

Impact of Users' Reference and Information Needs Satisfaction on Library Patronage

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Abstract

Though there seems to be a decline in public library patronage in Nigeria, yet it is believed that best practices in library services can enhance attendance of clientele. The study investigated the extent to which reference and information needs satisfaction enhances library patronage. The study was guided by 3 research questions. It adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 4,943 users. The sample size was 353. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The findings showed that users' reference and information needs' satisfaction enhances library patronage to a high extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended that public library stakeholders should provide the reference sections with adequate human, financial, and material resources; and rebrand and repackage reference service to attract users' patronage physically and online.

Keywords: *Reference and information needs, library patronage, impact assessment, Users' satisfaction, Public libraries.*

Introduction

Users are the people who come to the library as groups or individuals to use the library space for utilising information resources, consulting library services, and other purposes. Users are unique based on the type of libraries that serve their information needs. Users in public libraries are heterogeneous and diversified and that includes the general populace. Afkhami, Tajafari, Nowkarizi, and Asghari-Nekah (2019) affirm that users of public libraries are heterogeneous. There is no limit to who uses the public library because such libraries are funded with taxpayers' money.

Hence, everyone is entitled to use public libraries for reading, studying, research, relaxation, recreation, and other activities. The people served by public libraries include the old, youths, children, business people, students, members of various professions, academics, artisans, and farmers. The heterogeneous nature of public library users' makes them clamour for special information services to satisfy their specific and diversified information reference and information needs. Saibakumo, Orewa, and Nwose (2019) note that the tenets of library use include the people and the technology that drives the patterns of patronage of the libraries.

The reference and information services needs of users are associated with various services provided by the libraries. Friedland (2017) reports that Communications Policy Research Network (CPRN) identified the categories of reference and information needs as selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), document delivery, literature search, information repackaging, database search, information brokerage, referral services. Solanke and Nwalo (2016) include bibliographic information, indexing, and abstracting information. Igwe (2012) adds specific services that meet their educational, economic, social, health, religious, cultural, and information needs. Public libraries are making giant strides to provide tailored and specific information services to satisfy these enormous needs of diversified users.

Public libraries in Nigeria as information service institutions are putting efforts to ensure that the users are well satisfied with their services and products (Olarongbe, Adepoju, Akanbi-Ademolake, and Pedro, 2013 & Kefas, 2015). According to Bua and Yawe (2014) satisfying users' needs involves making required information materials present at all times for users' consumption. Library user satisfaction implies how users feel after using the information resources and services and their willingness to return to the library when next they need information (Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari, 2014). Mairaj and Naseer (2013) stress that the library should maintain and strengthen the services with which users are satisfied, and improve those about which they are concerned. For this

reason, Verma and Laltnanmawii (2016) suggest that to satisfy the information needs of users the library should develop their collections and also provide different types of library services because the library is a growing organism. Advancing and improving the services of a library to satisfy users' information needs is one of the best practices in librarianship. It is expected that such giant strides and efforts will help increase and enhance users' library experience and patronage.

Enhancing library patronage involves redesigning the services to meet the standards and trends in the information provision business. It also involves redesigning the library structure, website, software, and digital platforms in attractive and appealing manners. Jaeger, Bertot, Kodama, Katz, and DeCoster (2011) specify that patronage in public libraries is skyrocketing. Although, Universal Class (2019) laments that, "because many libraries now offer their collections online, many people are forgoing the library in favour of heading to their computers." Not just about the library's online presence, the presence of the information resources and sources on the internet has greatly affected library patronage. To handle the situation effectively, public libraries in Nigeria need to improve their reference and information services.

