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Users' Satisfaction with Reference Services in University Libraries in Nigeria: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined undergraduate students' satisfaction with reference services in National Open University of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population of the study was twelve thousand, five and forty-seven (12,547) undergraduates that registered for the second semester 2017/2018 session drawn from four Study Centres libraries. Sample sizes of 590 students were selected. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of the 590 questionnaires distributed, a total of 511 questionnaires (representing 86.6% return rate) were filled and returned. The study revealed that reference services were provided in the National Open University of Nigeria. These services include current awareness service, face to face interaction, and provision of electronic databases among others. The study also revealed that the respondents were satisfied to a high extent with the reference services provided in the library. Similarly, majority of the respondents were satisfied with the reference librarians in their libraries; they indicated that the reference librarians are competent in their work, always available to attend to users' needs, communicates effectively and work with users to help them create keywords and use of databases. Furthermore, the test of hypotheses revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of both gender and age of the respondents with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria. The study concluded that despite the positive response of the students, the National Open University of Nigeria and other academic libraries in Nigeria should provide more and better reference facilities and introduce novel services.

KEYWORDS: *University libraries, Reference Services, Users' satisfaction, National Open University of Nigeria, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is a tertiary institution established to provide open and distance university education to all who wish to pursue university education in Nigeria through using open mode of instructional delivery. It was established in 1983 and suspended on 25th April 1984. Eight years after the closure, it was resuscitated on 1st of October, 2002 (NOUN, 2012). It was reopened to stop the proliferation of profit-oriented outreach programmes of many conventional universities scattered all over the country after the closure of the institution. Also, there was an urgent need to bring tertiary education to the doorstep of any individual who aspires to be educated irrespective of their age as it is stated in the university's mission statement, which is "to provide functional, cost-effective, flexible learning which adds lifelong value to quality education for all who seek knowledge" (NOUN, 2017). This mission statement can be achieved through well planned curriculum programmes, human resources and library support services. The National Open university of Nigeria (NOUN) libraries are set up to serve its parent institution which has over seventy – eight study centres scattered all over the country. National Open university of Nigeria has its headquarters at Abuja, where the University Librarian oversees and co-ordinate the study Centre libraries through the Study Centre Librarians. They send reports to the University Librarian on the activities going on in various study centre libraries. The NOUN libraries render a wide range of services including reference service.

One of the most important services rendered by libraries is reference service. Underscoring the importance of reference services, Madukoma (2015) observed reference services as fulfilling the purposes of information dissemination, helping the university library to achieve its crucial goals of pass on knowledge to library users. This goal can only be attained, when the library resources are exploited, efficiently and ably consulted. This can as well be achieved by educating users on proper usage of library resources. Rehman, Shafique & Mahmood (2011) citing Pomerantz, Luo & McClure (2006) opined that a quick study of a reference service help library management and concerned librarians with a clear understanding of how well the service is meeting its anticipated purposes and outcomes, how well the service is assisting students and university community meeting their information requests, and if the available information resources are producing the desired results. It is against this background that this paper examined users' satisfaction with reference services in National Open University of Nigeria.

Objectives of the study
- Find out the reference services available to the students of National Open University of Nigeria.
- Ascertain the extent to which students are satisfied with the available reference services in Open University of Nigeria.
- To find out how satisfied students are with the reference librarians
- To elicit information on students satisfaction with the reference facilities

Research Questions
1. What are the reference services available to the student of National Open University of Nigeria?
2. What are the extents to which students are satisfied with the available reference services in Open University of Nigeria?
3. To what extent are students satisfied with the reference librarians?
4. To what extent are students' satisfied with the reference facilities?

Hypotheses
1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female student with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of age ofstudent with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries, irrespective of the type, exist to provide information for its community and the society at large (Lokeshappa, 2019). Saikia & Gohain (2013) considered library collections including reference materials as the foundation of a library and a major source to meet the information needs of users. Namugera (2014) sees user' perception as the judgment and evaluation of reference collection performance and how it meets their needs. Many studies have been carried out on the user's perception of library reference collections.For example, Dollah & Singh (2010) investigated the effectiveness of reference services by academic libraries in Malaysia, the findings showed that majority of the students indicated satisfaction and agreed that libraries in Malaysia are offering effective reference service. Similarly, Baharuddin & Fadzil (2011) investigated perceptions of students reference services in Ptar Library UiTM in Malaysia; majority of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of services rendered, also students also indicated high level of satisfaction with reference interview, instant feedback, quality of the answer given and available reference sources with over 260 databases. The study of Uzoigwe & Eze (2018) on reference services in Nigerian University Libraries revealed that majority of students indicated high level of satisfaction as reference services meet their information needs.

