

## GAUGING USER SATISFACTION WITH LIBRARY SERVICES IN NUHU BAMALLI POLYTECHNIC, ZARIA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The research investigated user satisfaction with library services provided at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, utilizing a survey research approach. With a sample size of 127 respondents drawn from the study area, questionnaire was employed for data collection, resulting in 94 usable responses. Statistical analysis was then applied to interpret the collected data. The findings indicate a strong positive perception (90%) among respondents regarding the friendliness and accessibility of staff, reflecting a favorable relationship between users and library staff of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic. Moreover, the study underscores the lending of books and media, along with the provision of library materials, as the primary services recognized by users, with a frequency of 66%. Recommendations stemming from the study advocate for enhanced user awareness of available information resources and services, through direct and external channels. The study further proposes initiatives to promote user education programmes, potentially facilitated through student library handbooks and introductory library tours for new students. In conclusion, the research underscores the significance of cultivating positive relations to uphold the relevance of school libraries in a competitive environment. It highlights the importance of well-executed public relations initiatives to address negative perceptions and actively engage users in leveraging their talents and learning for broader societal impact. Ultimately, effective public relations practices are emphasized as pivotal in fostering a positive social image for the library, ensuring continued goodwill, patronage, and support.*

**Keywords:** User Satisfaction, Library, Library Services, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic

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### Introduction

Libraries are universally acknowledged as essential hubs for reliable and comprehensive information services, catering to the diverse informational requirements of users both reactively and proactively. This responsibility demands a meticulous evaluation of user needs and the library's capacity to meet them proficiently. Among the myriad functions libraries fulfill, one of the most crucial is the provision of reference and information services. Serving as a cornerstone of library operations, reference services involve guiding users in locating answers to their queries and selecting appropriate information resources. Reference sources, containing factual and widely accepted knowledge, are meticulously curated to address an array of user inquiries, spanning from specific to general and even research-oriented questions.

Elmer E. Rasmuson (2023) delineates three primary functions of libraries: the acquisition of information through collection development, the organization of information through cataloging and classification, and the dissemination of information through reader services. Reference services, which fall under the umbrella of dissemination, play a pivotal role in facilitating access to pertinent library and information resources for users. Essentially, reference services represent the cornerstone of library operations, serving as a vital conduit between users and the extensive knowledge contained within the library's holdings. As articulated by Ashikuzzaman, (2022) it is through reference services that users can tap into the finest library resources available, ensuring their information needs are met with efficacy and precision.

User satisfaction in library services involves a comprehensive assessment of users' experiences and perceptions regarding the library's offerings. It encompasses various aspects, including the ease of access to resources, the quality of assistance provided by library staff, the range and relevance of materials available, the adequacy of facilities and technology, and the overall atmosphere within the library. Understanding user satisfaction requires gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and other methods to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Libraries use this information to enhance their services, tailor their collections to meet user needs, and create a positive and engaging environment that encourages continued use and support.

User satisfaction, as defined by Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012), encompasses users' judgment on how well information services meet their expectations. Similarly, Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2014) assert that it reflects users' sentiments post-utilization of library resources and their inclination to return for future needs. Various factors, including staff quality, resource availability, and information infrastructure, can influence user satisfaction within the library. Evaluating user satisfaction is crucial, as content patrons not only continue using library services but also advocate for them, encouraging others to do the same. Given that reference services are tailored to meet users' information needs, continuous assessment of user satisfaction with these services is essential. Such evaluations aid in determining the effectiveness of reference services and identifying areas for enhancement.

