Reference Services and Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo

Atanda, Luqman Ayanlola *1 and Ekanem, Moses Iwukuyo 2

1 Federal University Otuoke Main Library, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. E-mail: atandala@fuotuoke.edu.ng
2 University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. E-mail: randolphmoses@yahoo.com

This study investigated reference services and students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources, to determine the influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources, and to examine the influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted the Kano model theory. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The area of study is the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo. The population for the study comprised all 4,888 registered users of the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo for the 2017/2018 academic session. The sample size for this study was 488 and the sample was selected using accidental sampling technique. The instrument used for the collection of data was a researcher developed questionnaire. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. The data generated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and the dependent t-test was employed to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that there is significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources, that there is significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources and that there is significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources. Recommendations made were that librarians should ensure that needed information is provided within a very short time, students should be referred to experts in specialized fields and information should be provided.
INTRODUCTION

The widespread of library resources and their processing is a key trait of university library services which is based around personal interaction between users and the library staff. Libraries should see to it that these services (reference services) show proper levels of customer care and that the information given to the users is useful to the users and are made available to them at the right time when it is mostly needed. Retting (Rehmann, Shafique and Mahmood, 2011) pointed out that the distinguishing features of reference service include a staff designated to provide the service a collection of reference works accessible to the public in an area set aside for the provision of the service; adequate guides to the library’s resources; and a high degree of interaction between the staff and the clientele. Although in today’s world the term reference service circumscribes more activities than those mentioned by Retting. It is in the light of this that Mitchell (2008) rightly said that today’s reference librarians are actively engaged with the many emerging new processes by which learning occurs.

Furthermore, Rehmann, Shafique and Mahmood (2011) opined that reference librarians in academic libraries are actively engaged with the many emerging new processes not only by which learning occurs, but also by which research is done. The authors further stated that to be successful, today’s reference librarians need to not only understand but also embrace current and emerging technologies affecting reference functions and the information needs of library users. Indeed, wherever or however reference services are provided, librarians are cognizant of the major changes in libraries– changes that stem from countless cultural, economic, legal and social developments that have impacted, and continue to impact, librarians’ work. Similarly, King and Hiller (Rehmann, Shafique & Mahmood, 2011) mentioned that the information needs and expectations are continuously changing in the rapidly changing information scenario. Libraries need to re-orient their collections, services, and facilities to keep pace with these advancements. User feedback is considered as a more reliable factor in measuring the utility and effectiveness of any library. This is the reason why it has become a thing of importance for library user surveys to be carried out. Surveys have often been used as a tool to assess service quality and user satisfaction.

According to Elmer E. Rasmuson Library (2018) the three main types of reference assistance, or services are:– (a.) Assistance or instruction with using the library, including locating materials, using the catalogue, using the computers to access information, and using basic reference sources; (b.) assistance with identifying library materials needed to answer a question; (c.) providing brief, factual answers to questions such as addresses, statistics, and phone numbers, that can be quickly located. Reference service helps to establish contact between a user and the right document at the right time, thereby saving the time of the user. In support of this, Mohamed (2012), while quoting Ranganathan, pointed out that, establishing such a contact is an effective method of discharging the function of converting the potential user to habitual user. Martins (2009) emphasized on the importance and relevance of reference services in academic libraries. Although it is true that academic institutions are generally research oriented; but they need reference resources for fact findings and research purposes. Such collections should be considerably strong in terms of quality and quantity and, up to date consisting of the most authoritative works in the major schools and knowledge guided by criteria for selection.

The practices of reference services, according to Bunge and Bopp (2009) are categorized into three groups. First they are categorized into information services that take the forms of ready reference questions; bibliographic verification; interlibrary loan and document delivery; information and referral services; research questions and fee-based services and information brokering; they are also seen as Guidance; including readers’ advisory services; bibliography; term-paper counseling; selective dissemination of information (SDI); current awareness service (CAS); and as one-to-one or group instruction. According to Ogunmodede and Emehar (2010), the effectiveness and efficiency of reference services would, to a large extent; represent what the users perceive of the whole library service. One of the types of reference services is the quick factual information. The quick factual information is information gotten from the librarian in one or two minutes, by providing facts or pieces of information found in a single source. Different reference sources are used in providing this service viz Encyclopedia, Dictionaries, Yearbooks, Directories, Biographical dictionaries, and Geographical dictionaries, to mention a few.

