A Survey of User Satisfaction at the National Library, Osogbo, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study was carried out to determine the level of user's satisfaction with the library services rendered at the National Library of Nigeria, Osogbo.

Design/ methodology: A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study set out to determine three main objectives using a well-structured, self-administered questionnaire.Total enumerative sampling method was employed to select one hundred consenting library clientele were used the NLN, Osogbo during the 2 week survey period. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze data.

Findings: Most of the respondents were single, male students whose mean age was 19.98 $\pm$ 1.24. Overall level of satisfaction with library services was low (44%). Although library staff members were competent, they needed to pay more attention to human relations. Suggestions for improvement included improved collection, provision of functional computer workstations with internet, reprographics facilities and increased opening hours.

Implications:The study has far reaching implications for public library services in Nigeria and for policy makers.Periodic user surveys should be carried out as a form of bench marking and feedback mechanism to ensure that public libraries in Nigeria do not lose relevance.Management of NLN should ensure continual training of staff to ensure best practices.

Originality/Value: The study is valuable in that it is an original research article which finds practical application to library services in contemporary times for librarians and library users.In any information system, the user is the central focus. User's satisfaction therefore cannot be overemphasized. The outcome of this survey and its recommendations will guide the management of NLN, Oshogbo in the strategic and operational design of library services which reflects the needs of its clientele in terms of resources, delivery and services offered. Other public libraries may also find the study helpful when planning user satisfaction surveys.

Key words: Public library, User satisfaction, Nigeria, Service quality.

Introduction

The pivotal role of the public library in socio-economic development cannot be underscored. This assertion rings true because being a means of self education, the public library functions as an alternative to formal education in its role as layman's university. Ali (2009) defined a public library as a public institution created with public funds for public education. The peculiar thing about public libraries is that they provide free access to various types of information products and services to all clients irrespective of gender, age, educational level or social class. Public libraries provide information to support formal and non-formal education. According to Nwalo (2000), libraries have the major objective of acquiring information materials such as books, newspapers, journals, magazines, photograph maps, films, microfilms, CD-ROMs and other forms of records. The information materials are systematically organized, processed, preserved and made available for users to meet their educational, research, information and recreational needs.

National library of Nigeria, Osun State branch, Osogbo is a typical public library. It was established in the mid 1960's with the enactment of the National library act of 1964. A branch is supposed to be established in each of the 36 states of the federation. Presently, NLN Osogbo has failed to expand to all the states; has inadequate social amenities, is understaffed with insufficient storage facilities for its audio visual collection (Ojo and Shabi, 2011).

This study focuses on NLN, Osun State branch, Osogbo

Literature Review

Senevirante (2006) posited that the ultimate goal of a public library is to bring about user satisfaction. This view was further corroborated by Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) who stated succinctly that a public library exists to satisfy its users. In a Sri Lankan study, Sirathaasan (2013) found a positive correlation between library collections and user satisfaction. Andaleeb and Simmonds (2001) identified several factors which influenced user satisfaction; the factors included responsiveness, competence assurance, tangibles and resources. User satisfaction as defined by Applegate (1997) is a personal and emotional reaction to a library service or product. Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) averred that user satisfaction is how users judge the services of the library and whether they get the desired information resources, facilities and services expected from the libraries. The study of user satisfaction is essentially to improve library services. Several Nigerian studies suggest that the primary aim of meeting users information needs is not being achieved due to lack of adequate resources in the public libraries Awana (2007); Ezeala (2009); Ojo and Shabi (2011); Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012); Ikenewe and Adegbilero – Iwari (2014). This trend is indicative of the fact that the public library scene in Nigeria is in dire need of a makeover. Public libraries in Nigeria are a far cry from what they ought to be in terms of resources, services and facilities. This study therefore set out to survey the opinion of the library users on ways library resources and services at NLN, Osogbo can be improved upon. The study results will have serious implications for the Nigerian public library sector. Findings can be used for strategic planning and implementation of improved public library services. It also will serve as road map or guide for improving upon the present facilities, resources ,services and ultimately user satisfaction at NLN, Osogbo.

Ezeala and Yusuff (2011) in a study of user satisfaction with resources and services in Nigerian Research libraries concluded that research institute libraries in Nigeria are ineffective in their service provision. They suggested that this may be due to under-funding of the libraries by the parent institution. The study recommended increased budgeting allocation to the library and a user serviced performance evaluation of library staff as a remedy to the situation. To further explain user's satisfaction with information resources, facilities and services Cardotte; Woodruff and Jenkins (1987) consumer satisfaction theory was developed into a conceptual model by Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012). In tandem with the model, information is regarded as a consumable product while the library users are customers who are having a purchasing experience. This implies that when the information resources, services and facilities obtained in a public library is lower than users' expectation; the users will be disenchanted and disappointed with the library services. The end product is users' dissatisfaction with the library and vice versa. Landrum, Prybutok, Zhang and Peak (2009) stated succinctly that service quality is a major influence on customer satisfaction. It is a major determinant of whether customers buy products or services and whether they will continue to do so. As a result of this observation, accurate and reliable instruments that assess service quality are of utmost importance to public service providers such as libraries which form the crux of this study.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) developed an instrument called SERVQUAL to measure service quality in the marketing sector which has since been used in a variety of organizations including libraries. SERVQUAL is based on the proposition that service quality can be measured as the gap between the service the customers expect and the performance they perceive to have received. Another variation of SERVQUAL named SERVPERE which is a subset of SERVQUAL commonly used by researchers to measure service quality in libraries (Nitecki and Hernon, 2000); (Landrum, Prybutok, Zhang and Peak, 2009). The performance dimensions measured by SERVPERF are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Norliya2009). The Norliya study focused on service quality in terms of functional quality which relates to the service process and service quality as distinct from satisfaction.

