

WORK ATTITUDE AND SERVICE DELIVERY OF REFERENCE LIBRARIANS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated the work attitudes and Reference service delivery in academic libraries in Anambra State. Two research questions were used for the study. A survey design was used in quantitative research. All the 31 librarians from the five academic libraries in Anambra State made up the study's target population. The questionnaire served as the data collection tool. Graphs, frequency tables, and percentages were used to descriptively analyse the acquired data. the work attitude and interpersonal skills that affected the services provided by reference librarians were frustration brought on by poor working conditions and a lack of enthusiasm for the reference services. The strategies for enhancing work attitudes, interpersonal communication skills, and service delivery of reference librarians in academic libraries in Anambra State call for reference staff to be well educated in their area of specialization, and reference staff to be made aware of the need to have passion and love for their work. The study showed that academic libraries in Anambra State do not have enough experience about the work being performed and taking part in regular evaluations of users' needs in order to know the best service to provide.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Reference Librarians, Work Attitude, Reference Service Delivery,

Introduction

Academic libraries, are crucial parts of higher educational institutions. Santosh (2017) agreed and proposed that academic libraries play important roles

in knowledge dissemination through supporting university teaching, learning, and research activities. Mingba (2011) argued that in the light of these definitions, no school can assert its claim to academic greatness without a strong library to support its teaching, research, and public service responsibilities.

Therefore, a library is a collection of resources documenting human culture in many languages and media. Academic libraries are those that are created, supported, and maintained by institutions of higher learning in order to further the goals of those institutions (Opara 2011).

However, service-oriented operations are typically the norm in libraries. The referral services provided by libraries reflect this. Given the significant contributions which academic libraries make to our institutions, it is imperative to evaluate the reference services offered there, keeping in mind that this is the most crucial of all library activities. In order to achieve the goal of encouraging study and research, service delivery in the university library aims to meet the information needs of users who make up the university community. The provision of services by university libraries that are reliable and practical will satisfy users' identified needs. In providing library services and influencing the use of the library's resources, staff attitude is important.

The Reference service is the core obligation of any ideal library and information centre. Regardless of the type of library or information centre, the primary responsibilities of librarians are to provide information and reference services. The reference services division acts as a conduit between the library and its direct users, be it members of the general public, a particular community, or teams of users with specialized knowledge. Information and reference services can't exist on their own. The library's customers are at the heart of the reference service. The interpersonal interaction is what makes reference services possible (Kemoni 2014). When a user expresses a request, the reference librarian thinks about the resources and methods to use to satisfy their demands. The reference Interview is the primary form of interpersonal contact in the reference community.

The manner in which library staff members respond to patron needs while doing their duties is known as their work attitude. Based on prior interactions with the library personnel, visitors are encouraged to visit the library while looking for information resources to satisfy their information needs. However, research has shown that libraries in Nigerian universities do not always provide their customers with high-quality service (Basil, Ruteyan & Eghwubare, 2016). Therefore, insufficient power supply, a lack of skilled workers, and a bad attitude on the part of library staff can be held responsible for the poor service quality. Over the years, this lack of current information sources has prevented the library from providing the greatest level of service. Similar to this, Vera and Vicki (2014) noted that many university libraries in Nigeria may face difficulties due to a lack of design for high-quality service delivery.

Furthermore, Adesina (2013) provided additional evidence for this theory when he posited that attitudes are formed through learning and may be altered with the right orientation. Once formed, attitudes would influence how an individual interacts with objects, subjects, or other people. A person's attitude might vary depending on their upbringing, experience, education, skill level, level of exposure, exposure to diverse environments, exposure to different government policies, exposure to different corporate policies, and other factors. People's attitudes are dynamic and always changing, thus when an individual or group of persons is exposed to new experiences and ideas, new attitudes are generated and old views are adjusted (Adesina, 2013). In this context, attitude refers to a developed emotional toned inclination to consistently react favorably or unfavorably towards a subject, an item, or an idea. Generally speaking, attitude can be described as the sum of a man's propensities, feelings, biases, preconceived notions, beliefs, anxieties, and convictions regarding any given subject.

We can describe the work attitude as a mental and emotional state toward the work that influences the behavioral intention to work based on the concepts given above. According to Aries and Rizqi (2013), work attitude refers to how employees feel about various aspects of the workplace. It is their perceptions of the job and its surroundings based on their feelings, emotions, beliefs, judgments, and views. Because work cannot be done in a vacuum from its environment, it is crucial to take this concept into consideration. The definition of attitude toward work given by Nal (2015), as used by Akcay et al (2016), was "tendencies occurring based on individuals' judgments of their work." According to Myers (2013) and Perloff (2016), work attitude refers to a worker's cognitive, and emotional, response to the work. Employees' attitudes toward their jobs are influenced by what they think and feel about it. Depending on how they have interacted with the work, employees may have a favorable or negative reaction to it (Abun, et.al 2021).

