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AN ANALYSIS OF QUALITY REFERENCE SERVICES DELIVERY AS PERCEIVED BY UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Reference service is a specific service tailored towards the information needs of each library user hence giving each individual library user a sense of belonging in the library. Reference service is also the various library activities specifically aimed at making information easily accessible. Reference service includes guiding users in order to know what services and resources are available and how to locate them within the library. The guidance usually comes in form of instruction, and orientation which is generally referred to as user education (Mishra and Mahapatra, 2013; Kumar and Phil, 2009). In the library, reference service is offered by a librarian at a designated desk within the library building, over the telephone or through correspondence, however this is gradually giving way to faceless correspondence. The reference librarian handles all types of queries, from directional questions to in-depth research (Dollah and Singh, 2005). Similarly, Katz (2002) cited in Yusuf (2011) further highlighted that the reference librarians role also involve teaching users how to find information either within the library or outside of the library.

The attainment of quality in products and services (reference service) has become a pivotal concern such that while quality in tangible goods has been described and measured by marketers, quality in services is largely undefined and un-researched (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). Measuring the quality of goods is not as difficult as measuring the quality of a service. Goods are quantifiable but services are not quantifiable. Quality therefore, as an intangible construct, is measured by perception of the service either from the user's point of view or the provider's point of view.

Service quality is thus a business concept used by consumers to adjudge a product/service as either good or bad because it has met the need or exceeded the needs of the user. In the world of business, organisations have realised that in order to survive and flourish in a highly competitive and ever changing market, they need to exist for the customers and serve them appropriately so as to continually make profit and remain in business. By extension libraries exist and serve its users appropriately by meeting their information needs. The quality of the services provided can be adjudged appropriate or inappropriate by users when it meets, exceeds or does not meet their information quest. Bicknell-Holmes (1994) however reiterated that instead of libraries acquiring what users would like or want, we (librarians) have forced our collection on the users thus leaving our users dissatisfied with our services in the long run.

Evaluation of library reference services began in earnest in the late 1960s and early 1970s when budgetary situations required justification of the existence of all services in the library (Rehman, Shafique & Mahmood, 2011). The concept of service quality in the context of a library is also the users' expectation and perception of service performance and the reality of the service being provided (Sohail & Raza, 2012). In addition, understanding customer expectation is a prerequisite for delivering superior service (Coleman, Xiao, Bair & Chollett, 1997). Herson and Nitecki (2001) opined that service quality definitions vary across the literature and are based on four underlying perspectives. a) Excellence, which is often externally defined. b). Value, which incorporates multiple attributes and is focused on benefit to the recipient. c) Conformance to specifications, which enables precise measurement, but customers may not know or care about internal specifications, and d) Meeting or exceeding expectations, this is all-encompassing and applies to all service industries.

In measuring service quality, various models have been developed and adopted such as SERVQUAL (Service Quality) or Gaps model, LIBQUAL (Library Quality). The SERVQUAL was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985). SERVQUAL or the gaps model defines service quality as a function of the gap between customers'

expectations of a service and their perceptions of the performance of actual service delivery by an organisation.

LibQUAL (Library Quality Scale) is used to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality. Miller (2008) also posited that LibQUAL focuses on measuring three dimensions in the library and they are service effect (librarian's competency and helpfulness), information control (library's collection adequacy for self-reliance service), and library as a place (ambiance of the library for academic activities). Service quality has helped to improve the reference service by establishing a closer and better relationship between the reference librarian and the user.

The importance of service quality in the library as a whole is that it serves as a planning tool and as a means of evaluating precise statements on which the library seeks customer inputs. It enables the library to develop a partnership with its customers to gain competitive edge, and services provided are better improved upon as a result of users' comments/opinions on the library services (Hernon and Nitecki, 2001) and by extension on the reference service.

By implication quality reference service can be defined as user satisfaction with reference service, which is driven by library staff behaviour, communication skills, user friendly environment, and suitable levels of staff morale and workload (Bicknell, 1994; Richardson, 2002; Suzinor and Kiran, 2009). The services being provided by reference librarian can be said to be of quality when users' information needs are met, users are satisfied with their information needs, and when reference librarians have the requisite skills and competence. This also includes ability to communicate to users and the convenience of the physical facilities of the reference environment. In addition, the measure of the quality of a service is also tied to the mission and objectives of the organization (Suzinor and Kiran, 2009).