Luos and Buer (2015) underscore the importance of evaluating reference services to identify strengths and weaknesses, thereby offering insights for service improvement. User satisfaction is integral to this evaluation, providing valuable feedback on users' perceptions of library reference services (Sriram & Rajev, 2014). A study by Rehman, Shafique, and Mahmood (2011) on user perception and satisfaction with reference services in Punjab university libraries found that while users generally expressed satisfaction with aspects like collection, staff, facilities, and services, none were rated highly satisfying. Similarly, Tella and Oyedokun (2014) examined online reference services in Nigerian university libraries via social media and found that despite users' awareness of library presence on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, they were unfamiliar with reference services due to deficiencies in user education and publicity efforts, leading to only moderate satisfaction levels. In another study, Ebijuwa, Salami, and

Isamotu (2016) evaluated users' perception and satisfaction with reference services at Olusegun Oke Library, LAUTECH, Nigeria, finding no highly satisfying categories. Constraints included staff reluctance, difficulty accessing materials, and users' education levels affecting information literacy skills.

### **Problem Statement**

Establishing positive relationships between library staff and users is crucial for achieving the library's objectives and promoting academic growth among students. The significance of cultivating such relationships has become increasingly apparent, as evidenced by instances where users demonstrate unfavorable attitudes towards utilizing library resources, potentially stemming from the quality of interaction with staff. Furthermore, strained relationships between users and staff can impede effective library utilization, undermining the institution's educational goals. Assessing the impact of these relationships on user academic achievements is therefore pertinent for library staff. Poor human relations within the library environment can deter patronage, with users feeling reluctant to engage with resources in an unwelcoming atmosphere. This, in turn, hampers the library's support for teaching, learning, and research endeavors. To address these issues, the study aims to evaluate user satisfaction with library services at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria. By identifying areas for enhancement, the study endeavors to improve service quality, foster positive staff-user relationships, and enhance academic development within the institution.

### **Study Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to find out the level of user satisfaction with library services offered in Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria

The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the type of relationships that exist between library staff and users of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria, and
2. identify the available library services offered at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria.

### **Literature Review**

Various services are offered in public libraries. Luo, and Buer, (2015) defined library services as those jobs performed by libraries for the benefit of the general public whom they are meant to serve. Ranasinghe, (2012) emphasized that library services include the loaning of books and other media, provision of books and other materials for use in the library, information service including print and electronic media, readers' advisory services including reservation services. Current awareness services: it is part of the services provided by academic libraries as part of reference service whose responsibility is to provide arrant selective dissemination of information, publication of current contents, and the publication of a list of new arrivals. Inter library loan service; arrangement of inter library loans is one of the important function's academic libraries. Hardly can any library meet all the information needs of her clientele

(Ekekwe and Muokebe 2012). Most World libraries at present engage in knowledge management that is the ways information resources are arranged and organised for easy, retrieval and utilization by the users.

Kelechi (2020) opined that library services include:

**Educational services:** Libraries provide varieties of resources and services to support education at all levels. Hunter, and Erin, (2008) pointed out that access to information is the basic human right. Today, there is so much information available than ever before in the world's history. Libraries acquire, process, organize and disseminate information free to all citizenry.

**Information awareness services:** Libraries provide information awareness services by spreading authentic information on current issues such as Covid-19 and other health matters. They also provide information on politics and governance. As a public service which is open to everybody, the public library has a key role of collecting, organizing and disseminating information, as well as providing access to a wide range of information sources.

Many authors and librarians have written on the library services, but not much emphasis has been laid on the library services that would be favorable to the non-literates. Ekekwe, and Muokebe, (2008), library services are library book loan, reference services, photocopying services, binding, online services, overnight journal loan, abstracting and indexing services, internet connectivity, computer typesetting, CD-ROM searching and publishing. Furthermore, Aina (2004) enumerated the following services as being sought after in libraries: photocopying services, current awareness services, interlibrary loan and document delivery service, user education service, book reservation services, exhibition services, and consultancy services. Despite all the strides made by public libraries, many librarians are still worried that public library users remain largely students who concentrate on reading for their promotional and entrance examinations with the help of personal textbooks and without borrowing books from the library (Ashikuzzaman, 2022).

