the information needs of users has 62%, are practiced.

Table 2:Use of legal deposit materials that promote effective user support in National Library, Lokoja.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1.	The legal deposit materials in the National libraries fulfill international goals of Universal Bibliographic Control through the local bibliographic control.	44	35	15	6	3.1	Accepted
2.	Legal deposit materials helps the users in their various disciplines.	56	24	12	8	3.3	Accepted
3.	Gives the users the springboard to contributes effectively to societal development	47	29	20	4	3.19	Accepted
4.	Legal deposit resources are provided by libraries to address the information needs of users.	60	24	14	2	3.5	Accepted
5.	Attracts users to the library and allows library users to gain access to the library information resources	75	12	8	5	3.6	Accepted

	and services.						
6.	Current information resources can be accessed easily	45	30	15	10	3.1	Accepted
7.	Legal deposit materials helps to meet the needs of users	55		20	15	10	3.2 Accepted
8.	Legal deposit materials assist users in their field of study.	39		30	15	16	2.92 Accepted
9.	Legal deposit materials are used for research purposes.	45		24	19	12	3.4 Accepted

The study showed that legal deposit materials attract users to the library and allows users to gain access to library information resources and services has 3.6 mean score, legal deposit resources are provided by libraries to address the information needs of users has 3.5 mean scores, legal deposit materials are used for research purposes and gives the users the springboard to contribute effectively to societal development has 3.4 mean scores respectively; legal deposit materials helps the users in their various disciplines and legal deposit materials helps to meet the needs of users has 3.2 mean scores respectively.

Table 3: Factors affecting effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1.	Inability of the National library to enforce the legal deposit laws.	60	25	10	5	3.4	Accepted
2.	Low level of compliance to legal deposit law.	32	40	18	10	2.94	Accepted
3.	Poor attitude and lack of stringent enforcement of penalties	32	40	18	10	2.9	Accepted
4.	Non-awareness of the availability of legal deposit materials.	15	15	50	20	2.3	Rejected
5.	Inadequate legal deposit materials	30	15	20	15	2.8	Accepted
6.	Low patronage by users	33	33	20	14	2.9	Accepted
7.	Inadequate publications by authors	35	25	20	20	2.8	Accepted
8.	Inadequate collections in the National library.	20	15	35	30	2.3	Rejected

9. Lack of instructions on the use of legal deposit materials.	35	25	20	20	2.8	Accepted
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Table 3 indicated that the factors affecting effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja include inability of the National Library to enforce the legal deposit laws which has 3.4 mean score, low level of compliance to legal deposit laws has 2.94 mean score; low patronage by users and poor attitude and lack of stringent enforcement of penalties has 2.9 mean scores respectively; lack of instructions on the use of legal deposit materials; inadequate publications by authors and inadequate legal deposit materials has 2.8 mean scores respectively.

Table 4: Strategies for enhancing effective user support in the National Library, Lokoja.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1.	There should be effective preservation of legal deposit materials	39	36	20	15	3.2	Accepted
2.	The management of the Nationallibrary should encourage the useof legal deposit materials.	36	30	18	16	2.9	Accepted
3.	There should be stringent enforcement of the legal deposit laws for effectiveness and efficiency	40	30	20	10	3.0	Accepted
4.	Legislation should include Penaltiesfor non-compliance	32	40	18	10	2.92	Accepted
5.	Newly publishedmaterials should he accepted deposited on time.	39	26	20	15	2.9	accepted
6.	There should be orientation for authors and publishers.	60	15	15	10	3.3	Accepted
7.	Local authors shouldbe guided on the laws of legal deposits	41	30	16	13	3.0	Accepted
8.	Authors and publishers should be encouraged to publish more materials.	35	25	30	20	3.0	Accepted

Analysis in Table 4has disclosed some of the strategies that can be used to enhanced the management of legal deposit materials at the National Library, l.okoja. They range from orientation for authors and publishers which has 3.3 mean score; effective preservation of legal deposit materials has 3.2 mean scores, stringent enforcement of the legal deposit laws for effectiveness and efficiency, Guiding Local authors on the laws of legal deposit, encouragement of authors and publishers to publish more materials has 3.0 mean scores

respectively; legislation on penalties for non-compliance has 2.92 mean score; Management to encourage the use of legal deposit materials has 2.9 mean scores while timely deposit of newly published materials has 2.9 mean score. Therefore, all the items in table four were accepted.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that:

- The National Library of Nigeria should embark on regular legal deposit drives and also provide the State branches with adequate logistics to enhance drive at both the State and grassroot levels.
- Academic and research institutions should be visited regularly so as to collect their research output. This averts duplication on research efforts.
- Funds should be made available by the Federal Government to the National Library of Nigeria to assist them in carrying out regular deposit drives and sensitization workshops on legal deposit compliance.
- The National Library of Nigeria should ensure timely deposit of legal deposit resources, since the laws stipulates “as soon as materials are published”
- The use of posters, handbills, print and electronic medias, appeals, adverts and announcements be embarked upon so as to adequately get in touch with the stakeholders and also enforce penalties as the last resort on Legal deposit defaulters.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the effectiveness of the legal depository practices of the National Library, Lokoja is satisfactory however, efforts should be made for it to be more effective. Though the effort at enhancing compliance of publishers and authors is satisfactory, as it is recorded to be highly effective, it is imperative for the agency to be more proactive in her efforts so as to have an overall impact in its legal depository practices.

The study has also provided empirical evidence supporting comprehensive and timely collection of legal deposit. Having identified the strengths and weakness of the National Library, Lokoja, legal depository practice, it is important that the recommendations are

applied so as to engender an improved legal depository practices and compliance of publishers and authors with legal deposit obligations.

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