

PRINCIPLES FOR QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN MEDICAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN PLATEAU AND NASARAWA STATES, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of user education, information resources accessibility on quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised 30 library staff and 3,761 medical students in three medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria. Taro Yamani's formula was used to determine the size of 361 medical students. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.71 to 0.92. The response rates were 83% for staff and 93% for students. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study revealed as follows: The findings revealed that the level of quality service delivered to students in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria was high. The level of quality service delivery of library staff in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria was high. The study concluded that principles in providing quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria are high.

Keywords: Quality service delivery, Library Staff, Medical students and University Libraries

Introduction

Quality Service Delivery (QSD) is essential for librarians providing specific products or services that meet users' needs. However, there are evidences of poor QSD in medical university libraries such as convenient environment during operation hours, poor equipment/facilities, lack of knowledge in answering clients, poor priority in responding to user queries, and delay in user requests. Quality service delivery involves providing a specific product or service that meets the user's needs. Service provision is vital to medical libraries, as it encompasses the processes and actions employed to offer information services and resources to patrons, enhancing their activities and productivity (Edeole, 2019). Quality service delivery refers to the degree to which user

requirements and expectations are met when requesting information resources. According to Agoh and Omekwu (2022), quality service delivery is a set of mechanisms whose interactions affect the effectiveness of library and information services. Libraries and information services independently create and distribute information resources, providing a framework for management to implement policies affecting library service procedures.

Delivering quality service to institutions of learning enhances the organization's reputation, as users perceive the organization as prioritizing quality service delivery (Ashen et al., 2017). Reputation is the process of identifying how an institution is perceived and establishing an action plan to correct, maintain, or enhance the quality of service delivery to users. Quality service delivery in medical university libraries influences patron behavior, maintaining a good reputation for the institution and staff credibility. Staff credibility and professionalism expand the minds of service deliverers, cultivating consistency and improving customer services (Amaechi et al., 2018). Providing quality service delivery earns a reputation for transforming libraries by improving products and services, meeting the needs and demands of the knowledge society.

Quality service delivery aims to solve user problems by developing interactions between library staff and users. Librarians in medical libraries should be familiar with the information problems users face. Any quality service delivery should have up-to-date equipment, facilities, and library materials. A solution process is necessary for problem-solving in medical libraries. Offering users solutions to problems responds to academic issues (Prabha et al., 2010). Employing suitable employees increases an organization's chances of success in providing solutions to clients' problems.

This study attempts to identify principles for quality service delivery, concentrating on five dimensions: convenient environment, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, and reliability (Arash, 2006). Despite observations on quality service delivery in medical university libraries worldwide and in Nigeria, numerous hurdles affect the provision of quality service delivery in Plateau and Nasarawa States. Poor library locations, inconvenient operating hours, and inadequate physical and online facilities hinder quality service delivery. Udo and Ben (2022) found a significant influence of library environmental convenience on users' patronage of library services. This study aims to investigate the principles for quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Quality service delivery is seen as librarians providing specific products or services that fit their users' needs. It is seen in terms of bridging the gap between user expectations and the actual service provider. Studies have indicated that libraries often fall short in delivering quality services, reflected in the limited demand from patrons for existing library services (Obiora et al., 2020) in medical libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria. The low level of quality service delivery has been observed as an inconvenient environment in terms of library location and operation hours, obsolete equipment/facilities, and seating capacity of the library. Additionally, it includes being poorly attended to by individual clients, inadequate knowledge in responding to clients, lack of periodization to respond to user queries, and delivery of user requests as promised. Lack of inadequacies in types of resources, lack of usefulness of resources to medical students, the medical libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria, face significant challenges in delivering quality services to their users, resulting in unmet user expectations, inadequate access to relevant information, and poor user satisfaction (Lujan & Armando, 2017). It was against this background this study investigated the principles for quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of quality service delivery to medical university library students in Plateau and Nasarawa States Nigeria?
2. What is the level of quality service delivery to medical university library librarians in Plateau and Nasarawa States Nigeria?

Review of Literature

Quality Service Delivery

Adamu (2017) asserted that service quality delivery is seen as bridging the gap between user expectations and the actual service provided. In other words, service quality delivery is seen as a strategic tool for positioning and achieving operational efficiency and enhancing performance

(Adamu, 2017). According to Edeole (2019), quality service "includes all bundles of services that the library provides to users to support and advance the objectives of the parent institution. Agoh and Omekwu (2021) considered quality service delivery as a set of mechanisms whose interactions affect the effectiveness of library and information services. Quality service delivery is a phenomenon that takes into account consumers' expectations and positive impressions of the services provided (Erkan et al., 2014; Kucukaltan, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

SERVQUAL Model Developed by The Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