Public libraries are established in Anambra State, Nigeria in the major cities and towns. The libraries provide information services, including reference services to meet users' information needs. Prof. Kenneth Dike Library which is the central library and headquarter of public libraries in the state is

located in Awka the state capital. Aside from the central library, there are 3 divisional libraries in Anambra state. They are Onitsha Divisional Library, Nnewi Divisional Library, and Abagana Divisional Library. There are also 7 branch libraries which are: Ajalli Branch Library, Nkpologwu Branch Library, Adazi Nnukwu Branch Library, Amichi Branch Library, Ozubulu Branch Library, Ihembosi Branch Library and Atani Branch Library.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of users' reference and information needs satisfaction on library patronage in public libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the:

1. users' reference and information needs in Anambra State public libraries;
2. extent to which users' reference and information needs are satisfied in Anambra State public libraries;
3. extent to which users' reference and information needs satisfaction enhances library patronage in Anambra State public libraries.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are users' reference and information needs in Anambra State public libraries?

2. To what extent are users' reference and information needs satisfied in Anambra State public libraries?
3. To what extent has the satisfaction of users' reference and information needs enhanced library patronage in Anambra State public libraries?

Literature Review

The following previous studies that are related to the study were reviewed:

Olarongbe, Adepoju, Akanbi-Ademolake, and Pedro (2013) assessed information needs and characteristics of users of Oyo State Public Library, Nigeria. The findings showed that the majority of library users were students who needed information that supports their education, which they sought mainly from textbooks. The majority of the users obtained their needed information from the library and the internet. The major constraint to accessing needed information was the inadequacy of relevant materials. Periodic users' studies and acquisition of current and relevant materials were suggested as possible solutions.

Kefas (2015) surveyed users' satisfaction with public library services in Mubi, Adamawa State. The study revealed that most of the materials are outdated. The library is faced with the problem of information retrieval tools, which implies that the services provided by the library is not adequate.

Jegan and Jayaprakash (2018) studied awareness of information needs and information-seeking behaviour of public library users in Salem District. The study

reveals that majority of the respondents were males. The majority of the users in the public libraries in Salem district are employees 62 (52%), followed by the students 26 (22%). 17 (14%) respondents are farmers, while 15(12%) respondents are businessmen. 31 (26%) respondents expressed that their level of satisfaction with library services was excellent, followed by 50 (42%) respondents rating the satisfaction level as good. While 30 (25%) respondents are just satisfied with the level of library services being rendered, 09 (07%) respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the library services.

Olalekan (2020) conducted a study on utilization and user satisfaction of public library, using Herbert Macaulay Library, Lagos State, Nigeria as a case study. The research found out that, most of the library users are youths and young adults. The study also revealed that the respondents indicated visiting the library frequently for general reading, followed by research work, career, recreation/entertainment, to get help always, socialize to meet friends, and to use the internet. The findings also show that majority of the respondents indicated that the attitude of the library staff influence their visit to the library, and was generally satisfied with the resources and services rendered by the library.

Anne (2014) assessed reference and information services rendered to undergraduate students in federal university libraries in Enugu and Anambra states of Nigeria. The results revealed that reference services are rendered to undergraduate students in the two university libraries and that reference

resources are available in the reference sections of the university libraries. The study also revealed that the undergraduate students make use of the reference services offered to them in the libraries under study.

Ayanda, Ayanda, and Ayangbekun (2017) investigated users' satisfaction with the reference services in the National Library of Nigeria, Lagos. The result shows that out of the 95 respondents, 67 (70.5%) were males while 28 (29.5%) were females. It shows that the majority of the library users use the library materials regularly. Amongst the materials regularly used are encyclopedias, dictionaries and manuals. Also users are pleased with the library's services and facilities. The two areas where lack of satisfaction was expressed are lighting and photocopying services.

Aslam and Seher (2018) investigated user satisfaction with Liaquat Memorial Library, Karachi, Pakistan. It is a public library. The study discovered that the library is playing a vital role to some extent, but many areas need to be improved to meet the expectation and intellectual needs of the society. The majority of the users were students of Intermediate and of Master's level using library services to fulfill their educational needs. Also, there are users with multiple information needs who use recreational materials as well as newspapers. The rate of satisfaction of users was good, but the factors of dissatisfaction were also present. Poor internet services sometimes cause dissatisfaction for the users. Low cooperation from librarians and less guidance service were among the reasons for non-satisfaction.

Adeniran (2011) investigated user satisfaction with academic library services, academic staff and students' perspectives. The study revealed that of the academic staff and students who formed the population for the study, students were found to have used the library most. The result also showed that College of Management Sciences had the highest frequency of use, and it also showed that users were satisfied with the services of the library.