Quality reference service is measured based on users' satisfaction with the services provided, availability of reference tools relevant in the user's field of interest, availability of both traditional and electronic services tailored to capture and meet user's need, library environment and by extension reference environment. Others are reference queries answered, reference query response time, assistance from the librarian, communication skills of the user and the reference librarian.

In Nigeria there are six geo-political zones i.e South-West, South-South, South-East North-Central, North-East. For this study, the South-West geo-political zone was selected for this study because it has the highest number of universities in Nigeria as at the time of this study. This study therefore focused on fifteen (15) out of the thirty-eight (38) universities in South-west (Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ekiti and Lagos respectively) Nigeria that had functional reference section and reference librarian.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The essence of having voluminous collection whether print or electronic in university libraries and by extension reference section is so as to equip users with adequate resources to complement what is being taught in the classroom. However, observation and literature revealed that the availability of information communication and technology (ICT) tools, search engines, smart phones, electronic books and social collaborative tools has made users demand for easy and efficient ways of access for scholarly publications as against the traditional subscription.

This may not be unconnected to the need for independence by users, reference service not reflective of emerging technologies, librarians behind the reference desk not answering users' query satisfactorily. This may have made majority of university library users 'searchers' and 'reference librarian' in an online environment, thereby completely neglecting

the library and by extension the reference section and its services (Tella and Oyedokun, 2014; Oyedokun, 2014; Hunter and Brown, 2010; Sidorko and Cmor, 2012; Applegate, 2008; Budd, 2009; Hellyer, 2009; Martin, 2009; Duke, MacDonald and Trimble, 2009; Sonntag and Palsson, 2007; Meldrem, Mardis, and Johnson, 2005; Novotny, 2002).

This reference service neglect has led to the gradual reference service decline which has become worrisome especially in the face of reduced budgetary allocation to libraries, and libraries trying to justify the need for its existence within the university. As a result of the foregoing, there is the need to examine the quality reference service delivery as perceived by undergraduates in selected Nigerian university libraries in South-West.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following were the guiding objectives for the study;

1. What is the perception of undergraduates to reference service delivery in selected university libraries in South-West, Nigeria?
2. What is the quality of reference service delivery in selected university libraries in South-West, Nigeria as perceived by undergraduates?
3. What are the barriers to quality reference service delivery by reference librarians in selected university libraries in South-West, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reference services arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in response to several forces and trends, such as an increase in the number and variety of information resources available within and outside of libraries. An increase in the complexity of those information resources, and increase in the number and diversity of people using libraries (particularly public libraries), leading to a wider range of information needs, enquiries, and sophistication in the search for information (Janes, 2002). Reference service is very vital in any library thus requiring the service of a librarian because of the proliferation of various information sources leading to information explosion, ignorance and lack of search skill on the part of library users (Edom, 2013).

The internet has however introduced new interactive platforms such as e-mails, social media, instant messaging to the reference desk for communication such that libraries and by extension reference service are no longer confined to providing only face-to-face services. Prior to the discovery of the internet, reference librarians relied on face-to-face communication, fax machine, telephones to answer reference queries. However with the growth of internet, librarians had another means of communication which is cheaper and more accessible by users. One of the first services to go online was the Electronic Access to Reference Service (EARS), launched by the University of Maryland Health Services Library in Baltimore in 1984 (Singh, 2004).

Sitting behind a desk therefore may no longer be the best way to provide reference service. The availability of information in various media has affected the traditional face-to-face reference transaction (Pomerantz, 2003) such that there is a decline in face-to-face transaction between the reference librarian and the users, and the number of reference queries (Budd, 2009; Applegate, 2007; Meldrem, Mardis, and Johnson, 2005; Novotny, 2002; Gibson and Mandemach, 2013; Nelson, 2013). This was corroborated in a study, and the findings showed that there has in fact been a decline in the number of reference transactions per week on a per-library basis across all institutional types surveyed. The findings also showed that the number of librarians relative to numbers of students for most institution types was down (Applegate, 2007). In a related study on reference service transformation in academic

libraries Gibson and Mandemach (2013) study found out that of all the ten libraries surveyed, all the libraries affirmed that there was a decline in face-to-face reference services while some posited that there was an increase in email/chat reference.