The model was developed by **Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (....)** to assist employees in assessing their self-perception of the quality-of-service delivery. The SERVQUAL model is the most desirable feature for service providers' needs, as it assesses customer satisfaction as the top priority paradigm (Aghdaie & Faghani, 2012; Karim, 2020). The SERVQUAL model has addressed twenty-two (22) items to measure service delivery and five (5) constructs, such as assurance, tangibility, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. This study adopted a convenient environment, removing tangibility, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance from the items, knowing the prompt crisis areas that Plateau and Nasarawa State universities are facing to serve the purpose of addressing the problem of quality service delivery. The theory assumes that a gap exists between customer expectations of quality service delivery and the perceived service delivery by the service provider. However, an observation is that customer interest should be the top priority in product and service delivery to maintain continuous client patronage. SERVQUAL was used to identify and meet differences in perceived user expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1994). Users of libraries in a particular workplace institution are thought to exploit service quality, which is defined as consumers' overall perception of the relative mastery of the organization and its services. To gain a competitive advantage over other institutions that may be providing the same services to the library, the medical student university libraries in the world, Plateau and Nasarawa States stand to do well in terms of academic excellence when strictly employing the principle involved with features of SERVQUAL.

Critique of SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL model has faced criticism for its limitations as a measurement tool for assessing service quality. Specifically, empirical studies have identified a lack of discriminant validity between SERVQUAL's dimensions, while content validity remains uncertain due to overlapping conceptual definitions of some dimensions (Buttle, 1996; Polyakova & Mirza, 2015). Furthermore, the dimensions of 'empathy' and 'reliability' have been found to be confusing, with the reliability dimension overlapping with the technical quality offered by the Nordic model (Lapierre & Filiatrault, 1996; Polyakova & Mirza, 2015).

SERVQUAL model is crucial to the study since it compares client expectations with the results of a service or an item. The SERVQUAL model is relevant to the study because it measures staff preparedness to open libraries at the conformality of use and locate libraries where the environment is convenient. It puts physical equipment/facilities and staff and the service center in place for effective quality service delivery (tangibility). It also meets users' requests by providing free error resource service and prompt delivery of users' requests (reliability). The willingness to deliver and put extra effort into service delivery (responsiveness) Librarian sensitivity to users' needs and giving individual attention to users needs (empathy) All the dimensions ensured by librarians are the efficient provision of quality service delivery to medical students in university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive research design attempts to observe all the variables and subjects at one point without attempting to manipulate or control the subjects. Young (2016) observed descriptive design access to people's attitudes or opinions towards situations such as events organizations or procedures which uses questionnaires, interviews, or direct observation to collect data. The total population of this study was 30 library staff and 3,761 medical students covering medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States Nigeria. The researchers used total enumeration for library staff to gather questionnaires and for the students, a stratified sampling technique was used and arrived at 361 sample sizes. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Five styles of Likert scale table were used and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the constructs ranged from 712 to 920. This shows that the instrument is considered highly reliable for data collection. The questionnaire is

frequently used for survey research to collect quantitative data with a set of inquiries formulated for a particular study (Young 2016). Returned questionnaires total 25 library staff and 361 Respondents rating (83%) and (93.%). Data collected from the research instrument was analyzed with Statistical Package and Social Science (SPSS) version 23. The SPSS was used to analyze coded data responses to generate descriptive. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research question 1: What is the level of quality service delivery to medical university libraries students in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria?

Table 4. 1

Analysis of Research question one. Level of quality service delivery (Student's perception)

Quality Service Delivery Indicate the level of quality services provided to you by librarians	Very High Level (%)	High Level (%)	Moderate level (%)	Low Level (%)	Very Low Level (%)	Mean	SD
Reliability (REL)						4.03	.654
Speedily correcting wrongly posted users' information	86(25.7)	182(54.3)	67(20)	--	--	4.06	.674
Treating user's information needs promptly	68(20.3)	212(63.3)	54(16.1)	1(3)	--	4.03	.613
Providing sufficient users information resources	74(22.1)	193(57.6)	68(20.3)	--	--	4.02	.652
Providing error-free information to users	59(17.6)	225(67.2)	51(15.2)	--	--	4.02	.573
Delivering user requests as promised is done to a	70(20.9)	191(57.0)	74(22.1)	--	--	3.99	.657
Tangibility (TAN)						3.86	.644
The seating capacity of the library is befitting and appreciative to users to a	65(19.4)	185(55.2)	85(25.4)	-	-	3.94	.667
Up-to-date equipment/facilities for users are to	55(16.4)	192(57.3)	86(25.7)	2(.6)	-	3.90	.660
Library materials are well classified by their subjects for users to a	28(8.4)	192(57.3)	114(34.0)	1(.3)	-	3.74	.607
Empathy (EMP)						3.86	.642
The library has their customer's best interests at heart	61(18.2)	210(62.7)	64(19.1)	-	-	3.99	.612
Making extra efforts at meeting users' information needs via referral service is to a	64(19.1)	196(58.5)	75(22.4)	-	-	3.94	.644
The understanding of specific	63(18.8)	190(56.7)	82(24.5)	-	-	3.94	.656

needs of its customers and providing users with exact information to a

The level to which library staff gives attention to individual clients in the provision of crucial information is to a	64(19.1)	184(54.9)	87(26.0)	-	-	2.93	.669
knowledge displayed in answering all client's questions by the staff of the library is to a	3(9)	173(51.6)	138(41.2)	21(6.3)	-	3.47	.627