This study equates service quality to user satisfaction and sees the two variables as being directly proportional to one another since service quality determines user satisfaction.

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Objectives

This study will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of users' satisfaction with the services rendered at the NLN, Osogbo;
2. To determine users satisfaction with the performance of library staff at the NLN, Osogbo;
3. To ascertain factors that can enhance service quality and user's satisfaction at NLN, Osogbo.

Methodology

The study area is National Library of Nigeria, Osun State Branch, Osogbo. It is owned and funded by the Federal Government. Presently, it is situated in the outskirts of the state capital and is housed in a rented one story building. The study population is made up of all the users of NLN, Oshogbo who used the library during the survey period and consented in being study participants. The study is a descriptive cross sectional survey. Sampling method is total enumerative census involving the total number of users who used the NLN, Osogbo during the two week survey period who consented to join the study. 100 respondents participated in the study because they gave consent to be included in the study. The survey instrument was a questionnaire titled (User Satisfaction Opinionnaire) which was developed by the researchers based on the SERVPERF model by Landrum, Prybutok, Zhang, Peak,(2009). The survey instrument was validated by experts at the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan to ensure content and face validity. The questionnaire was structured for identification of the variables to be measured. It was divided into sections. Section 1 elicited responses on the socio demographics of the respondents. Section 2 elicited responses on user satisfaction with library services. Section 3 elicited responses on user satisfaction with performance of library staff while section 4 elicited responses on ways to improve library services. All responses were entered into computer software using SPSS version 19. Data was analyzed using simple frequencies and percentages

Results

Table I: Socio-demographic profile of users of NLN, Osogbo

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
10- 15	5	5
16- 20	17	17
21- 25	24	24
26- 30	22	22
31- 35	19	19
36- 40	6	6
41- 45	7	7
Gender		
Male	65	65
Female	35	35
Occupation		
Civil Servant	18	18
Trader	3	3
Student	74	74
Others	5	5
Marital Status		
Single	71	71
Married	28	28
Separated	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**

Table 1 presents sociodemographic data of the respondents. Most of the respondents (82%) fall within the 16 – 35 age range. Ages of respondents ranged from between 10 – 45 years with the mean age being 19.98 ± 1.24. There were more males (65%) than females. Majorly, the respondents were students (74%). Only 28 were married.

Table II: **Level of User's Satisfaction with Library Services**

S/N	Services Rendered	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
1.	Information desk	60	36	4
2.	24 hours access to book collection	0	82	18
3.	Face to face assistance of librarians	48	42	10
4.	Weekend library services	-	95	5
5.	Quiet place to read and study	64	30	6
6.	Inter library loan	5	92	3
7.	Delivery of books/articles on request	8	90	2
8.	Browsing for books or journals	10	88	2
9.	Computer workstations	0	100	-
10.	Internet facilities	0	100	-
11.	Bindery services	0	98	2
12.	Photocopying/Scanning services	0	100	-
13.	Overall level of satisfaction	44	39	17

Table II presents the level of user satisfaction with the services rendered at NLN, Osogbo. About two thirds (60%) of respondents are satisfied with the services rendered at the information/help desk. Majority (64%) of respondents are satisfied with the provision of a quiet place to read and study. All of the respondents are dissatisfied with weekend library services, bindery services and photocopying/scanning services. Overall satisfaction level is below average (44%).

Table III: Level of Satisfaction of Library Users with Performance of Library Staff at NLN, Osogbo

S/N	Criteria	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
1.	Punctuality	54	34	12
2.	Willingness to help users'	36	64	-
3.	Courteous to users	45	55	-
4.	Empathy towards users	32	68	-
5.	Knowledgeable answers to users queries.	89	8	3
6.	Readiness to respond to users requests	35	65	-
7.	Neat and decent appearance	40	60	-
8.	Prompt service	52	48	-

Table III presents the level of satisfaction of users of NLN, Osogbo with the performance of library staff. The respondents are very satisfied with the answers obtained to users queries (89%) but they are not satisfied with the attitude of the library staff towards users as can be seen from the low scores for willingness to help users (36%), empathy towards uses (32%) and readiness to respond to users requests (35). On the other hand, punctuality and prompt services were rated average by the respondents. Physical appearance of library staff (40%) was rated below average.