Murphy (2014) study found out that undergraduates use Google, Wikipedia, library catalogue and databases as tools for locating research material. However, Google and Wikipedia were the starting point to find research material and if these sources did not provide the needed information they typically look to their professors, friends, peers in class, or a family member. The only time they would ask help from a librarian was if a professor required it for class.

The reference librarian duties are but not limited to taking statistics, providing current awareness services, and selective dissemination of information. Akporhonor (2007) examined the reference collection and services of four academic libraries in Nigeria, the findings of the study revealed that the duties performed by the reference staff are keeping statistics of users who visit the section and their queries, taking stock of mutilated books sent for binding, keeping records for books consulted daily and reference materials taken out for photocopy. Other duties are answering reference questions, cataloguing and processing of reference materials, compiling reading lists, bibliographies, list of new materials, indexing and abstracting, user education, current awareness services as part of the services rendered.

Similarly, a study on the evaluation of reference services in academic libraries in Nigeria revealed that the commonest reference services are referral service and answering reference queries (Akor and Alhassan, 2015). Reference service may not be as effective as it should be, when hampered by good communication, interpersonal skill, information literacy skill and ICT skill.

This view was supported by Akor and Udensi (2013) in a study to ascertain the functions of interpersonal communication in rendering reference service in Nigeria. The study found out that lack of self-confidence made it difficult for the reference librarians to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable clients. Semantic barriers arising from differences in language and education also posed a great challenge to effective interpersonal communication between the reference librarian and the users.

The findings of a survey of two public libraries in Nigeria by Okafor (2012) revealed that the challenges associated with reference service provision are lack of skill on the part of reference staff, lack of reference books, lack of electronic resources, and inadequacy of photocopiers for users. No matter how competent a reference librarian may be if the quality of the service is not meeting the user's need, the purpose might be defeated. This was corroborated by Ghotbabadi, Baharun and Feiz, (2012) who asserted that scientists have found that the quality of services has a significant influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

According to Mwatsika and Khomba (2013) service quality is best defined by the consumer of a product or service because quality implies the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy the implied or stated needs of consumers. The definition of quality is, however, subjective, personal and changes from person-to-person, place-to-place, organization-to-organization, situation-to-situation and time-to-time (Manjunatha and Shivalingaiah, 2004). Quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of a service; rather they also involve evaluations of the process of service delivery (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985).

Quality assessment assists libraries to improve their image and the quality of their services (Jayasundara, Ngulube, and Minishi-Majanja, 2010). Measuring the service quality and in this study reference helps to provide a feedback to access the performance of the reference service delivery and to know if the services is meeting the potential users' desire. This was corroborated by Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu, and Ugwanyi (2014) that affirmed

that focusing more energy in meeting customers' expectations has become a critical factor in libraries in the 21st century because a measure of library quality based only on library collections has become obsolete thus the need to access service quality from the users' perspectives.

Service quality has been measured in libraries. For instance in India, Manjunatha and Shivalingaiah, (2004) found out that the concept of assessing service quality from library users' perspectives was still in its infancy. In Pakistan, library service quality was an unfamiliar topic and practices of regular assessment of library service quality rarely exist at any level (Rehman, and Sabir 2012).

In another study on service quality determinants in selected university libraries in Sri Lanka using focus groups by Jayasundara, Ngulube & Minishi-Majanja, (2010), it was found that among many other things, the following are the service quality determinants: staff approachability, convenient opening hours, complaint responsiveness, good ventilation, good functional furniture, and courtesy of the staff. Others are good lighting, personal attention to customers, being informed about new services, quietness in the library, supportive atmosphere, air-conditioning, and staff knowledge ability. Furthermore, promptness of the staff, comfortable and inviting place, high quality information resources and good sanitary facilities were also included.