Literature review concentrated mainly on academic libraries and not public libraries. This study therefore fills the gap by surveying public libraries.

Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2015) declares that a descriptive survey aims at collecting data on and describing systematically the characteristics, features, or facts about a given population. A descriptive survey design was adopted because the study collected data with a questionnaire that was used to describe the reference and information needs satisfaction for enhancement of users' library patronage in Anambra State public libraries. The population of the study was users in public libraries in Anambra State. According to the 2019 Library User Register, there were 4,943 registered library users. This was made up of 2,430 users in Prof. Dike Central Library, 454 users in Abagana Divisional Library, 1189 users in Onitsha Divisional Library, and 870 users in Nnewi Divisional Library.

The sample size for the study is 357 users, determined with Roasoft Sample Size Calculator. The sample size comprises 176 users in Prof. Kenneth Dike Central Library, 32 users in Abagana Divisional Library, 85 users in Onitsha Divisional Library, and 64 users in Nnewi Divisional Library. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the central library and 3 divisional libraries. These libraries were selected because they have reference sections in the library complex. In the second stage, the accidental sampling technique was adopted in selecting the users. A 43-item questionnaire titled **Users' Reference and Information Service Needs Satisfaction Questionnaire (URISNSQ)** was designed. It has 3 clusters. Cluster A elicited response on users' reference and information service needs. The response mode is Needed and Not Needed. It has 11 items. Cluster B is on the extent to which users' reference and information needs are satisfied. It has 11 items. Cluster C dealt with the extent to which reference and information need satisfaction enhances library patronage. It has 21 items. The response modes are VHE = Very High Extent; HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent; VLE = Very low Extent. Data were analyzed with frequency count, percentage, and descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. All analysis was done with the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Users' reference and information service needs in Anambra State public libraries

Table 1: Frequency Count and Percentage Rating of Users' on the Reference and Information Service

S/n	Items	Needed	%	Not Needed	%	Dec
1	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	292	86.4	33	9.8	1 st Needed
2	Question-answering service	288	85.7	36	10.7	2 nd Needed
3	Information brokerage services	285	84.8	39	11.6	3 rd Needed
4	Document delivery services	284	84.5	38	11.3	4 th Needed
5	Orientation services	284	84.5	41	12.2	4 th Needed
6	Information and referral services	283	84.2	41	12.2	5 th Needed
7	Literature search services	278	82.7	44	13.1	6 th Needed
8	Bibliography service	278	82.7	46	13.7	6 th Needed
9	Selective dissemination of information services	272	81.0	51	15.2	7 th Needed
10	User education services	269	80.1	56	16.7	8 th Needed
11	Database search services	264	78.6	61	18.2	9 th Needed
12	Information repackaging services	258	76.8	67	19.9	10 th Needed

% = Percentage, Dec = Decision

Table 1 shows the users' reference and information service needs in Anambra state public libraries. It revealed that the identified reference and information service needs of users are Current Awareness Services (CAS) (86.4%), question-answering service (85.7%),

information brokerage services (84.8%), orientation services, and document delivery services (84.5%) which are ranked 1st to 4th on the table. Other information service needs of the users as indicated in the table are information and referral services, literature search services and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services.

Extent users' reference and information service needs are satisfied

Table 2: Frequency Count and Mean Rating of Users' on the Extent to which Reference and Information Needs are Satisfied.