Okeke, Oghenetga and Nwabu (2013) carried out a study on academic libraries' reference and information services in Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State University, Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Madonna University, all in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that reference and information services provided by these libraries were not adequate; students indicated satisfaction with only photocopy of documents. Also, Madukoma (2015) revealed that reference services were insufficient and underutilized in Babcock University Library, Ogun State, Nigeria. Apotiade, Oyewole and Belau (2015) in their study on availability and use of electronic reference services in Bells University in Ogun State, Nigeria, indicated that the main electronic reference services available were online chatting with the librarian, discussion over the phone with the librarian and email of questions to the librarian. Also, Uzoigwe and Eze (2018) in a study on perceived benefits of reference services in Nigerian University Libraries, established that majority of Nigerian university libraries were offering reference services and majority of students reported high level of satisfaction. They indicated provision of ICT in reference services, user education and access and e-journals were forms of reference services provided.

The role of the reference librarian in the provision of reference services cannot be over emphasized. Studies have also been carried out on users' perception of reference librarians. Kampen-Breit and Cooke (2015)'s study indicated that majority of students in Florida perceive reference librarians helpful but amazingly, these students were not willing to call for help as a result of their previous interactions with reference librarians, as their behaviour was considered offensive and irritating. Namugera (2014) observed that the majority of users perceive reference staff competent, they possess the skills and knowledge required to offer the desired reference library services in Makerere University Library, Uganda. Similarly, the study of Rehman, Shafique and Mahmood (2011) indicated that users expressed satisfaction with the reference staff. Also, in their study, Olajide & Fabunmi (2011) indicated that users were satisfied with the reference librarians in University of Ado-Ekiti Library, Nigeria. In the same vein, Adeniran (2011) reported that users of Redeemer's University library, Nigeria were satisfied with the quality of reference staff of the library. Contrarily, Onifade and Adeniyi (2011)'s study show that users of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State were not satisfied with the help received from library staff, as only one reference librarian was available to answer many users' queries, cutting across a range of disciplines.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey. The population of the study was twelve thousand, five and forty-seven (12,547) undergraduates that registered for the second semester 2018 session drawn from four Study Centres libraries. The study centre libraries are Benin (4,164), Enugu (2, 694,), Asaba (2,304) and Awka (3,385). Yaro Yamane formular $\frac{N}{1+(Ne^2)}$ Uzoagulu (2011) was used in calculating the

sample size of students from each study centre in order to have proportional representation. Sample sizes of 590 students were selected as follows: Benin (151), Enugu (144), Asaba (146) and Awka (149).students from the four study centre libraries.

Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was constructed on a four-point Likert scale of Very High Extent(VHE,4Points); High Extent(HE, 3Points); Low Extent(LE, 2Points); Not Applicable(NA, 1Point).Five hundred and ninety questionnaires were drawn and administered to the respondents comprising of undergraduates. A total of 511 questionnaires (representing 86.6% return rate) were filled and returned.

Analysis of Data

The data were organised in tables according to research questions, standard deviation (SD) and Mean ($\overline{X}$) scores. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used in analyzing the data generated from the respondents. Analyses values were assigned to the four response categories' and the mean was interpreted in line with the 4 point scale ranging from (4) highest to (1) the lowest. In decision making the lower limit of the high degree response category, which was 2.50 was used as cut off. Any item with a mean response of 2.50 and above was accepted as an influencing factor. ANOVA was used in testing the hypotheses, the results were based on a P-value of 0.05 benchmark. Where the level of significance is above 0.05, it means that there is no significant relationship between the variables.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Study Centre	No. of Copies of questionnaires administered	Valid questionnaire returned	Percentage
ENUGU	144	130	25.4
BENIN	151	125	24.7
ASABA	146	126	25.4
AWKA	149	130	24.5
TOTAL	590	511	100.0

The rate returns according to study centre libraries were Benin (125), Enugu (130), Asaba (126) and Awka (130). A total number of five hundred and eleven questionnaires were returned from the undergraduates in the four study centre libraries under study.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male	193	37.8%
Female	318	62.2%
Total	511	100.0%

The respondents percentage figure on their gender showed that the highest number of respondents from the four study centre libraries under study are females 318(62.2% while males were 193(37.8%).

Table 2: Age group of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Per cent
18-22	252	49.3%
23-27	166	32.5%
28-32	47	9.2%
33 and above	46	9.0%
Total	**511**	**100.0%**

The above result showed that the highest age group of the respondents are in the range of 18 -22

(252) with a percentage of 49.3%, followed by 23 – 27 years (166) 32.5%, 28-32 years (47) 9.2% and lastly 33yrs and above (46) with 9.0%.