In another study to survey users' perception and satisfaction with reference services in university libraries of Punjab in Pakistan the findings revealed that the reference staff are competent and helpful, demonstrates good communication skills. The respondents agreed that reference section's environment (noise level, heating/cooling, lights, furniture, cleanliness, etc.) is conducive to study and convenient to use, its opening and closing hours meet their needs. Overall satisfaction showed that students were satisfied with the overall quality of reference services (Rehman, Shafique and Mahmood, 2011).

In Nigeria, Olawunmi, Durodola and Ajayi (2016) examined students' perceived quality of library facilities and services in Nigerian private universities. With a focus on four private universities in Ogun State (Covenant, Crescent, Crawford and Bells) using a modified SERVPERF questionnaire with a total of 744 undergraduates that were randomly selected. The findings revealed that students' general perception of library services in the four (4) universities was above average. In a related study of two public libraries in Nigeria, Okafor (2012) found out that the quality of service in terms of document delivery services, current awareness services, and selective dissemination of information services were rather low.

Furthermore, Asogwa et. al. (2014) used ServQUAL to measure reference services quality in academic libraries in Nigeria and found out the library services were not meeting user's desires because user's expectations was greater than their perceptions which imply that all the services provided did not meet the desires of library users. The study also found out that physical facilities that help in providing quality services in most academic libraries in developing countries were grossly inadequate and consequently affect the responsibility and reliability of academic librarians. The findings further revealed that some libraries were better equipped with modern facilities than others, and this has influenced the perceptions and expectations of users.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. As at the time of this study the South-West geo-political Zone in Nigeria had thirty-eight universities (www.nuc.edu.ng), and this zone was selected because it had a vast distribution of universities in Nigeria. The researchers took a research assumption that out of the thirty-eight universities, the basis of inclusion of any university in this study was on the premise that such

university had been established for at least ten years or more as at the time of this study, because they should have well established and functional reference sections. This position was necessary because in this zone there was the proliferation of universities.

As a result of the foregoing twenty universities were purposively selected. Out of the twenty, the National Open University, Lagos was excluded because it is a distance learning university whereby the students are not domiciled on campus. In carrying out this study therefore, nineteen universities were purposively selected for the study.

The universities comprises of five federal universities (Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; Federal University of Technology, Akure and University of Lagos, Yaba and University of Ibadan, Ibadan), six state universities (Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye; Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba; Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and Lagos State University, Ojo) and eight private universities (Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo; Bells University, Ota; Covenant University, Ota; Crawford University, Igbesa; Ajayi Crowther university, Oyo; Lead City University, Ibadan; Bowen University, Iwo; Redeemers University, Ede). These three categories reflect the ownership of universities in Nigeria.

Furthermore, out of the nineteen universities purposively selected, Ladoke Akintola University, Ogbomosho; Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and Ajayi Crowther University were excluded from the study. The reason for the exclusion as at the time of this research is that they either had no reference section, the entire library was under renovation and the reference section was locked up due to low patronage by users. The population of this study consisted of six hundred and thirty-seven (637) undergraduates and sixteen (16) reference librarians. The undergraduates selected were those that utilised the reference section of the library.

The questionnaire developed by the authors was used for this research. This study developed two questionnaires i.e one for the users of the service and the other for the reference librarians. The questionnaire was validated using face and content validity. The Cronbach Alpha value for the overall reliability of the research instrument was 0.92. The Pre-test was conducted at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin library using ten (10) randomly selected undergraduates who were using the reference section of the library. This university was selected because it is not part of the geographical location of the study. In carrying out this study, six hundred and fifty (650) copies of the designed questionnaire were administered to the undergraduates who were found in the reference section. Sixteen (16) copies of the questionnaire for reference librarians were also administered in the selected universities in South-West, Nigeria.

