

PERSONAL, ATTRIBUTES OF LIBRARY STAFF AS PREDICTORS USERS' SATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract

The paper aligned a correlational research design to examine the personal attributes of staff as predictors of users' satisfaction with information services in academic libraries. The population of the study comprised all 5404 registered users in the three universities in the River State of Nigeria. The universities include the University of Port Harcourt (2675) Rivers State University (1889) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (840). Simple random sampling technique was utilized to sample 400 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed instrument titled 'Staff Attributes and User Satisfaction Scale' (SAUSS). The copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents were retrieved with a 100% response return rate. The data was collected and analyzed using simple regression and multiple regressions and the associated Fisher test of ANOVA. The findings revealed that professional status and job experience of library staff significantly predict users' satisfaction with information services in academic libraries. It was concluded that issues relating to improving library and information services require that careful attention should be accorded to such personal human attributes which are capable of affecting the lofty ideas of library management positively or negatively. It was recommended that library management shorten the welfare and personal progress of the force to ensure that the right attitude work is instilled in library staff.

Keywords: Academic libraries, professional status, job experience, information services, users' satisfaction.

Introduction

Information is an indispensable tool of modern society, needed in all walks of life. The life activity of nearly every human individual depends mainly upon access to and efficient use of information for developmental purposes. Thus the library is the bedrock of reliable information and knowledge sources upon which human society relies for human capacity and societal development. The academic library is the hub of all academic activities in any university. It is the laboratory that serves the varying needs of members of the community as far as information

provision and use are concerned. However, the value of any academic library is judged by the usefulness derived from rich information services. Hence, this is inferred from the satisfaction derived by users in accessing the library services to solve their information needs. Consequently, the critical judge of any tertiary institution library is the user himself since he is the one who determines the level of satisfaction, he derives from interacting the library (Nwokocha, 2004; Ogundipe, 2005; Ifidon, 2006)

Therefore, the library as a growing organism continually appraises its services and philosophy to reflect the information needs of its community users. This accounts for the shift in the philosophy of library services provision from material-based (number of materials acquired and stored locally) to user-based (specific materials that suit the users' needs) to ensure maximum satisfaction from using the library since the main reason any service provider is to ensure users satisfaction. Thus user satisfaction is based on meeting users' expected needs. According to Katankesh, Nasiry, Fein, and Damunabi (2020), user satisfaction has been considered as the measure of system effectiveness, is an evaluative construct. It represents meeting the needs and expectations of the user, and achieving these requires that library staff know about them work toward providing them and strive consistently towards meeting these needs. Satisfying users' needs should be the primary concern of any academic library. If the users do not perceive the library as meeting those objectives, their hopes will be dashed and they will leave the library with disillusionment and dissatisfaction. What constitutes user satisfaction or dissatisfaction in any tertiary Institution library may be a combination of several factors which produce either positive or negative effects on the user's information search. Accordingly, these factors are categorized into seven dimensions information quality, system quality, vendor support quality, system use, perceived usefulness, user characteristics, and organizational and management style (Kalankesher et al., 2020) The vendor support quality translates to the staff of the information system. Staff characteristics involve such variables as age, education, gender, location, exposure, occupation, and orientation of library staff. In the course of this research, the staff variables to be used are the variables of age, staff status, experience and gender.

Staff status is acquired through one's educational qualification on the job he holds. Education is regarded as an important force that positions people into better jobs, improving their job status thus helping to solve their economic problems. It is business imperative that there should be qualified staff strength for advancement and effective dissemination of information to the community. There is the need to get the appropriate manpower to make this plan a reality. Educational qualification improves one's job status, which provides the skilled labour force and generates new ideas and methods of production in terms of effective dissemination of information to the users on which the goal of the university depends.

The experience of the library staff on job is an important factor that can influence users' satisfaction with information service. The level of experience a person has gained in a job is determined by the number of years he has spent on that job or training acquired. One can say that experience is an important variable of library staff because when a staff is well experienced in his job, he would be able to adequately attend to the users of the library. When the time of

the user is not wasted in sourcing information, and his queries are promptly answered the resultant effect is thus the user will be satisfied.

Consequent to the above, this study is concerned with assessing job experience and professional status of library staff as a correlate of user satisfaction with information services in academic libraries.