Responsiveness (RES)

Librarian priority to respond users queries is to a	62(18.5)	179(53.4)	94(28.1)	--	--	3.90	.677
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Not too busy to respond users request is to	61(18.2)	169(50.4)	105(31.3)	--	---	3.87	.693
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Acceptance to prompt request within a time frame service to users is to a	58(17.3)	161(48.1)	82(24.5)	34(10.1)	--	3.73	.873
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The willingness to help users is to a	1(.3)	177(52.8)	135(40.3)	22(6.6)	--	3.47	.622
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Convenient Environment (CE)

Convenience to library location is to a	36(10.7)	193(57.6)	105(31.3)	1(.3)	--	3.79	.624
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Convenience of the operation hours by librarian is to	10(3)	181(54)	143(42.7)	1(.3)		3.60	.554
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The convenience to use of the facilities (both physically and online) is to a	14(4.2)	157(46.9)	123(36.7)	41(12.2)		3.43	.758
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Overall Mean						3.84	.655
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Decision rule: if mean is 1-1.79= very low, 1.80-2.59 = low, 2.60-3.39=Moderate. 3.40-4.19= High, 4.20-5.0= very high

The overall mean score of 3.84 indicates that the level of quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa states is high. This suggests that the libraries are delivering quality services to their users. Under reliability, the respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the speed of correcting wrongly posted users' information (mean = 4.06) and treating user's information needs promptly (mean = 4.04). Reliability (mean = 4.03): The respondents indicated that the library is reliable in delivering quality services. Empathy (mean = 3.86): The respondents indicated that the library has their customer's best interests at heart. Making extra efforts at meeting users' information needs via referral service (mean = 3.94) Having customer's best interests at heart (mean = 3.99). Tangibility (mean = 3.86): The respondents indicated that the library provides tangible items that meet their needs. Seating capacity of the library

is befitting and appreciative to users (mean = 3.94) Up-to-date equipment/facilities for users (mean = 3.97). Responsiveness (mean = 3.74): The respondents indicated that the library staff is responsive to their needs. Librarians' priority to respond to users' queries (mean = 3.90). Library staff not being too busy to respond to users' requests (mean = 3.87). Convenient Environment (mean = 3.61): The respondents indicated that the library provides a convenient environment for their needs. Convenience to the library location (mean = 3.79) Convenience of the operation hours by librarians (mean = 3.60).

The implication is that high level of quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa states, Nigeria, suggests that these libraries are meeting the needs of their users. The libraries' strengths in reliability, empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, and convenient environment indicate that they are providing quality services in these areas. Although the libraries are performing well, there is still room for improvement, particularly in areas where the mean scores are not at the highest level.

Research question 2: What is the level of quality service delivery to medical university library staff in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria?

Table 4.1

Analysis of Research question two. Level of quality service delivery (Staff's perception)

Quality Service Delivery Indicate the level of quality services provided to you by librarians	Very High Level (%)	High Level (%)	Moderate Level (%)	Low Level (%)	Very Low Level (%)	Mean	SD
Tangibility (TAN)						4.21	.508
The seating capacity of the library is to a	14(56)	11(44)	-	-	-	4.56	.507
Library materials are well classified by their subjects to a	13(52)	12(48)	-	-	-	4.52	.510
Up-to-date equipment/facilities for users is to a	--	14(56)	11(44)	-	-	3.56	.507
Empathy (EMP)						4.14	.652
Library customer' best interests is to a	11(44)	11(44)	3(12)	-	-	4.32	.690
The understanding of specific needs of its customers and providing users with exact information is to a	9(36)	14(56)	2(8)	-	-	4.28	.614
The level to which library staff gives attention to individual clients in the provision of crucial information is to a	5(20)	16(64)	4(16)	--	--	4.04	.611
knowledge displayed in answering all client's questions by the staff of the	7(28)	12(48)	6(24)	-	-	4.04	.735