FINDINGS

Result in Table 1 revealed that most of the undergraduates (95 i.e. 14.9%) that participated in the study were from Obafemi Awolowo University while the least respondents were from Bowen University.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/ N	Universities	Ownership	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	Federal	95	14.9
2.	Covenant University, Ota	Private	91	14.3
3.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	Federal	67	10.5
4.	University of Lagos, Yaba	Federal	54	8.5
5.	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba	State	53	8.3

6.	Redeemers University, Ede	Private	48	7.5
7.	Crawford University, Igbesa	Private	44	6.9
8.	Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun	State	40	6.3
9.	Lead City University, Ibadan	Private	37	5.8
10.	Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo	Private	33	5.2
11.	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	Federal	31	4.9
12.	Bells University, Ota	Private	29	4.6
13.	Lagos State University, Ojo	State	5	0.8
14.	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	State	8	1.3
15.	Bowen University, Iwo	Private	2	0.3
16.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Federal	Reference section not available for undergraduates	
	Total		637	100.0

Respondent's Perception of Reference Librarians

The result in Table 2 showed that most of the undergraduates perceived the reference librarian as being helpful 380 (59.7%), knowledgeable 374 (58.7%), understood their information needs 372 (58.4%) and friendly 359 (56.4%). Furthermore the result in Table 2 revealed that 185 (29.0%) of the undergraduates were not satisfied with the available resources in the reference section.

Table 2: Reference Service Delivery as Perceived by the Undergraduates

Reference Delivery Perception	No	Partly	Yes
Was the reference librarian helpful	145(22.8%)	112(17.6%)	380(59.7%)
Did you find the reference librarian knowledgeable	146(22.9%)	117(18.4%)	374(58.7%)
Did the reference librarian understand what you wanted	142(22.3%)	123(19.3%)	372(58.4%)
Is the library staff available to you always at the reference desk	151(23.7%)	114(17.9%)	372(58.4%)
Did the reference librarian appear knowledgeable about your question	164(25.7%)	103(16.2%)	370(58.1%)
Was the reference librarian friendly	148(23.2%)	130(20.4%)	359(56.4%)
Were the explanations clear	156(24.5%)	137(21.5%)	344(54.0%)
Did the reference librarian give you enough time	171(26.8%)	126(19.8%)	340(53.4%)
Did you learn something about reference sources or use of the library as a result of consulting the reference librarian	186(29.2%)	113(17.7%)	338(53.1%)
Did you get enough help and explanation	159(25.0%)	166(26.1%)	312(49.0%)
Did library staff attend to your requests promptly	165(25.9%)	165(25.9%)	307(48.2%)
Did you become acquainted with any reference	210(33.0%)	121(19.0%)	306(48.0%)

sources you hadn't previously known about as result of consulting the reference librarian			
Have you ever had the experience of giving up a search because you could not find the relevant information	222(34.9%)	131(20.6%)	284(44.6%)
Are you able to find reliable information to most of your queries in the reference collection	160(25.1%)	200(31.4%)	277(43.5%)
Are you satisfied with the available resources in the reference section	185(29.0%)	178(27.9%)	274(43.0%)

Reference Service Quality as Perceived by the Undergraduates

Result in Table 3 revealed that majority or 633 (99.4%) of the respondents affirmed the non-availability of reference space that inspires study and learning, also that the reference staff did not have the knowledge to respond to their queries 632 (99.2%). In addition to the quality of the reference service provision, the respondents posited that the reference section lacked a comfortable and inviting location 630 (98.9%).

Interestingly 629 (99.2%) of the respondents reported low quality of the reference section and transaction in terms of giving users individual attention, readiness to respond to users queries, quiet space to perform individual activity, latest resources that will help access needed information and staff that understands the users information need.