Literature Review

User satisfaction with information services is the conceptual framework adopted here for this research. A lot of research and scholarly literature abound in the area of the user and the library, but most of these researches focus on user education, user survey study, or user behaviour. Not much attention has been given to the issue of user satisfaction and staff variables as one of the vital prerequisites of achieving users' satisfaction. West (2001) remarked that the main reason to carry out a user satisfaction survey is to seek a continuous improvement of services within individual institutions libraries. The primary purpose for a standard approach to user Satisfaction study is the desire to produce comparative data for tertiary institutions' libraries (Nitecki, 2000), According to Simmonds (2000), libraries conduct user satisfaction surveys for many reasons such as to measure collections, service delivery, service quality communication, library staff and facilities and equipment. It is therefore apparent that the decision to conduct a user satisfaction survey grows out of a need to find answers to some questions such as stall variables and discover how tertiary institution libraries are doing to ensure the satisfaction of their users.

According to Hornby (2000), satisfaction refers to a state of being satisfied, pleased or contented. Users satisfaction with information service delivery concept argues that access to information is not equal for all classes of users said the capacity for their utilization winch fosters satisfaction equally differs among individuals in line with their purpose information use, service delivery efficiency, library environment, staff disposition, education and general exposure of the user to information service facilities and programs. The differences in the level of user satisfaction with information services among users that of whether the relevant service on information resource and manpower that facilitates service delivery being desired by the user is provided, it is provided, is available on time and relevant to the information need; does the user have access to it and if it is accessible, is it in the format and language understandable to the user.

Uhegbu (2007) posited that user satisfaction in any library is a combination of two major factors human and environmental. The human factor has to do with the staff that delivers the services - their disposition to the user, communication skills public relations the like. The environmental factor has to do with the goodness of the library itself. That is, its neatness, ease with which information resources are retrieved, library organization, availability of retrieval tools and conveniences IFLA guidelines also recommend two indicators to examine opinions and users' satisfaction measured at two levels. These are General user satisfaction which evaluates the service of the library as a whole and user satisfaction with individual styles on components of those services.

On the pages of newspapers, where vacancies we advertised, experience in a job is almost always demanded. In many cases, a lower educational qualification is accepted if the applicant has a specified number of years of experience in that job in other cases, higher educational qualifications and many years of experience are demanded. Thus, one would say that experience on the job is important for effective service delivery. In university libraries, some staff is promoted in recognition of their long service. The promotion of a person who has a lower educational qualification seems to suggest that the person who is promoted does not have enough experience to be able to perform the duties their jobs require.

Personnel policies should be enacted to include selecting the competent, training the inexperienced and providing incentives for all members of the organization. Selecting the competent recruiting potentially effective group members. Training the inexperienced is essential to obtaining maximum productivity from individual members of the group. Incentives that meet the individual needs of the members boost morale and productivity.

Library staff attitude relates to the staff's immediate physical environment and the individual's natural social being. This culminates into the total belief held dearly by an individual an object or event. Critically examining the definition, one can see that the individual's attitudes are usually derived from various experiences and are present but dormant most of the time. They become very much expressed in speech when attending to the users of the library. When a library staff has gotten much experience on the job, he is well-grounded in the area of his duty and can confidently attend to the needs of the users providing them with the right information resource to suit their needs.

It is pertinent to say that the experience of library staff towards the users of the library would influence users' satisfaction with information service delivery. For instance, a negative attitude expressed by the library staff would harm the user, making user dissatisfied with the dissemination Information service. When the library expresses a positive attitude towards the user like being very receptive and polite to the user, being patient with the queries of the user and offering the right information needs, would result to the user leaving the library environment a very satisfied individual. The user would be encouraged to continuously seek the services the library provides as his needs are satisfied.

Educational qualification accords a person's status profession, Professionals are regarded as high-level educational and non-professionals are those with low-level educational qualifications with a person widely referred to as professionals. These are persons with a diploma qualification in their respective professions. The educational qualification has a multiplier effect which is the supply of manpower capable of effective work output as in the case of the library. effective dissemination of information service delivery to the users to achieve users' satisfaction Talking about the economic implication of educational qualification In Nigeria, Thompson (1981) noted that the new wave of thinking on the line of investing more in education was largely Initiated by UNESCO during their international Conferences Thompson noted that in the conferences they firmly grasped the fact that education is an investment in productivity which largely contributes to efficiency in the various countries of Africa.