When it comes to the provision of library services at any university library, staff attitude is a very important part of librarianship. The job of library staff, regardless of kind, is crucial in this situation for meeting the information needs of their throngs of patrons. Studying elements that affect employees' attitudes to their jobs becomes essential for library management due to the nature of the work, the level of stress, and the hours that university libraries' human capital work. Such employees' performance is influenced by work-related attitudes such job participation, leadership, dedication, and contentment. Employee engagement and commitment to the organization and its goals are generally to determine performance. The performance and productivity of the entire organization will improve holistically as a result of an employee's good attitude who is well aware of the business dynamics and can fine-tune to the organizational environment.

Reference and information librarians play a crucial role in society. By serving as a liaison between users and information and having the ability to quickly connect those in need of resources with those who have them without wasting time, a good reference and information librarian will inevitably promote the usage of academic libraries. For users (lecturers, students, and researchers) who rely only on libraries for their desired and necessary information in expanding knowledge, the academic library is to offer reference and information services. The reference librarian is therefore required to have a broad range of intellectual talents, a passion for helping users, a talent for document organization, the capacity to do literature searches, the ability to speak clearly, and appropriate understanding of the resources. Different types of libraries offer different reference and information services. Due to the type of clientele to be serviced and the goals the library must achieve, the nature varies. Instruction in library usage was given a lot of weight by reference and information services in university libraries. Since they make up the majority of patrons of academic libraries, students and researchers receive a lot of support in the information-provision process. It should be highlighted that "personal assistance" is the primary topic of conversation in reference services. If so, the library must be seen to be fulfilling its expected function in attending to the requirements of the users. To do this, the librarian has a functional role to perform; as a result, he is required to have a broad range of intellectual abilities and a desire to help users in any manner possible. His importance as a reference librarian cannot be overstated or understated.

Reference and information services include direct, one-on-one assistance within a library to those looking for certain educational, social, cultural, economic, political, and other types of information. Janes (2012) defines reference and information services as direct, one-on-one assistance that a library provides to its users who are looking for information for whatever reason, as well as a variety of library initiatives designed to make information as accessible as possible. According to Ademodi (2011), providing reference and information services entails dealing with specific information users who struggle to express or even comprehend their own information needs.

Statement of the problem

Employing knowledgeable library staff with a positive attitude is crucial if university libraries are to deliver the high-quality services that their patrons demand in order to meet their information needs. These staff members will be responsible for preserving the library collection and making sure that it is accessible and available when users need it.

However, literature has shown that this is not always the case, as some library staff have implicit work attitudes that obstruct work and cause frustration

when retrieving library materials because information resources are not organized well and collections are not cataloged well due to inadequate staff training. These attitudes have prevented the library from providing the best possible services over the years (Basil, Ruteyan & Eghwubare, 2016).

Objective of the Study

- i. Determine the work attitudes of staff towards the service delivery of reference librarians.
- ii. Find out the work attitude that affects the services delivered by reference librarians.

Research Questions

1. What are the work attitudes of staff towards the service delivery of reference librarians?
2. What are the work attitudes that affect the services delivered by reference librarians?

Methodology

The research method adopted was quantitative. Descriptive survey research was used. The research design used was cross-sectional survey. The target population of the study consisted of all librarians of the academic libraries of Federal and State institutions in Anambra State. According to the records obtained from the five academic libraries for this study, 31 academic librarians work there. Of these, 5 are from Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka, 6 are from Federal Polytechnic in Oko, 6 are from Federal College of Education in Umunze, 9 are from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University in Igbariam and 5 are from Nwafor Orizu College of Education in Nsugbe. A closed-ended questionnaire that was developed by the researcher in accordance with the research questions served as the study's instrument.

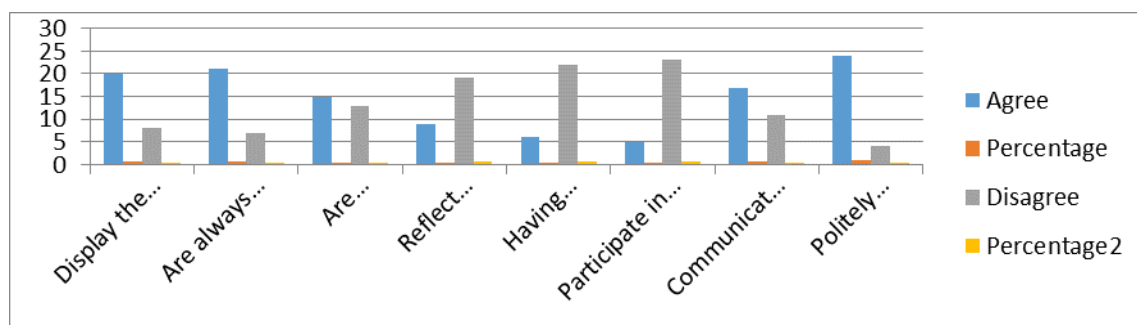
Findings of the study

Research question 1: What are the work attitudes of staff towards the service delivery of reference librarians in academic libraries?

