

Empirical investigation on impact of Koha on library services in selected academic libraries in Nigeria

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This study examined the impact of Koha on library services in some selected universities in Nigeria. A total of 50 library staff was purposively selected from five universities belonging to south-western and north-central regions of the country. A self-designed questionnaire was administered to both professional and para-professional staff of the libraries. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical method. The results of the analysis of the data showed that Koha has favorably impacted their libraries. Some difficulties encountered in implementing Koha were inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints.

Keywords: Library software; Open Source software; Koha; Library services; Academic libraries

Introduction

Computers in libraries have been used extensively for acquisition, cataloguing, classification, circulation, serials control, and information storage and retrieval activities. The importance of integrated systems in library activities such as cataloguing, circulation, acquisition and serials management, etc. is no longer debatable as libraries all over the world have realized the need to move from their manual practices to integrated systems and networked operations¹. Integrated Library Software (ILS) can be seen as an automated library system that is capable of managing the operations of more than one basic library functions. Integrated library system is a system which can keep all tracks of a library operation such as items, billing, tracking various items owned by library like books, journals, magazines, DVDs and so on, orders made by various faculty staff and students and also even patron management. ILSs can connect various libraries together including their various branches.

Today's ILS software can do various tasks at a time. Most ILS systems now offer web-based portals where library users can log into and view their account, renew their books, and avail many other

services. In any integrated library system, there are generally two interfaces; one is for users and another for administrators. A user can search a book, view available book list, renew book, hold book, print issue list, and edit his/her information (patron information); while staff can store bibliographic records (book, CD, DVD, journal etc.), library materials in database, create patron database, order a book, purchase a book, check the price list and others.

A number of software packages have been developed for use in the management and dissemination of information in libraries. The open source software, Koha- the integrated library system is being used by hundreds of libraries worldwide². The development of Koha is steered by a growing number of libraries throughout the world. These libraries either on their own or collaborating in groups, sponsor the development of new features to support their workflows. Koha's impressive feature continues to evolve and expand to meet the needs of its sponsoring libraries. The freedom to pick and choose from features, through the administration of system preferences, offers librarians the opportunity to tailor Koha library software in order to match their specific workflow needs.

Since the original implementation in 1999, Koha functionality has been adopted by thousands of libraries world-wide, each adding features and functions, depending on the capability of the system. With the release of Koha3.0 in 2005, and the integration of the powerful Zebra indexing engine, Koha became a viable, scalable solution for libraries of all kinds³. Koha is built on this foundation with its advanced feature and Koha is the most functionally advanced open source ILS in the market today⁴.

In the recent years, many libraries in Nigeria are increasing adopting Koha. This survey is to examine the impact of Koha on library services in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the satisfaction level of selected libraries in using Koha;
2. To find out the challenges faced by the library staff and users in using Koha; and
3. To suggest ways of improving the use of Koha software by librarians and users in the future.

Methodology

The sample population of this questionnaire-based survey study comprised the professional and para-professional librarians in the following universities: Ladoke Akintola University, University of Ilorin, Redeemer University, Adeleke University and Bowen University. The study sample consisted of fifty professionals and para-professionals from the selected university libraries. Out of the total of 50 questionnaires distributed among the five selected universities, 47 were returned and used for the data analysis. In order to ensure content and construct validity mechanism, the instrument was examined by

two library automation researchers. Further, to achieve the reliability of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested by administering 10 copies each to the professional and para-professional staff of a public library. The responses collected were correlated using Cronbach Alpha and the correlated co-efficient yielded an $r = 0.91$. This indicates that the instrument is reliable and good enough for data collection in this study.

With the employment of descriptive statistics, table frequency was used to present quantitative analysis of the facts gathered from the questionnaire administered on the respondents.

Analysis

Impact of Koha

Table 1 reveals that 37(78.7%) respondents strongly agreed that Koha software has impacted library services. More so, 33(70.2%) respondents strongly agreed that Koha is helpful in charging and discharging of books and library materials. Also, 31(66.0%) respondents strongly agreed to the fact that Koha has helped in moving most of the libraries to the next level. Also, 25(53.2%) respondents strongly agreed that Koha makes acquisitions system for smaller library simple and 21(44.7%) agreed that Koha makes acquisitions of smaller library simple.

Satisfaction with Koha

Table 2 presents the satisfaction of library professionals and para-professionals with Koha. Twenty four (51.1%) respondents strongly agreed that they are satisfied with Koha in carrying out library services. Twenty eight (59.6%) respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the use of Koha to other libraries and 20(42.6%) respondents strongly

Table 1—Impact of Koha on library services

	SA Freq. %	A Freq. %	D Freq. %	SD Freq. %	Total %
Koha software has impacted our library services.	37 (78.7%)	10 (21.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.05)	47
Koha is helpful in charging and discharging of books and library materials	33 (70.2%)	14 (29.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	47
Koha has helped in moving most libraries to the next level	31(66.0%)	16(34.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47
Koha makes acquisitions system for smaller library simple	25(53.2%)	22(46.8%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47
Koha makes union catalog facility available	21(44.7%)	26(55.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 2—Satisfaction with the use of KOHA

	SA Freq. %	A Freq. %	D Freq. %	SD Freq. %	Total
I am satisfied with Koha for carrying out library services	24(51.1%)	23(48.9%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47
I would recommend Koha to other libraries	28(59.6%)	19(40.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47
I find Koha dependable	20(42.6%)	27(57.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	47
Overall, I am satisfied with Koha	18(38.3%)	29(61.7%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.05)	47

Table 3—Challenges encountered with the use of Koha

	SA Freq. %	A Freq. %	D Freq. %	SD Freq. %	Total Freq.
High cost of maintenance	0(0.0%)	1(2.1%)	41(87.25)	5(10.6%)	47
Inadequate expertise	0(0.0%)	4(8.5%)	37(78.25)	5(12.8%)	47
Software problems e.g. malfunctioning, hanging	1(2.15)	2(4.3%)	39(83.0%)	5(10.6%)	47
Difficulties in installing Koha	1(2.1%)	0(0.0%)	29(61.7%)	17(36.2%)	47

agreed that they find Koha dependable. Also, 18(38.3%) respondents strongly agreed that overall, they are satisfied with the use of Koha.

Challenges in using Koha

Table 3 gives the challenges with Koha. The maintenance cost of Koha is pretty low and there is seemingly the required expertise in handling the software in the universities. It is also seen that there is negligible software related problems including installation of the software.

Conclusion

Koha is an effective software that is recommended for use in libraries that have not adopted an open source software for library automation. As Koha continues to receive wide acceptance by the user community, it is anticipated that the programmer and

the user community will be proactive in further improving the software to make it even user friendly.

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