Research Question 1: What are the reference services available to the students of National Open University?

Table 3: Reference services available to the students of National Open University

Item statement	Available		Not Available		Decision
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Face to face Interaction	317	62.0	194	38.0	Available
Library Handouts and Guides on library use	356	69.7	155	30.3	Available
Magazines/Journals	386	75.5	125	24.5	Available
Current awareness Services	304	59.5	207	40.5	Available
Electronic Databases	360	70.5	151	29.5	Available
Library based reference Interaction	432	84.5	79	15.5	Available
Email based reference interaction	306	59.9	205	40.1	Available

The findings revealed that, all the reference services listed above are available to students of National Open University in the four study centre libraries. The result also showed that current awareness services(40,5%) is the highest rated reference services available to these undergraduates, followed by face to face interaction (38%),library handouts and guides on library use (30.3%), Electronic Databases (29.5%) while the less is Library based reference Interaction (15.5%).

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which students are satisfied with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent of satisfactions with the available reference services

S.N.	Item statement	Enugu N=130		Asaba N=126		Awka N = 130		Benin N = 125		Overall N =511		Decision
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
1	Face to face Interaction	2.48	1.04	3.01	0.94	2.52	1.06	3.01	0.99	2.75	1.04	HE
2	Library Handouts and Guides on library use	2.55	0.92	2.95	0.87	2.63	0.94	2.93	0.88	2.76	0.92	HE
3	Magazines/Journals	2.45	0.91	2.97	0.80	2.52	0.93	2.93	0.82	2.71	0.89	HE
4	Current awareness Services	2.38	0.94	2.92	0.88	2.48	0.94	2.92	0.90	2.67	0.95	HE
5	Electronic Databases	2.41	0.92	2.79	0.96	2.49	0.95	2.76	0.99	2.61	0.97	HE
6	Library based reference Interaction	2.33	0.91	2.80	0.90	2.42	0.95	2.77	0.93	2.58	0.94	HE
7	Email based reference interaction	2.27	0.92	2.67	0.98	2.33	0.94	2.61	1.00	2.47	0.97	LE
	Cluster Mean & SD	2.41	0.94	2.87	0.90	2.48	0.96	2.85	0.93	2.65	0.95	HE

VHE - Very Highly Extent, HE–Highly Extent, LE–Low Extent, NA – Not Applicable

Table 4 above indicated that the students of National Open University to a high extent are satisfied with the available reference services available to them with the cluster mean ($\overline{X}$ 2.95) and a standard deviation of (SD 0.95**).** The respondents arehighly satisfied with library handouts and guides on library use ($\overline{X}$ 2.76, SD 0.92), followed by the face to face interaction ($\overline{X}$ 2.75, SD 1.04), Magazines/Journals ($\overline{X}$ 2.71, SD 0.89), Current awareness Services ($\overline{X}$ 2.67, SD 0.89) while their satisfactions on the Email based reference interaction is to a low extent ($\overline{X}$ 2.47, SD 0.97).

Research Question 3: To what extent are students satisfied with the reference librarians?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent of satisfactions students are with the reference librarians

S.N.	Item statement	Enugu N=130		Asaba N=126		Awka N = 130		Benin N = 125		Overall N =511		Decision
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
1	Reference Librarians are competent with their work	2.72	0.86	3.21	0.76	2.78	0.89	3.15	0.77	2.96	0.85	
2	Reference Librarians communicate effectively	2.76	0.85	3.22	0.78	2.78	0.86	3.15	0.81	2.98	0.85	
3	Reference Librarians are always available to attend to users' need	2.75	0.90	3.13	0.81	2.78	0.92	3.05	0.84	2.93	0.88	
4	Reference Librarians work with users to help them create keywords for leocting and using databases	2.67	0.93	3.04	0.78	2.71	0.96	3.03	0.82	2.86	0.89	
	Cluster Mean & SD	**2.73**	**0.89**	**3.15**	**0.78**	**2.76**	**0.91**	**3.10**	**0.81**	**2.93**	**0.87**	

VHE - Very Highly Extent, HE–Highly Extent, LE–Low Extent, NA – Not Applicable

Table 5 shows that that the majority of the respondents are satisfied with the reference librarians showing that the reference librarians are competent in their work, always available to attend to users' needs, communicates effectively and work with users to help them create keywords and use of databases.

Research Question 4: To what extent are students' satisfied with the reference facilities?