Referral is yet another type of reference service that is provided in the reference section of the library. It is an act of referring someone for consultation, review, or further action. According to the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS), it is a type of reference transaction in which a patron with an information need is directed to a reputable person or agency outside the library (Reitz, 2014). Referral is basically a service that provides detailed information, including contact information, or mailing address where a person can go and receive the required help. This service does not provide the user with the needed documents or information actually needed for his query but refer him to the sources such as secondary publications, professional organizations, and research institutes. This service can function on its own or with other services.

Another type of reference service in the library is the selective dissemination of information. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) refers to tools and resources used to keep a user informed of new resources on specified topics. The selection is based on
an interest profile, a list of keywords that describe the interest of users. According to Connor (2012), librarians or information professionals conduct extensive interviews with their clients to establish a fairly complex profile for each individual. Based on these profiles, the information professionals would then distribute selectively, appropriate information to their clients.

**Statement of the Problem**

In any institution, libraries are known for providing information resources and services to support teaching, learning, research and community services, and the reference section is an important section of the library that is aimed at providing services to users by providing answers to the queries of the users at any given point of time. Every year, new users come into the university with different needs and expectations. The abundance of resources available and the difficulty in being able to determine these resources can create problems for the users. Most library users are unaware of the quality and variety of information and services available, and in most cases where they are aware of these information and services they may not have a positive perception about the services and as such may not be satisfied with it. Therefore, investigating how users perceive the services of a reference section of a library as well as how satisfied the users are with these services will determine the perception level on reference services. It is in the light of the above that the researcher examined reference services and students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Students’ Perception on Satisfaction with reference services in the University of Uyo library. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To ascertain the influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
2. To determine the influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
3. To examine the influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions have been considered in order to guide this study:

1. What is the influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo?
2. What is the influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo?
3. What is the influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
2. There is no significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
3. There is no significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

**Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will be significant to the following group of people in a number of ways. First, the study will be of immense benefit to the University of Uyo library as a whole as it will reveal the areas where it is lagging behind as far as its reference services are concerned. It will make it possible for the reference librarians of the University of Uyo library to be able to know how users actually perceive them and their services, and how satisfied these users are with them and their services.

The study will also be useful to students as it will expose them to the fact that they have the right to quality services, not just from the reference section of the library, but from the library as a whole.

The study will enable lecturers in library schools to be able to know what and how to inculcate quality knowledge in future reference librarians. The study will also be beneficial to researchers as it will provide a background information or knowledge for those willing to work on related areas.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study is delimited to the registered student users of the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo. It is also delimited to the study of reference services and students’ perception of information resources, with the influence of influence of quick factual information on
students’ perception of information resources, the influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources and the influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources as the objectives.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Kano model theory and the assimilation-contrast theory. The choice of these theories is because they deal with customers’/users’ perception and satisfaction with products and services.

Kano Model Theory

The Kano model theory is a theory developed in the 80’s by Professor Noriaki Kano and his colleagues of Tokyo Rika University. Introduced in 1996 by Noriaki Kano, the theory indicates that the sufficiency of products’ attributes might not lead to customer satisfaction (Kano and Seraku, 1996). The Kano model of customer satisfaction classifies attributes based on how they are perceived by customers and their effect on customer satisfaction. The model is based on three types of attributes viz basic or expected attributes, performance or spoken attributes, and surprise and delight attributes. The performance or spoken attributes are the expressed expectations of the customer. The basic or expected attributes are, as the meaning implies, the basic attributes without any major significance worth mentioning. The third one, the surprise and delight attributes are those, which are beyond the customers’ expectations.

Kano model measures satisfaction against customers’ perceptions of attribute performance; grades the customers’ requirements and determines the levels of satisfaction. The underlying assumption behind this model theory is that the customer satisfaction is not always proportional to how fully functional the product or service is or in other words, higher quality does not necessarily lead to higher satisfaction for all product attributes or services requirements. The model distinguishes between three types of basic requirements, which influence customer satisfaction. They are: (i) Must-be Requirements- If these requirements are not fulfilled, the customer will be extremely dissatisfied. On the other hand, as the customer takes these requirements for granted, their fulfillment will not increase his satisfaction; (ii) One-dimensional Requirements- These are usually explicitly demanded by the customer. The higher the level of fulfillment, the higher the customer’s satisfaction and vice versa. (iii) Attractive Requirement- These requirements are the products/services criteria which have the greatest influence on how satisfied a customer will be with a given product”.