S/N	Items	VHE %	HE %	LE %	VLE %	Mean	Std		Dec
1	Information and referral services	186 57.1	95 29.1	22 6.7	13 4.0	3.33	.98	1 st	HE
2	Orientation services	163 50.0	98 30.1	31 11.7	17 5.2	3.18	1.03	2 nd	HE
3	Information repackaging services	145 44.5	115 35.3	43 13.2	16 4.9	3.15	.97	3 rd	HE
4	User education services	163 50.0	85 26.1	49 15.0	17 5.2	3.13	1.08	4 th	HE
5	Selective dissemination of information services	153 46.9	92 28.2	44 13.5	24 7.4	3.06	1.12	5 th	HE
6	Current awareness services (CAS)	138 42.3	115 35.3	39 12.0	22 6.7	3.05	1.06	6 th	HE
7	Database search services	136 41.7	113 34.7	41 12.9	26 8.0	3.04	1.10	7 th	HE
8	Information brokerage services	140 42.9	92 28.2	61 18.7	24 7.4	3.01	1.07	8 th	HE
9	Literature search services	135 41.4	103 31.6	50 15.3	28 8.6	2.99	1.09	9 th	HE
10	Document delivery services	102 31.3	108 33.1	68 20.9	38 11.7	2.77	1.10	10 th	HE
11	Bibliography service	93 28.5	113 34.7	64 19.6	33 10.1	2.67	1.19	11 th	HE
Grand Mean						3.03			HE

VHE = Very High Extent; HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent;

VLE = Very low Extent, Std = Standard Deviation.

Table 2 shows the result on the extent to which users' reference and information needs are satisfied.. It indicates that all the reference and information users of Anambra state public library are satisfied to a high extent. This includes information and

referral services (3.33), orientation services (3.18), information repackaging services (3.15), and user education services (3.13) needs were satisfied to a great extent. Other reference and information service needs that are satisfied to a high extent are

Selective Dissemination of Information, Current Awareness Services (CAS), document delivery services, and bibliography service. The grand mean 3.03 shows that reference and information services needs were satisfied to a high extent for enhancement of users' library patronage in Anambra state public libraries.

The extent to which user satisfaction of reference and information needs' enhances library patronage.

Table 3: Frequency Count and Mean Rating of Users' on the Extent to which the Satisfaction of Reference and Information Needs Enhances Library Patronage

S/N	Items	VHE %	HE %	LE %	VLE %	Mean	Std	Dec
1	Increased use of library internet service	178 54.3	104 32.3	27 7.89	15 3.46	3.36	.98	HE
2	Increased request for bibliographic services	178 54.6	96 29.4	38 11.7	9 2.8	3.32	.89	HE
3	Increased reference inquiries received daily	142 43.6	151 46.3	25 7.7	5 1.5	3.30	.75	HE
4	Increased resources duplication/ photocopying request	171 52.5	108 33.1	25 7.7	13 4.0	3.28	.96	HE
5	-----	157 48.2	124 38.0	27 8.3	14 4.3	3.27	.87	HE
6	Increased request for instructional services	153 46.9	117 35.9	38 11.7	15 4.6	3.23	.89	HE
7	Users' consult brainstorming services frequently	138 42.3	123 37.7	43 13.2	17 5.2	3.14	.94	HE
8	Increased headcount	128 39.3	129 39.6	54 16.6	12 3.7	3.12	.88	HE
9	Increased resources reservation request	139 42.6	117 35.9	46 14.1	20 6.1	3.12	.95	HE
10	The number of borrowed books have increased	134 41.1	107 32.8	64 19.6	19 5.8	3.07	.94	HE
11	Increased request for selective dissemination of information services	110 33.7	142 43.6	50 15.3	21 6.4	3.02	.91	HE

12	Increased request for information scouting	116 35.6	131 40.2	51 15.6	19 5.8	3.00	.91	HE
13	More reference resources are used daily	93 28.5	177 54.3	32 9.8	8 2.5	3.00	.95	HE
14	More users are registered daily	105 32.2	140 42.9	56 17.2	19 5.8	2.97	.94	HE
15	Increased request for literature search services	111 34.0	130 39.9	58 17.8	16 4.9	2.96	1.01	HE
16	Increased request for current awareness services	96 29.4	141 43.3	59 18.1	24 7.4	2.91	.96	HE
17	Increased inter-library loan request	104 31.9	146 44.8	38 11.7	16 4.9	2.90	1.11	HE
18	Increased consultancy service request	94 28.8	147 45.1	59 18.1	12 3.7	2.90	.99	HE
19	Increased participation in the library exhibition	105 32.2	118 36.2	70 21.5	28 8.6	2.88	1.00	HE
20	Increased request for translation services	97 29.8	132 40.5	62 19.0	21 6.4	2.84	1.05	HE
21	Increased resources duplication/ photocopying request	171 52.5	108 33.1	25 7.7	13 4.0	3.28	.96	HE
Cluster Mean						3.07		HE