Accordingly, Oyekola and Eitayo (2020) assert that every society defines a means of categorizing each person into a particular social group. The placement of each individual in turn determines his value, as defined by the larger society, hence, the greater role of society in defining every person's value. Differences in values and statuses of individuals engender stratification in society. If social stratification affected only such matters as who gets elected as President or who becomes the Chief Executive Officer, a separate chapter might not be dedicated to its discussion. But social stratification does much more: It results in some members of society benefiting greatly and others suffering"

Stratification, therefore, involves ranking individuals according to how much they possess of such characteristics mentioned above and the consequences of placing them in such ranks As regards the library staff in tertiary institution libraries, higher educational qualification encourages social stratification on the job which brings about job satisfaction, due to increased income and elevated lifestyle. When a library staff is satisfied with his job, there is increased job performance. He can effectively his by rendering effective information service delivery to the users of the library. This, in turn, makes the users satisfied with the services the library provides resulting in users satisfaction of information service delivery.

The American Psychological Association (n.d.) was of the view that status encompasses not just moo also educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. If therefore a society offers high rewards for certain scarce positions in this case librarians, there will be some competition for them. To the extent that more valued positions involve talent and training competition helps to ensure that the best in quality and kind rise to the top where their abilities can best be employed as in the case of rendering effective information service delivery to users.

Oyekola and Eyitayo (2020) suggested that educational qualification brings about a movement of individuals either up or down the social ladder. This implies a change to class status either in the upward or downward direction. The rank an individual has determines the respect, prestige and influence he holds. An individual's status is an intangible quality and an expressive feeling of being somehow special and valuable.

It brings about self-confidence and increased performance of one's duties. In the case of the library staff, when there is upward nobility in social status it brings about promotion and increases in income, self-worth worth and self-confidence. The library stall feels very confident in attending is the needs of the user without being intimidated by the types of queries asked by the user. He is well-rooted in the area of his job and can effectively render accurate information service which in turn results in users' satisfaction of information service delivery.

Hedge and Rineer (2017) agreed that an individual's chance of occupational advancement depends on his educational qualification. When an Individual working in an institution, in this case, tertiary institution libraries is given an opportunity for occupational advancement, in culls for job motivation and when the library staff is motivated it brings about effective and increased performance of his duties. The library staff is patient enough to listen to the queries of the user

and makes sure they proffer solutions to their queries. There is effective information service delivery which results in user satisfaction with the services the library provides. From the foregoing, there is evidence to support the fact that educational qualification influences users' satisfaction with information service delivery but there is no evidence to show the extent of influence.

Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the influence of library staff professional status on users satisfaction with information services in academic libraries.
2. determine the predictive influence of library staff job experience on users satisfaction with information services in academic libraries.
3. examine the joint influence of library staff status and job experience satisfaction with information service in academic libraries

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all 5404 registered users in the three universities in the Rivers State of Nigeria. The universities include the University of Port Harcourt (2675) Rivers State University (1889), and Ignatius Ajuru University Education (840). Using the minimum suitable (kpolavie, 2018) 400 library users were sampled through a simple random sampling technique, As designed instrument titled Staff Attribute and User Satisfaction Scale (SAUSS) for data collection questionnaire was distributed and retrieved on spot ensuring a 100% response return rate. The ethical standard was maintained while collecting data. The data we collated and analyzed using sample and multiple regression and the associated ANOVA.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Library staff professional status and users' satisfaction with information service

R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std Error				
0.701	0.649	0.607	22.51				
	Sum of Sq.	Df	Mean Sq.	F	A	Sig.	Result
Regression	816.46	1	916.46				
Residual	39336.738	398	165.15	27.23	0.5	.02	
Total	40153.198	399					Significant

Table 1 above shows the pair of library staff professional status and users' satisfaction with information service obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.701 indicating a high relationship An R of was obtained, and an Adjusted R of L607 was obtained. a 64.9% (0.64910064.9) predicting strength of library stat) professional status on users' satisfaction with information

service The ANOVA table associated with simple regression reveals a calculated F value of 27.23 with Sig Value of 0.02 ($F_{27.23}$, $p > 0.02$). Therefore predictive influence of library staff's professional status on users' satisfaction is significant, thus, library staff predicts user satisfaction with information service.

This finding above is in direct agreement with the argument that the obvious reason for providing educational opportunities to employees in any organization is to increase knowledge and technical skill, thereby, improving their professional status Thus, educational qualification has a multiplier effect, one of which is effective work output accordingly to Mahmood, Ahmad, Ibrahim, Jaalar and Yaacob (2020) assert that education produces quality and entrepreneurial graduates professionally muted individuals) who will not as catalysts for the transformation of the national economy. It also justifies the requirement of high professional qualification from applicants by prospective employers in events job vacancy advertisements Hence, Ugoani (2020) education is a crucial condition for social economic and personal empowerment required for management development The observed significant influence of professional status, therefore, underscores the need of authorities of tertiary institutions to go for the professional librarians in events of recruitment into library service.