This theory is useful to this study as it will make librarians and other library staff know that for a library to be well stocked alone cannot make the user have a good perception of the service rendered and will not necessarily guaranteed user satisfaction but making sure the right information gets to the right users at the right time. The theory has helped to note that the higher the level of fulfillment, that is, greater quality service, the higher the level of users’ satisfaction. When the expressed expectations of the user and the basic attributes of the services are met, and when the services go beyond the customers’ expectations, there is bound to be satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

The function of libraries is three-fold. Libraries acquire information, organize that information in a way it can be retrieved, and disseminate the information the library has acquired. Reference services fulfill this last function. The purpose of reference service as a unit in a library is to maximize the utilization of graphic records and these services range from a minimal aid to maximum level to library clientele in answering questions. According to Abdulahi and Mamza (2014) there are, basically, three levels of services that user might likely receive from reference unit, that is, conservative level - pointing to where the reference material may be found; moderate level – teaching the user how to use the reference resources and, liberal- providing the resources or even the answer to the user because of the librarian’s passion for work. Aina (2004) stressed that; reference unit is the only unit in the library that establishes direct personal contact between the resources and user in search of answers to immediate questions. Unlike other library materials, reference resources are so special in the sense that they contain facts that have been brought together from many sources and are always organized for easy and quick use. Lawal, Nkereuwem and Edem (2008) further emphasized that reference materials are not read from cover to cover but are used as sources of finding precise information. Considering the nature of these resources, the need for reference librarians who have the passion for humanity service is very important if only the users could make good use of these rich resources.

According to Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS), reference services are all the functions performed by a trained librarian employed in the reference section of a library to meet the information needs of patrons (in person, by telephone, or electronically), including but not limited to answering substantive questions, instructing users in the selection and use of appropriate tools and techniques for finding information, conducting searches on behalf of the patron, directing users to the library resources, assisting in evaluation of information, referring patrons to resources outside the library when appropriate, keeping reference statistics, and participating in the development of reference collection (Reitz, 2014). In Aina’s (2004)
words, reference service is the ability of the reference librarian to translate the query of the user into terms that can be met by a given reference source. Reference service, according to Abdulahi and Mamza (2014), is a direct contact between the right reader and the right material and at the right time in the right personal way. Ranganathan (as cited by Mohamed, 2012) pointed out that, establishing such a contact is an effective method of discharging the function of converting the potential user to habitual user. Emphasis is placed much on establishing personal contact with individual users as the best way of enabling them have access to the documents to meet their information needs. Mohamed (2012) also suggested that for reference service to be up and doing, libraries have to play a key role in providing information services in anticipation of user needs. Such services include various forms of current awareness and selective dissemination of information services aimed at keeping the users abreast of the latest developments in their areas of interest. The primary aim of the library is to offer a variety of services to its clientele to meet their specific information requirements. Several techniques of the library such as classification, cataloguing, shelving lists, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPACs), open access to its readers and similar other types of services are all indirect form of assistance to users to find their document in the library. One of the basic objectives of every library and information centre is to save the time of the user as well as to provide specific information as quickly as possible. The method used in accomplishing this involves personal efforts to bring together the user and his document. Hence this method of providing personal attention to readers in terms of meeting their specific needs is given the name ‘Reference Service’ (Chandwani, 2010).

The existing interest of the reference librarians is important in relation to the quality of service their libraries render to the users. Personal attention is at the very heart of the reference desk, and the goal of the information literacy is to create confidence in information consumers (Unomah, 2006). It is equally important to adequately stock the reference section of the library with relevant resources and all possible means through which access to these resources will be guaranteed.

Influence of Quick Factual Information on Students’ Perception of Information Resources

The goals of library reference service are to connect library and information resources for their research needs, and to achieve the connection between the library and users in most effective manner and the shortest time possible. Quick factual information which constitutes the ready reference service, according to Cassell (as cited by Korem, 2012) is a service finished in a very short time- in a moment if possible. The concept here is based on duration of time and fact. Most quick and factual information are gotten in a few minutes while some take a longer time but seldom more than half an hour. The reference librarian should be able to answer the inquiry in duration of time, maybe immediately. Korem (2012) supported this view by saying that answers can be answered by a reference librarian in one or two minutes by providing a fact or piece of information found in a single source. Investigating user’s perception regarding quality of quick factual information satisfaction is a fine tool to examine the role of library in providing effective information services to its user. It (among other services) provides feedback for library administrations to evaluate library services and bring necessary improvement in its services if necessary (Khan, 2015).