Table 3 shows the extent to which reference and information needs' satisfaction enhances users' library patronage in Anambra State public libraries. The grand mean of 3.07 reveals that reference and information needs satisfaction enhances library patronage to a high extent. It also indicates that all the items are rated high extent, such as increases use of library internet service (3.36), increases request for bibliographic services (3.32), increases reference inquiries received daily (3.30), and increases resources duplication/ photocopying request (3.28) ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Furthermore, reference and information needs satisfaction to a high

extent makes users' stay longer in the library (3.27), increases request for instructional services (3.23), users' consult brainstorming services frequently, increased resources reservation requests, and increased headcount.

Discussion

Users' Reference and Information Service Needs in Anambra State Public Libraries

In the first result, it was found that Current Awareness Services (CAS), question-answering service, information brokerage services, orientation services, document

delivery services information and referral services and literature search services are the reference and information service needs of users in Anambra state public libraries. In their report, Friedland (2017) reveals that the Communications Policy Research Network (CPRN) identified the categories of reference and information needs as selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), document delivery, literature search, information repackaging, database search, information brokerage, referral services. Solanke and Nwalo (2016) include bibliographic information, indexing, and abstracting information needs. Public library users are diversified, which equally implies that their reference needs are diversified and enormous. Identifying the users' reference and information needs will assist public libraries to make adequate provision of resources that will aid in meeting their information needs.

Extent to which Users' Reference and Information Needs are satisfied in Anambra State Public Libraries

In the second result, it was found that users' reference and information service needs are satisfied to a high extent for the enhancement of library patronage in Anambra State public libraries. In line with this finding, Tiemo (2016) insists that users' satisfaction has been the primary objective of libraries and library professionals. Adeniran (2011) argues that the purpose of establishing a library is defeated if its users are not satisfied with the resources and services it provides. Awodoyin and Aina (2018) suggest that users adjudge a product/service as either good or bad

because it has met the need or exceeded the needs of the user through service quality. When users frequently patronize the services of the public libraries it will boost their image as information service institutions. An increase in the rate of users' patronage will spur the government to increase the fund allocated to the public library for their maintenance.

Extent the Satisfaction of Users' Reference and Information Needs Enhances Library Patronage

In the third result, the study found that users' reference and information needs' satisfaction to a high extent enhances library patronage in Anambra state public libraries. It includes increased use of library internet service, increased request for bibliographic services, increased reference inquiries received daily, increased request for instructional services among others. Solanke and Nwalo (2016) found a positive significant relationship between user needs and patronage of reference services. Adiele, Grend, and Chinedu (2015) aver that patronage is burned out of a desire to be committed to an organization either based on its service quality or perceived service qualities. Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare, and Omosekejimi, (2015) posit that the level of using the library depends on users' satisfaction with the available information resources and services rendered to them. Users' satisfaction is very important to the existence and operation of public libraries. When the users are satisfied with the services of the library they will be encouraged to frequently visit the library, or consult librarians with their information needs.

Conclusion

The identification of users reference and information needs such as Current Awareness Services (CAS), question-answering service, information brokerage services, orientation services, document delivery services, information and referral services and literature search services, shows that the public libraries are still relevant, hence, should improve their reference services delivery. Also finding out that users' reference and information service needs are satisfied to a high extent implies that users desire to consult and patronise the services of the public libraries. This could spur them to frequently visit the library for their reference and information needs. Finally, determining that users' reference and information needs' satisfaction to a high extent enhances library patronage in Anambra state public libraries shows that public libraries have advanced and improved their services. This could result in users appreciating the services of the libraries.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, these recommendations were made:

1. Public library stakeholders should provide reference sections with adequate human, financial, and material resources.
2. The management of public libraries should design and implement the provision of digital reference services to ensure timely access to information irrespective of location and time.
3. Public libraries should rebrand and repackage their reference services in a way that will attract users' patronage physically and remotely.

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