Table IV: Library Users Suggestions for Improved Library Services

S/N	Suggestions	NC	%
1.	Pay more attention to library users	68	68
2.	Good human relations with readers	74	74
3.	Provide internet facilities	100	100
4.	Make policies against noise and other distractions	15	15
5.	Organize workshops and seminars for library users	24	24
6.	Provide current editions of relevant books	88	88
7.	Friendly and conducive reading environment	76	76
8.	Computer workstations	96	96
9.	Provision of photocopier and book bindery services	100	100
10.	Weekend library services	76	76
11.	Provision of current Newspapers and Magazines	100	100
12.	Provisions of Digital Satellite TV	68	68
13.	Provision of religious Literature	2	2

Table IV presents the suggestions of the library users for improved services delivery in NLN, Osogbo. All the library users (100%) see the provision of internet facilities, provision of dailies and magazines and provision of photocopying and bindery services as of utmost importance. In rank order, the most pressing need is provision of computer workstations. This is closely followed by improving the library collection (88%). Only 2 respondents indicated interest in religious materials. Good human relations with library users by library staff was also highly ranked (74%).

Discussion of Findings

Library user surveys have become a widespread practice among both academic and public libraries during the past twenty years. Surveys have been used as a tool to assess service quality and user satisfaction (Hiller, 2011). Survey can be broad and comprehensive or narrowly focused on specific services or activities such as this study.

People from all walks of life use public library facilities, resources and services (Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012). This study is in tandem with this observation as indicated in the age range respondents (16 – 35). The mean age and marital status of respondents suggests that they are mainly students. This result may probably be explained by the fact that Oshogbo and its environs have universities and other tertiary educational institutions around it.

The findings of the study on the satisfaction of with services rendered indicate that the users are satisfied only in two areas; provision of quiet reading and study area and also satisfaction at the information desk probably in the area of reference queries. Previous studies have shown that access to the library collection and other library services profoundly affect users' satisfaction (Martensen and Grondholdt, 2003); (Adediran 2011). This is corroborated by Sivathaasan (2013). Satisfaction, according to Hornsby and Crowther (2000) represents a state of pleasure or contentment with an action, event or service, especially one that was previously desired. The overall level of satisfaction with library services rendered was below average.

This result is in consonance with the findings of Simmonds (2001) and Sivathaasan (2013) who buttressed the fact that user satisfaction is influenced by such factors as responsiveness by staff competences and assurances; tangibles and

resources. According to Doraswamy (2010) and Adediran (2011); the performance of any library can be judged on the basis of the extent of satisfaction of users. On this premise, the findings of this study are similar to that of Ezeala (2011) who conducted a survey among libraries in Nigerian agricultural research institutes and found that there is no user satisfaction because the libraries are ineffective in their service provision.

In the area of satisfaction with library staff, the users were satisfied with the level of professionalism and high competence exhibited by staff in answering users' queries. This result is suggestive of the fact that the staff of NLN are well qualified which is contrary to the findings of Bayissa and Gojeh (2009) who carried out a similar study in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian study found libraries in the Ethiopian public sector to be inadequately equipped with professionally qualified library staff. This study revealed that although the staff are professionally competent, they do not satisfy the users in the areas of the 'human side of user service'.Martensen and Gronholdt (2003)asserted that the human side of user service is an important determinant of user satisfaction .Curiously, the findings of this study are contrary to that of Simmonds and Andaleeb (2001) who found that responsiveness, competence and demeanour of the staff had no effect on library usage and consequently user's satisfaction.

The survey defined areas to concentrate on for improvement of library services which will lead to improved user satisfaction. Results of this study are consistent with the findings of Seneviratne (2006) where library users in Peradeniya suggested improvement in print and non-print collections, reprographic services, addition of computers, scanners and fax machine. More space, better ventilation and staff recruitment was also suggested. Although contrary to the findings of this study, the staff and facilities were satisfactory in the Peradeniya study.

Conclusion

Based on the five dimensions of user's satisfaction in the SERVPERF scale, the users of NLN Osogbo were dissatisfied in the area of tangibility which has to do with physical facilities, equipment and personnel. The satisfaction level was high in the assurance dimension. Although staff competence was clearly acknowledged, this was not reflected in

the quality of services rendered. In the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness and empathy the users were dissatisfied.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this survey, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of NLN, Osogbo should train and motivate its staff to provide competent guidance to users in a friendly and courteous manner.
2. Staff at the loans desk should show empathy to users' while giving prompt attention.There should be that readiness to respond to users requests.
3. Library opening hours should be reviewed upwards with weekends included.
4. The library collections should be improved in size and content with religious materials included.
5. Computer workstations should be provided with internet facilities.
6. Reprographic services which include scanning, photocopying and bindery services should be provided.
7. Noise control should be put in place. Finally, Periodical user's satisfaction surveys should be carried out as a form of feedback mechanism to ensure that the NLN, Osogbo does not lose relevance in Osun State.

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