Table 2: Library staff job experience and users satisfaction with information service

R	R²	Adj.R²	Std Error				
0.894	0.752	0.698	12.80				
	Sum of Sq.	Df	Mean Sq.	F	α	Sig.	Result
Regression	1781.324	1	1781.324				
Residual	38371.874	398	248.876	32.85	0.5	.00	
Total	40153.198	399					Significant

Examining the level that library staff job experience predicts users' satisfaction with information service, analysis in Table 2 that there is a high relationship between library staff job experience and user satisfaction with information service with a correlation coefficient of R-0.894. The R² obtained 0.752, and the Adjusted R² of 0.698 was realized. This means that library staff job experience accounts for 75.2% ($0.752 \times 100 = 75.2\%$) changes in user satisfaction information while the remaining 24.8% changes are accounted for by variables outside library staff job experience Furthermore the ANOVA table reveals that calculated $F_{32:85}$ with Sig value of 0.00 ($F_{32.83}$, $p > 0.000$). Hence, the prediction of users' satisfaction with information services is statistically significant. It was observed that the job experience of the library staff exerts a significant influence on users' satisfaction with information services Researchers sop experience on the job as an improvement that also translates to improved organizational performance (Al-Mzary, Al-Rifai, and Al-Mermany, 2015, Okechukwu, 2017). This is seen as training that ensures that the workforce adapts seamlessly to new technology and increases the efficiency and productivity of individuals and organizations (Khan, Abbasi, Waseem, Ayaz, and Ijaz. 2016). The observation is in agreement with the popular notion expressed in media or electronic print where else vacancies are advertised. It is common knowledge that in almost all such adverts, many years of experience in the job is usually required However, it is believed

that any staff can be highly productive on any job with a positive attitude, dedication, and determination irrespective of years of service.

Table 3: Library staff professional status and job experience on users' satisfaction with information service

R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std Error				
0.825	0.696	0.638	8.307				
	Sum of Sq.	Df	Mean Sq.	F	<i>α</i>	Sig.	Result
Regression	25817.189	9	4302.865				
Residual	4036.009	398	39.780	108.167	0.05	.00	
Total	43153.198	399					Significant Reject Ho

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	.042	2.090		.020	.984
Library staff status	.394	.113	.094	.981	.001
Library staff job experience	.431	.122	.105	1.102	.000

Table 3 summarily presents the analysis of the constructs of staff qualities as predictors of users' satisfaction with information services. The analysis shows that multiple correlations between library staff professional status, job experience and users' satisfaction with information services obtained a multiple correlation coefficient of $R=0.825$ indicating a high correlation. Furthermore, the R of 0.076 was obtained as the coefficient of determination. Consequently, the joint influence of staff attributes (library staff professional status and job experience) accounts for 69.6% variation in users satisfaction with information service, while the remaining 10.49% is unaccounted for by staff attributes (library staff professional status and job experience). The testing of the obtained influence, shows that the value of 108.167 was realized. The F value with Sig of 0.000 is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level ($F=108.167$, $p>0.00$). Therefore the joint influence of library staff professional status and job experiences is statistically significant in predicting users' satisfaction with information services in academic libraries,

Furthermore, the coefficient table shows the individual staff quality contributions to user satisfaction. Library staff professional status contributes 0.394, and library staff job experience 0.431.

Conclusion

Information has been defined as a pre-requisite ingredient to survival in contemporary society. And libraries are continually striving to provide adequate timely, and accurate information services and resources. However, these services must be appealing to users for optimal utilization. This is because, the lofty ideas in library services will not be meaningful if users are satisfied with the informative resources and services. Hence, the rationale for this study. The study found a significant influence experience and professional status attributes library staff on users satisfaction with information services. From this finding it is remarkable to that most studies on users satisfaction have hitherto ignored such personal-social attributes of library staff and focus is mostly on user and library facility attributes. It is worthy to note that librarians human beings that exist alongside other beings and are also impacted by social and personal effects. It was concluded that issues relating to improving library and information services, requires that attention should be accorded to such personal human attributes which are capable of affecting the lofty ideas of library management positively or negatively. It is based on this finding also, that it was recommended that library management should always consider the welfare and personal progress of their workforce to ensure that the right attitude is instilled in library staff.

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