

**Full Length Research**

# **Users Satisfaction with the Reference Services in National Library of Nigeria, Lagos.**

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Accepted 15 October 2017

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**This study is user's satisfaction with the reference service in National Library of Nigeria, Lagos. The simple random sampling technique with questionnaire instrument was used for data collection on 100 users in the studies library, out of which 95 responded. The response rate accomplished was 95 percent. This study shows that the surveyed library (National Library of Nigeria, Lagos) provides services and facilities for its users. The study reviewed some of the studies carried out by dignified authors and researchers on reference services. The study also revealed that as much as possible the reference resources of the library are untimely utilized by users. The attitude of the library staff to the library users was excellent as shown in the research work. However, the areas where the library is lagging were also identified and recommendations proffered on how best to improve on the laxities.**

**KEYWORDS:** Library, Questionnaire, Reference, Reference Services, Reference sources, Satisfaction

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**Cite This Article As:** Ayanda EO, Ayanda OT, Ayangbekun OJ (2017). Users Satisfaction with the Reference Services in National Library of Nigeria, Lagos. *Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci.* 5(7): 224-228

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Library is described as a store house of knowledge, which is made up of collections of books, periodicals, films, recordings, computer databases and other media. It forms a vital part of the world's systems of communication and education and makes available knowledge that has been accumulated for ages. Consequently, its use is essential for development of the society-students, teachers, scholars, scientists, business executives, government officials. Thus, education itself is termed as the advancement of the intellect via information, which may be for personal, social or professional use. In the library the clientele needs assistance in finding materials for their project works (in case of students) research materials and for other reasons which includes preparing for examinations and

reading.

However, Reference Services (RS) are the services provided by a library to its users (Bankole 1999) which make the library to meet the information needs of its community in which the library is situated, it is also a professional effort in making information and knowledge more readily available to those who need them (Nwalo, 2000), in order to help the user in his quest for information that will lead him to knowledge. Meanwhile the research work is to access user's satisfaction with the reference services in terms of available reference sources, reading environment and their general feelings in the usage of the library using National library of Nigeria, Lagos, as case study.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is set out to provide answers to the following research questions namely:

- ❖ How current are the reference sources in National Library of Nigeria Lagos?
- ❖ How satisfactory are these reference sources?
- ❖ How responsive are the library reference sources to the varying needs of the users?
- ❖ What can be done to improve the present situation?
- ❖ What are the attitudes of the library staff towards the users and their work?
- ❖ How conducive is the library for reading

## CONCEPT OF REFERENCE SOURCES AND SERVICES

Success in the reference interface in the library depends on the mutual relationship between human elements of the service and the informational structure of the library. This is because, effective reference services require, apart from professional qualification, special training, personal qualities, good temperament and experience. Meanwhile, provision of reference service is a sequential activity such as reference question, negotiations, identification of the reference query topic and identification of the appropriate information sources that satisfy the reference question (Bankole, 1999). Olalokun (2003) opined that reference service consist of professional and personal assistance to individual library users in pursuit of information. It is generally believed that the principal purpose of reference service is to provide the resources needed by library users.

The reference and users' service department of a library is usually referred to as the "show case", Gateway or the "window of the library" because of its variety of activities. In today's world, reference services has been greatly enhanced by electronic advancements, such developments have in turn raised the standards of living in many spheres of human endeavors. One way to maintain this current tempo is to encourage librarians and information specialists to become literates in the use of electronic media. The services include selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), publication of current contents and the list of new arrivals. Indexing and abstracting services also notify the users of what is available for consultation in order to save his/her time. Also reference services can be performed faster and more efficiently with computers in automated library systems (Nwalo 2000), hence providing a great relief to both library staff and the users. Therefore, there will be no need for manual cataloguer which takes up more space as computerized catalogues can be searched within a split of a second to determine

whether an item sought by a patron is available in the library.

## FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVE USE OF REFERENCE MATERIALS

- Available reference material resources (Ologbonsaiye, 1994).
- The staff of the library- attitude to work.
- Quality of available literatures.
- Up-to-date materials, both foreign and local (Onyewuotu, 1996).
- Ability to acquire new information technologies- Digital library (2001).
- Right environment and support by the library management (Olalokun, 2003).

## USERS' SATISFACTION WITH REFERENCE RESOURCES AND SERVICES

If libraries are to continue to meet the demands of their users, increased co-operation and resource sharing are vital. Nweke (1992) asserted that one of the areas of satisfying users should be by the provision of current up-to-date library resources as well as the provision of current information tools such as: Catalogue cards, footnotes, abstracts, indexes, bibliographies, etc.

According to Popoola (1996), the ultimate criteria for assessing the quality of a library service is its capacity for meeting users' needs. The value of any library service is the beneficial effects accruing from its use as viewed by the founders when a library is not found wanting in anything financial, effective personnel, library facilities and other library materials, such a library can effectively satisfy its users.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of this study is a survey research, which is concerned with data collection by the researcher from the subjects, with appropriate instruments.

### Study Population

The population of the library users under survey, National Library of Nigeria, Lagos for the year 2004 \*was 116,984 while in 2005 it was 100,175. In the choice of varied percentage of study, population as sample scholars have cautioned that the size of such sample must be related to the type of nature of the study, environment and convenience. This gives credence to experts who explained that the need and importance of random sampling is based on accurate estimate of population

**Table 1:** Classification of Respondents by Sex

Male Frequency	%	Female Frequency	%	Total Frequency	%
67	70.5	28	29.5	95	100

**Table 2:** Classification of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students	35	36.8
Applicants	7	7.3
Teachers	2	2.1
Nurses	3	3.1
Medical Doctors	1	1.0
Businessmen/ Traders	8	8.4
Technicians	6	6.3
Civil servants	33	34.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

characteristics and is critically dependent on the way in which a sample is selected. Random in this case refers to a selection process that guarantees that such members of the population had an equally likely chance of being included in the sample.

### Sampling and Sampling Procedure

Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires to the clientele of the library. A total of ninety-five (95) library users were used as study sample considering the most regular users of the library as they appear in the library randomly. Also, this administration of the instruments involves the researcher distributing the questionnaires personally to the clientele and give them some time to fill before going back to collect it to avoid losses

### Method of Data Analysis

The manual method of data analysis with the aid of electronic calculator was used. The tables of analysis were compiled on the variables of interest, and their frequency distribution obtained. This type of descriptive statistics involves the use of tables where some information and observations are recorded in integer numbers known as frequencies. Also, the percentage (%) distributions of the observed data for the variables of interest were calculated

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis was conducted to get the accurate result

for this research based on the sampling population using the followings classifications as extracted from the distributed questionnaires.

Table 1 shows that out of the 95 respondents, 67 (70.5%) were males while 28 (29.5%) were females. This implies that more males use the library than females.

Table 2 shows that the bulk of the library users comprise of students and civil servants. Reasons responsible for this may not be far from the fact that the library, being a reference library mainly stock materials (library resources) suitable mostly for these group of users; the library is also situated in the heart of the town where several higher institutions of higher learning are located. There are higher institutions like the University of Lagos, Yaba College of Technology, Federal Science and Technical College, Federal College of Education (Technical) and Lagos State University among others. The fact that users in the categories of businessmen and technicians are represented in appreciable proportion as shown in the table 2, buttressed the fact that the library has a diverse collection of resources to accommodate various categories of professionals and non-professionals to accomplish their goals.

Table 3 shows that majority of the library users use the library materials regularly. Amongst the materials regularly used are encyclopedias, dictionaries, manuals, etc. 29 (30.5%) of the respondents use the materials occasionally, 3 (3.2%) rarely use the materials. The findings also reveal that one person representing 1.1% never used materials while two persons (2.1%) were undecided as to how frequent they use the materials. The implication of these findings is that the library has useful reference materials that help the users most of the times.