Table 1

ITEM	Agree	Percentage	Disagree	Percentage
Display the right demeanor to users in need of information	20	71.4%	8	28.6%
Are always at ease while serving users	21	75%	7	25%
Are enthusiastic in assisting users identify the right	15	53.6%	13	46.2%

information to satisfy them				
Reflect professionalism in their approach to service delivery	9	32.1%	19	67.9%
Having enough experience about the work being performed	6	21.4%	22	78.6%
Participate in regular evaluation of users need in order to know the best service to render	5	17.9%	23	82.1%
Communicate effectively to users of the available resources	17	60.7%	11	39.3%
Politely encouraging users to patronize the library more during their approach	24	85.7%	4	14.3%

**Fig 1**

According to the data in table 1, it was found that academic library staff in Anambra State had a positive work attitude in the following ways: politely encourage users to use the library more when they approach 24 (85.7%); are always at ease while serving users 22 (78.6%); and show the right enthusiasm to users in need of information 20 (71.4%) regardless of the situation. According to the study, only 6 respondents (21.4%) feel that staff members had sufficient experience for the tasks at hand, and 23 respondents (82.1%) participated in frequent user needs assessments to determine the best services to offer.

The results of Adeniran (2010), however, showed that the success of information service delivery is determined by well-stocked and properly organized information resources manned by well-qualified, experienced, and empathetic staff. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

Research question 2: What are the work attitudes that affect the service delivery of reference librarians in your Library?

Table 2

ITEMS	Agree	Percentage	Disagree	Percentage
Inferiority complex	7	25%	21	75%
Stereotype	13	46.4%	15	53.6%
Cultural differences between the staff and the user	9	32.1%	19	67.9%
Services Inadequate ICT tools	20	71.4%	8	28.6%
Inability to understand ones question	14	50%	14	50%
Frustration due to poor working condition	26	92.9%	2	7.1%
Language problem	6	21.4%	22	78.6%
Low level of passion for the reference services	23	82.1%	5	17.9%

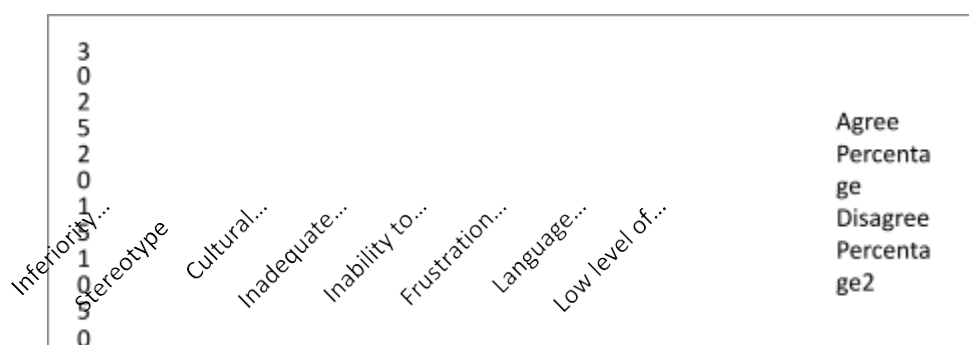


Fig 2

The analysis of the table in fig 2 reveals that the work attitudes that affect the services provided by reference librarians in academic libraries in Anambra State are inadequate ICT tools (20,71.4%), frustration due to poor working conditions (26,92.9%), and Low level of passion for the reference services (23,82.1%). The study's findings concur with those of Katz (2012) and Yusuf (2011), who believe that frustration brought on by difficult working conditions has an impact on the

services provided by reference librarians. According to him, there is a propensity for reference librarians to act aggressively toward clients through transfer if they are unhappy with the system they work for or are not motivated due to inadequate pay.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study showed that library employees do not have a favorable attitude regarding: Having sufficient training and experience with the task being performed and taking part in regular evaluations of users' needs in order to know the best service to provide. Additionally, it was revealed that the staff's attitude has a big impact on how well academic libraries in Anambra State perform services.

Recommendations

- i. The work attitude of reference staff should be improved upon especially in the area of not taking part in routine user needs assessments. They should also have sufficient training and experience in the work being done
- ii. For the supply of reference and information services, there should be enough working ICT tools and a conducive atmosphere.
- iii. The reference team needs to be made aware of how important it is to give reference services with enthusiasm and sufficient experience.

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