According to Kelechi, (2020), the use of libraries depends on the services provided or made available in the library. In the words of Nwalo, (2013), the effectiveness of any library is best measured in terms of access and demand of its services. Therefore, if the services provided are not adequate for the needs of the non-literates, it is not likely that they are going to make use of the library. This is the more reason why librarians in the public libraries should move outside the library walls and embrace new services, that the communities where they operate can feel their impact. Services that can improve farmer's lives, services that can help job seekers find jobs or create jobs for themselves, services that are targeted at supporting the needs of the youths and services that helps in promoting community health needs. Libraries are considered as agents of social, political and cultural change in any society and provide a wide range of readership than any other type of library (Sriram, & Rajev, 2014). Morrison in Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami and Paulina (2014) see public library as a focal center, a university accessible resort for educational, informational and other cultural need of the community. He went further to say that libraries engage in the eradication of illiteracy and are recognized as the best institution for adult

education. If that be the case, there should be no discrimination in their provision of library services to the public.

In the words of Ashikuzzaman, (2022), access to library services to all members of the community addresses the issue of equality in a community, with no form of discrimination against any potential user. Hunter, and Erin, (2008), remarked that libraries can offer services for everyone in the community, the children and youth, women and girls, the vulnerable and marginalized, the entrepreneur and established businessman, the inventor, or the health worker. Rowley, (2013) are of the opinion that library services should be repackaged and disseminated through rural information dissemination activities in public libraries and community centers in order to be accessible to the rural illiterates. Current awareness services are provided to ensure maximum exposure and utilization of the library's information resources.

For libraries to maintain its relevance in the society where they operate, they cannot do without innovative library services that would attract both the literates and the non-literates. Innovative library services entails converting old library services as well as creating new programmes that will aid in promoting a sustainable development. In the words of Tella, and Oyedokun, (2014), innovation covers all processes which are conducted to develop new or improved product, services, or production method, and to make it useful. He went further to provide a picture of innovative practices in libraries to include interactive programs to realize and improve research and learning culture, author activities, seminars, exhibitions, competitions, song, dance, music shows, work and career planning, assistance in filling out job application form, social responsibility projects, information literacy among others. Sriram, and Rajev, (2014), advised public libraries to implement innovative ideas that use technology to improve people's lives and livelihoods. In their laid down examples, public libraries can introduce library services for farmers, library services for the long-term unemployed people, financial literacy service, building healthy community service, mobile information and communication technology service and so on.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a survey research design to investigate library service usage at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria. Records indicated a user population of 127 individuals accessing library services daily (Librarian, 2023). Given this target population, all users of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria were included in the study. Data collection utilized a questionnaire as the primary instrument, with the researcher ensuring both face and content validity through collaboration with a supervisor and experienced academics and practitioners. Instrument reliability was assessed via a pilot study conducted over seven days, involving 30 questionnaire respondents from Kaduna Federal Polytechnic Library. Although outside the study area, Kaduna Federal Polytechnic Library shares similar characteristics with the study community. Data analysis employed frequency distribution and percentage calculations.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This section provides a comprehensive presentation and analysis of the data gathered from the field, with careful consideration given to the study's objectives.

#### Types of Relationships that Exist Between Library Staff and Users

This Table shows the type of relationship that exist between users and staff of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria.

Table 1: Types of relationship that exist between users and staff of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria

| Relationship                          | Frequency | Percentage  | Mean        | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| They are friendly                     | 42        | 45%         |             |                    |
| They are aggressive in nature         | 10        | 10%         |             |                    |
| They lack good human relationship     | -         | 0%          |             |                    |
| They are always ready to assist users | 42        | 45%         |             |                    |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>94</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>2.13</b> | <b>1.46</b>        |

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Based on the data in table 1 above, the most common relationship between users and staff at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria, is that staff members are "friendly," which has the highest response rate of 45%. This suggests that a significant portion of users perceive the staff as approachable and accommodating, fostering a positive atmosphere within the library. Conversely, the aspect with the lowest rating is the perception of staff being "aggressive in nature," which has the response rate of 10%. This indicates that a smaller proportion of users perceive any aggression in staff behaviour, highlighting a positive overall relationship between users and staff. The mean score for the relationship aspect is 2.13, indicating a generally positive perception, while the standard deviation is 1.46, suggesting some variability in responses but with the majority leaning towards positive perceptions. Overall, the findings suggest that the majority of users perceive the staff at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library as friendly and ready to assist, contributing to a positive user experience.