**Table 3:** Classification of respondents by frequency of using the Library materials

Reference Materials	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regularly	60	63.2
Occasionally	29	30.2
Rarely	3	3.2
Never	1	1.1
Undecided	2	2.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4:** Classification of Respondents by means of locating information from the Library

Means of Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Through the library Catalogue	39	41.1
Assistance of friends	-	-
Assistance of library Staff	42	44.2
Browsing	15	15.8
Through the index File or abstract	10	10.5

Table 4 shows that users locate materials /information in the library through different means as some of them indicated multiple means by which they locate information. However, majority of them locate their information with the help of the library staff. Another major means of locating materials/ information is through the library catalogue as 39 respondents representing 41.1% locate their materials through the library catalogue. This buttressed the point that the importance of the library catalogue and staff in providing good reference services cannot be over emphasized.

Finally, Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents' satisfaction with the library's services/facilities. From the above table, it was observed that users are pleased with the library's services and facilities. The two areas where lacks of satisfaction were expressed are lighting and photocopying services. The problem of erratic supply of power by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria coupled with the non-functioning of the library generator as well as the high cost of fuelling and maintaining the generator were reasons for lack of satisfaction. Photocopying service is another area of users' dissatisfaction as the library makes use of the only business centre in the premises. Thus, one business centre in the premise is quite inadequate with the numbers of patronage,

especially at the peak period. No wonder we do have a long queue of readers waiting to make photocopy.

Observation from the table also shows that certain users are very pleased with the attitude and behaviour of the library staff. Among the respondents of 95, 30 respondents representing 31.5% expressed that they are highly satisfied while 64, representing 67.3% expressed their dissatisfaction towards the attitude of the staff.

## CONCLUSION

The research work focuses on users' satisfaction with the reference services of the National Library of Nigeria, Lagos. We observed that a good physical environment ensures users' satisfaction, as well as that no meaningful learning and research could take place without a good library. In the light of the above assertion, the library (National Library) should be stocked with more current and adequate resources or provide more up-to-date information resources which includes both print, non-print and foreign. Computerized information resources are basically needed so as to get the rapid changes taking place from time to time. The library being in the formal capital city of Nigeria and serving a very large population

**Table 5:** Classification of Respondents by their Satisfaction with the Library facilities / Services

Resources /services /facilities	Highly Satisfied /freq.	%	Satisfied /freq	Unsatisfied /freq.	Highly Unsatisfied /freq.	%	Undecided /freq.	%	Undecided /freq.	%
Ref. Resources	33	34.7	52	54.7	-	-	10	10.5	-	-
Reading Chairs/Tables	41	43.1	37	38.9	7	7.3	9	9.4	1	1.0
Attitude of staff	30	31.5	64	61.5	1	1.0	-	-	-	-
No of ref. Staff	11	-	58	44.2	8	8.4	2	2.1	5	5.2
Ventilation	20	21.0	42	63.1	27	28.4	1	1.0	5	5.2
Position of Reference	17	17.8	60	47.3	15	15.7	3	3.1	-	-
Reading Space	32	33.6	45	54.7	17	17.8	1	1.0	-	-
Shelves	28	29.4	52	47.3	12	12.6	1	1.0	-	-
Catalogue	30	31.5	45	55.7	12	12.6	-	-	8	8.4
Flooring	30	31.5	45	55.7	12	12.6	-	-	5	5.2
Photocopying	10	10.5	20	68.4	50	52.6	10	1.5	7	7.3
Opening Hours	17	1.8	65	67.3	6	6.3	-	-	-	-
Referral Services	20	21.0	64	-	10	10.5	-	-	5	5.2
Lighting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

of users, in order to do away with backlog of books and other resources to become paper-less library and enhance more satisfaction for readers. It is therefore recommended by the researcher that this library should endeavour to carry out indexing and abstracting services with more vigor; employ more professional librarians, this will go a long way to satisfy the demand and aspiration of readers the more.

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