Table 3: Reference Service Quality as Perceived by the Undergraduates

Desired Service Performance	Low	High	Very High
Staff that understands my information need	320 (50.2%)	123 (19.3%)	194 (30.5%)
Reference staff that are consistently courteous	316 (69.6%)	118 (18.5%)	203 (31.9%)
Giving users individual attention	315 (49.5%)	125 (19.6%)	197 (30.9%)
Readiness to respond users questions	309 (48.5%)	117 (18.4%)	211 (33.1%)
Reference staff that have the knowledge to respond to my queries	309 (48.5%)	121 (19.0%)	207 (32.5%)
Latest resources that will help me easily access needed information	306 (48.0%)	120 (18.8%)	211 (33.1%)
Quiet space that I can perform individual activity	301 (47.3%)	98 (15.4%)	238 (37.4%)
A comfortable and inviting location	301 (47.3%)	111 (17.4%)	225 (35.3%)
References space that inspires study and learning	287 (45.1%)	135 (21.2%)	215 (33.8%)
Perceived Reference Service Performance			
Latest resources that will help me easily access needed information	432 (67.8%)	130 (20.4%)	75 (11.8%)
Giving users individual attention	427 (67.0%)	136 (21.4%)	74 (11.6%)
Reference staff are consistently courteous	427 (67.0%)	124 (19.5%)	86 (13.5%)
Staff that understands my information need	426 (66.9%)	131 (20.6%)	80 (12.6%)
Readiness to respond users questions	422 (66.2%)	126 (19.8%)	89 (14.0%)
Quiet space that I can perform individual activity	418 (65.6%)	118 (18.5%)	101 (15.9%)
A comfortable and inviting location	418(65.6%)	122 (19.2%)	97 (15.2%)
Reference staff that have the knowledge to	417 (65.5%)	128 (20.1%)	92 (14.4%)

respond to my queries			
References space that inspires study and learning	401 (63.0%)	147 (23.1%)	89 (14.0%)
Reference Service Performance Non-Availability			
References space that inspires study and learning	633 (99.4%)	3 (0.5%)	1 (0.2%)
Reference staff that have the knowledge to respond to my queries	632 (99.2%)	2 (0.3%)	3 (0.5%)
A comfortable and inviting location	630 (98.9%)	5 (0.8%)	2 (0.3%)
Quiet space that I can perform individual activity	629 (98.7%)	6 (0.9%)	2 (0.3%)
Giving users individual attention	629 (98.7%)	7 (1.1%)	1 (0.2%)
Readiness to respond users questions	629 (98.7%)	5 (0.8%)	3 (0.5%)
Latest resources that will help me easily access needed information	629 (98.7%)	7 (1.1%)	1 (0.2%)
Staff that understands my information need	629 (98.7%)	6 (0.9%)	2 (0.3%)
References staff are consistently courteous	628(98.6%)	8(1.3%)	1(0.2%)

Barriers to quality reference service delivery in University libraries in South-West, Nigeria

The section was answered by the reference librarians in the selected universities. The result in Table 4 showed that most of the universities (10 i.e. 62.5%) affirmed that the highest reference quality challenges was low awareness of reference service, and this was closely followed by 7 (43.8%) of the reference librarians in seven universities who affirmed that the challenges also include insufficient computers and inadequate staff to respond to users query.

Table 4: Reference Service Delivery Quality challenges

Universities	Low Awareness	Inadequate Power Supply	Insufficient Computers	No			
				Inadequate staff to respond to users query	The library does not have adequate resources	Minimal face-to-face interaction	Availability of internet and search engines
UNILAG	1(16.7%)	1(10.0%)	Nil	Nil	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	Nil
FUNAAB	1(16.7%)	1(10.0%)	Nil	Nil	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	Nil
Crawford	Nil	1(10.0%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	1(10.0%)	Nil
CU	Nil	Nil	1(11.1%)	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	Nil	Nil
Redeemers	Nil	1(10.0%)	1(11.1%)	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
FUTA	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
Bowen	1(16.7%)	3(30.0%)	3(33.3%)	3(33.3%)	2(16.7%)	1(10.0%)	3(27.3%)
Lead City	1(16.7%)	1(10.0%)	1(11.1%)	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
LASU	Nil	1(10.0%)	1(11.1%)	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
OAU	1(16.7%)	Nil	1(11.1%)	Nil	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
TASUED	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1(8.3%)	Nil	1(9.1%)
OOU	Nil	Nil	Nil	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	Nil	1(9.1%)
UI	1(16.7%)	1(10.0%)	1(11.1%)	1(11.1%)	1(8.3%)	1(10.0%)	1(9.1%)
Total	6(100%)	10(100%)	9(100%)	9(100%)	12(100%)	10(100%)	11(100%)
				Yes			
UNILAG	Nil	Nil	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	Nil	Nil	1(20.0%)
FUNAAB	Nil	Nil	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	Nil	Nil	1(20.0%)
Crawford	1(16.7%)	Nil	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	1(25.0%)	Nil	1(20.0%)
CU	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	1(16.7%)	1(20.0%)
Redeemers	1(16.7%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
FUTA	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	1(25.0%)	Nil	Nil
Bowen	3(30.0%)	1(16.7%)	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	2(50.0%)	3(50.0%)	1(20.0%)
Lead City	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