#### Available library services at public libraries.

This table shows the available library services at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria.

Table 2: Available library services known to you at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria

| Library services | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Standard |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------|----------|
|------------------|-----------|------------|------|----------|

|                                                               | y         | e           | Deviation   |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Lending books & other media                                   | 31        | 33%         |             |             |
| Provision of books and other materials for use in the library | 31        | 33%         |             |             |
| Readers' advisory services                                    | 11        | 12%         |             |             |
| Library Orientation                                           | 6         | 6%          |             |             |
| Children Library Services                                     | 15        | 16%         |             |             |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>94</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>2.72</b> | <b>1.53</b> |

*Source: Field Survey, 2023.*

Based on the provided table 2, the highest-rated library service among users of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria is "lending of books and other media" and "provision of books and other materials for use in the library," with each having 33% responses. These services are evidently highly valued by users, constituting a significant portion of the library's offerings and indicating a strong demand for access to diverse resources for both borrowing and on-site use. On the other hand, the lowest-rated service is "library orientation," accounting for only 6% responses. This suggests that there may be room for improvement in promoting and facilitating library orientation sessions to enhance users' understanding of available resources and services. Furthermore, "readers' advisory services" also received a relatively low responses (12%), indicating a potential area for further attention and development in assisting users with their reading interests and selections. Overall, while certain services are highly appreciated by users, others may require intense promotion or enhancement to better meet users' needs and preferences.

### Discussion of findings

Research question one aimed to investigate the prevailing relationship between users and staff at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria. The results revealed that majority (90%) of the respondents perceived the staff as friendly and consistently available to assist users. Conversely, a minority (10%) of the respondents indicated the presence of an aggressive demeanor among staff. This finding resonates with the proposition put forth by Nnadozie and Okeke (2015), who highlighted the primary objectives of public relations, including the maintenance of positive social standing and effective communication to foster mutual understanding within the community.

Research question two delved into the array of library services offered at Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library, Zaria. The findings indicated that the most recognized services among users were lending of books & other media and provision of books and other materials for use within

the library, with frequencies of 62 and 66% respectively. Conversely, the least recognized service was library orientation with 6% response rate. These findings align with the emphasis of IFLA (2011) on a comprehensive range of library services, including lending materials, providing information in various formats, and offering readers' advisory services, as well as reservation services. This agrees with the findings of Nnadozie (2016) where he stipulated that some of the library services include; integrated readers' services, library displays and exhibitions, library week, use of notice boards, directional guides, film shows, book talks, library publications, story hours, etc. He also noted strategy for enhancing service delivery through user education, because new users do not know about library rules and regulations. Therefore, it is the duty of librarians to give library orientation for maximum utilization of the library.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that fostering good relations is crucial for academic libraries to maintain their relevance in today's competitive environment. Additionally, the libraries play a vital role in enhancing users' understanding of their purpose and services. There exists a risk among library users, particularly students, of losing focus, becoming disengaged, or developing a lackadaisical attitude towards academic pursuits. Implementing a well-conceived and effectively executed public relations programme can address these negative tendencies and encourage users to effectively utilize library resources for the benefit of the broader community. Effective public relations initiatives can enhance libraries' reputation, attract continued support, including patronage, financial backing, and emotional endorsement, by fostering a positive social image for the institution.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Staff of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic Library should strive to be more approachable, cooperative, and supportive towards users. By fostering a friendly and welcoming environment, students can feel more comfortable and confident in utilizing library resources.
2. The Library staff should take proactive measures to inform all users about the range of information resources and services available, both internally and externally. This includes promoting awareness of digital resources, databases, and other facilities accessible to users. Empowering users with knowledge about available resources can enhance their overall experience and facilitate effective information retrieval.

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