library is to a							
Making extra efforts at meeting users' information needs via referral service is to a	5(20)	16(64)	4(16)	---	--	4.04	.611
Reliability (REL)						4.13	.637
Delivering user requests as promised is to a	9(36)	12(48)	4(16)	--	--	4.20	.707
Treating user's information needs promptly is to a	7(28)	16(64)	2(8)	--	--	4.20	.577
Providing sufficient users information resources is to a	7(28)	14(56)	4(16)	-	-	4.12	.666
Speedily correcting wrongly posted users' information is to a	5(20)	18(72)	2(8)	--	--	4.12	.526
Providing error-free information to users is to a	6(24)	13(52)	6(24)	-	-	4.00	.707
Responsiveness (RES)						4.07	.643
Acceptance to prompt request within a time frame service to users is to a	11(44)	10(40)	4(16)	-	-	4.28	.737
The willingness to help users is to a	4(16)	19(76)	2(8)	-	-	4.08	.493
Librarian priority to respond users queries is to a	6(24)	14(56)	5(20)	-	-	4.04	.676
Not too busy to respond users request is to a	4(16)	14(56)	7(28)	-	-	3.88	.666
Convenient Environment (CE)						3.86	.630
The convenience to use of the facilities (both physically and online) is to a	5(20)	13(52)	7(28)	---	---	3.92	.702
Convenience of the operation hours by librarian is to a	6(24)	10(40)	9(36)	--	---	3.88	.781
Convenience to library location is to a	--	20(80)	5(20)	--	--	3.80	.408
Overall Mean						4.09	.621

Decision rule: if mean is 1-1.79= very low, 1.80-2.59 = low, 2.60-3.39=Moderate. 3.40-4.19= High, 4.20-5.0= very high

The overall mean score of 4.09 indicates that the level of quality service delivery in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa states is high. This suggests that the libraries are delivering quality services to their users. Tangibility (mean = 4.21). The respondents indicated that the library provides tangible items that meet their needs. Seating capacity of the library (mean = 4.56) Classification of library materials by subject (mean = 4.52). Empathy (mean = 4.14). The respondents indicated that the library has its customers' best interests at heart. Library customers' best interests (mean = 4.32). Understanding specific needs of customers and providing exact information (mean = 4.28). Reliability (mean = 4.13). The respondents indicated that the library is reliable in delivering quality services. Delivering user requests as promised (mean = 4.20). Treating

user's information needs promptly (mean = 4.20). Responsiveness (mean = 4.07). The respondents indicated that the library staff is responsive to their needs. Acceptance to prompt requests within a timeframe (mean = 4.28) Willingness to help users (mean = 4.08). Convenient Environment (mean = 3.86). The respondents indicated that the library provides a convenient environment for their needs. Convenience of using facilities (mean = 3.92) Convenience of operation hours (mean = 3.88). The implications for the study is that high-quality service delivery is provided by librarians in Plateau and Nasarawa states indicating that they are meeting the needs of their users. Despite the high overall mean score, there is still room for improvement, particularly in areas such as convenient environment, where the mean score was lower. The study highlights the importance of tangibility and empathy in quality service delivery, with librarians perceiving these aspects as very high.

Discussion of the findings

The first research question sought to determine the level of quality service delivery to medical university library students in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria. The results revealed a high level of service delivery in the medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States. These findings are consistent with the study by Mahi et al. (2018) on student satisfaction at higher educational institutions, which revealed that service quality delivery significantly impacts student Adamu (2017) similarly found that undergraduate students were highly satisfied with the facilities, resources, and services provided by the Yusuf Maitama Sule University Library in Nigeria. However, the findings contradict those of Frederic et al. (2019), who reported that patrons were dissatisfied with the quality and depth of equipment and facilities in public libraries in Ghana. The current study's findings also differ from those of Said et al. (2022), who identified challenges in implementing public-private partnerships in health service delivery in Tanzania. The study's results are consistent with Obiora et al. (2020), who found that barriers to quality library services in federal universities in Southeast Nigeria include a lack of up-to-date information resources, unwelcoming staff, and inadequate facilities. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of quality service delivery in medical university libraries and the need for continuous improvement to meet the evolving needs of students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made, based on the study's findings.

1. The university libraries' management in Plateau and Nasarawa States should create room for improvement, particularly in staff responsiveness to users and convenient environment, to further enhance their quality services.
2. The study recommends that university management in Plateau and Nasarawa States should continue to provide ongoing training and development opportunities for library staff to enhance their reliability, responsiveness to users, and convenient environment, ultimately delivering quality services in medical university libraries.

Conclusion

The study concluded that five principles mentioned are meant to help library staff deliver quality service in medical university libraries in Plateau and Nasarawa States, Nigeria which in turn assisted library staff and medical students to succeed in performing well in their duties and studies. As part of vital keys for improved quality service delivery. However, though the results showed a high rate, it is part of the key importance for improving quality service delivery to medical students.

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