LASU	1(16.7%)	Nil	Nil	1(14.3%)	Nil	Nil	Nil
OAU	Nil	1(16.7%)	Nil	1(14.3%)	Nil	Nil	Nil
TASUED	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	1(14.3%)	1(14.3%)	Nil	1(16.7%)	Nil
OOU	1(16.7%)	1(16.7%)	1(14.3%)	Nil	Nil	1(16.7%)	Nil
UI	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	10(100%)	6(100%)	7(100%)	7(100%)	4(100%)	6(100%)	5(100%)

*Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba; Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo; and Bells University, Ota had no reference librarians as at the time of this study.

OAU, Ile-Ife- Obafemi Awolowo University, CU- Covenant University; FUTA- Federal University of Technology Akure; UNILAG- University of Lagos Akoka; RUN-Reedemers University Ede; TASUED-Tai Solarin University of Education Ijagun; FUNAAB-Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta; OOU-Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye; LASU-Lagos State University Ojo, Bowen

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that most of the undergraduates perceived the reference librarian as being helpful, the reference librarians understood what they wanted and there was the availability of reference librarian at the reference desk. The undergraduates also perceived that the reference librarian appeared knowledgeable about their queries. However, the undergraduates were not satisfied with the available resources in the reference section.

Also, the findings from the study revealed that in terms of reference service quality; there was a marginal difference between users' desired reference service performance and the perceived reference service performance. That is, in the reference section their expectation of reference staff that are consistently courteous, understand their information need, and availability of latest resources that will help them easily access needed information was high. However, the users found that these services were either low or they were not even available in the university libraries. The implication of this is that since the users desired service exceeded the perceived reference service performance, then the reference service was not meeting user's needs.

This finding corroborates earlier studies of Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu and Ugwuanyi (2014) that found out that all the services provided in university libraries in developing countries did not meet the desires of library users. These findings support Kulkarni and Deshpande, (2012) opinion that the quality of a service is best measured from customers' point of view because customers are the greatest asset for any organization. In this case the library users are the ultimate consumers of the library services and should therefore decide the quality of the library services.

The findings from this study further revealed that the majority of the undergraduates in university libraries in South-West Nigeria are not fully satisfied with the quality of reference delivery modus operandi. This finding negates the findings of Rehman, Shafique and Mahmood (2011) and Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare and Ferdinand (2015) that students were satisfied with the overall quality of reference services and the library services. It can be implied that most of the undergraduates in university libraries in South-West Nigeria are not fully satisfied with the reference delivery modus operandi. This finding also corroborates Asogwa et. al (2014) findings that the library services in academic libraries were not meeting users' desires.

The greatest challenge of reference service delivery in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria is low awareness of the reference section, and this cuts across both federal and private universities. On the issue of having adequate resources, the librarians in both federal, state and private affirmed that the library had adequate resources, which is still a reflection of the low awareness. Other challenges are insufficient computers and inadequate staff to respond to users query. On the availability of internet and search engines in the reference section the result showed that only five (5) universities has embraced this trend. The findings of this study negates the findings of Gama (2013) that found out that the problems facing reference service delivery in most university libraries in North-west Nigeria is unsteady power supply and inadequate ICT facilities, that these are the challenges facing reference service delivery in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from this study, the study concluded that there was a marginal difference between users' desired reference service and perceived reference service performance on ground. This implies that the reference services quality was not meeting users' information needs because the users were not satisfied with this service. Furthermore the study identified low awareness as the greatest challenge to reference service quality in university libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

1. There should be increased awareness and sensitization of users about the reference section of the library by librarians.
2. Continuous overall improvement of reference service quality by reference librarians in order to encourage the influx of users to the reference section of the library.
3. It is also recommended that owing to the prevalent technology age, the reference section should begin to gradually look away from traditional reference service and move to the online platform of digital reference service so as close the gap of adequate awareness of the reference service.