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of students' satisfaction with the reference facilities

S.N.	Item statement	Enugu N=130		Asaba N=126		Awka N = 130		Benin N = 125		Overall N =511		Decision
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	
1	There are air condition/fans for cooling of the references section	2.82	0.87	3.14	0.78	2.91	0.90	3.06	0.81	2.98	0.85	HE
2	The reference section provides computers to enhance the sue of electronic references sources	2.60	0.92	2.79	0.92	2.65	0.96	2.86	0.90	2.72	0.93	HE
3	There are computers in the reference section for easy accessibility of reference materials	2.64	0.90	3.10	0.81	2.67	0.92	2.98	0.85	2.84	0.89	HE
4	The library allows me to photocopy reference materials	2.66	0.87	3.06	0.87	2.72	0.92	3.02	0.93	2.86	0.91	**HE**
5	Reference collection satisfy my information	2.73	0.88	3.30	0.77	2.81	0.88	3.27	0.86	3.02	0.89	**HE**

	needs										
6	The library web pages are informative enough as it concerns e-reference information	2.56	0.85	3.01	0.66	2.60	0.88	2.99	0.71	2.79	0.81	**HE**
7	The library has sufficient electronic references sources	2.67	0.91	3.07	0.75	2.71	0.92	3.06	0.81	2.87	0.87	**HE**
8	The reference sources are current	2.61	0.88	3.02	0.74	2.66	0.90	3.02	0.79	2.82	0.85	**HE**
9	The available reference resources address my reference questions	2.58	0.82	3.11	0.77	2.62	0.86	3.04	0.82	2.83	0.85	**HE**
10	The library has sufficient print reference sources	2.67	0.84	3.10	0.79	2.68	0.88	3.05	0.84	2.87	0.86	**HE**
	Cluster Mean & SD	2.67	0.88	3.09	0.79	2.72	0.90	3.05	0.83	2.88	0.87	**HE**

VHE - Very Highly Extent, HE–Highly Extent, LE–Low Extent, NA – Not Applicable

Table 6 presents data generated on the students are satisfied with the reference facilities. Result shows that students are satisfied with the reference facilities provided in reference sections in the study centre libraries. The reference facilities are air condition/fans for cooling ($\overline{X}$ 2.98, SD 0.85), library has sufficient print and electronic reference sources ($\overline{X}$ 2.87, SD 0.86), students are allowed to photocopy reference sources ($\overline{X}$ 2.86, SD 0.91), there are computers in the reference section for easy accessibility of reference materials ($\overline{X}$ 2.84, SD 0.89), library web pages are informative enough as it concerns e-reference information (2.79 , SD 0,81) and above all the students to highly extent accepted that reference collection satisfy my information needs ($\overline{X}$ 3.02, SD0.89). The cluster mean ($\overline{X}$ 2.88, SD 0.87) indicated that these students are to high extent satisfied with the libraries references facilities.

H$_{O1}$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female student with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria

Table 7: Independent t-test analysis in the mean responses of male and female students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services

	N	X	SD	df	t	Significance (2-tailed) P	Decision
Male	193	2.59	0.72	509	-1.429	0.154	No significant
Female	318	2.69	0.71				

N = Population, X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degree of freedom, p = probability level of significance, t = calculated value

From Table 7, it can be seen that male respondents are 209 with mean rating of 2.59 and standard deviation of 0.72, while the female respondents are318 with mean rating of 2.69 with standard deviation of 0.71. t calculated value is -1.429 with df of 509 and Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.154 = P. Since P is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H$_{O2}$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of age of students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria

Table 8: ANOVA of the significant difference between the mean responses of students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	2.824	3	0.941	1.859	0.135	Not Significant
Within Groups	256.636	507	0.506			
Total	259.459	510				

Result in hypothesis in the above table, is the ANOVA result of the difference between the mean responses of students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria. The result showed that an f-ratio of 1.859 was obtained with a probability value of 0.135. Since the probability value of 0.135 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the hypothesis, it means that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of age of students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria is not rejected. The Inference drawn is that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of age of students with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study revealed that reference services were provided in the National Open University of Nigeria. These services include current awareness service, face to face interaction, and provision of electronic databases among others. The study also revealed that the respondents were satisfied to a high extent with the reference services provided in the library. Similarly, majority of the respondents were satisfied with the reference librarians in their libraries; they indicated that the reference librarians are competent in their work, always available to attend to users' needs, communicates effectively and work with users to help them create keywords and use of databases. Furthermore, the test of hypotheses revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of both gender and age of the respondents with respect to their extent of satisfactions with the available reference services in National Open University of Nigeria. These findings are in tandem with previous studies as earlier discussed in the review of literature (Dollah and Singh, 2010; Baharuddin and Fadzil, 2011; Uzoigwe and Eze, 2018).

In spite of the findings of this study, the National Open University of Nigeria and other academic libraries must strive to improve on their services in order to get more patronage and increase the level of satisfaction among users. They need to acquire more and better facilities and introduce novel services.

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