One of the means of accomplishing high level of patronage of the library by users’ is through the provision of quick and factual information to users of the library. With efficient and effective library services, the users will have a good perception of the reference section of the library. However, the best impact of the library resources and services are felt when the array of expertise could only be of benefit to the patrons through the adequacy and relevance of the librarian to accomplish a mission. Invariably, what is needed to handle the avalanche of information coming into the library as librarians is to maximize resources in order to serve the library patrons effectively (Ajibero, 2001). In some instances, only a small number of users visit the library with the intention of asking for assistance. This is linked to the availability of “self-service models” of information-seeking and users feeling that they can find what they need by themselves (Gardner and Eng, 2005; Dallis and Walters, 2006). Bickley and Corrall (2011) stated that some users (especially students) are reluctant to approach the librarian for any kind of assistance based on bad experiences with staff in the past. Some users find staff to be rude, uninterested or unhelpful, fear of feeling foolish or even because staff did not appear approachable. This can lead to users not having a good perception of whatever information resources there are.

Influence of Referrals on Students’ Perception of Information Resources

The Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS) define referral as a type of reference transaction in which a patron with an information need is directed to a reputable person or agency outside the library, better qualified to provide assistance (Reitz, 2014). In the words of Poe (2006) it is ‘the active process of linking a person with a need or problem with a service which will meet the need or solve the problem’. Referral is also known as “Information and Referral services (I & R). Referral services do not provide the user with the documents or information actually needed for his query, but refer him to the sources such as secondary publications, information units, professional organizations, research institutes, individual specialists, etc and tell him where to find them.

According to Poe (2006), one element of a referral service is finding information in anticipation of users needs. Another element is helping the user find information. The final element is advising the user. There
can be some situations where one is not equipped to give answers to users’ queries. These situations often require a greater level of expertise. In such situations, the user is not sent away, but referred to an expert. In this view, Amen (as quoted by Abdullahi and Mamza, 2014) asserted that library patrons often have needs that books will not meet noting that information and referral services help people obtain relevant and accurate information to meet specific needs.

Referrals can function on their own or in cooperation with other services. It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such services unless they keep themselves in close touch with their sources and users. This type of service provides detailed information, including contact information, mailing address where a person can go and receive the required help.

The following, according to Poe (2006) are influencing factors used to measure satisfaction level of users in referral service:

i. Library staff has additional responsibility to identify outside service agencies.
ii. Maintaining and updating the resource file.
iii. Do not have direct control.
iv. Attitude of the librarians

Chiu (2000) opined that when compared to lecturers, teaching assistants and classmates, the librarians were perceived to be the least likely to provide useful help by the users, and as such, are rated poorly, believing them to be unlikely to be able to help and thus the extent to which students believe reference librarians can offer academic assistance varies, although librarians are not considered as the first source of help to approach.

Despite the growth of Information and Referral (I & R) services, there are a number of problems associated with libraries providing such services (Poe, 2006). Librarians are trained to isolate a user’s need and then provide the most appropriate resource. With Information and referral, most users are looking for general information about a service that can solve a particular problem or need. The mission of a library can also clash with an Information and Referral service. Most libraries’ mission emphasizes collecting and providing access to documents, print or electronic, and answering reference questions. An Information and Referral service requires an addition to that mission since answers to questions are obtained using a resource file, containing information about agencies, organizations, etc. in the community that provide services and their contact information, instead of materials libraries hold in their collections. Another problem is that the librarians are removed from the agencies, organizations, etc., that provide services detailed in the information and referral resource file, which could lead to erroneous information if the file is not regularly updated. Another example of problems with librarians providing information and referral is the philosophical attitude of the profession. Most librarians are trained and are more comfortable using bibliographic tools and techniques to find the information. The driving attitude, “I am only as good as my sources,” tends to make librarians promote books or electronic resources as the sources of information rather than themselves. Librarians should try to break free from this attitude. They should promote themselves as the best source of information. Other problems with information and referral services often occur because of bad planning, for example, lack of proper training, lack of standards for the information and referral resource file, lack of criteria for staffing configurations and qualifications, lack of understanding the difference between coordinated and cooperative information and referral services, and poor funding.

In order for them to be a positive influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources, libraries that are going to offer such services must first determine what they can do to assist their users. Investigating the community to determine what information services exist usually is the first step. Librarians must check their findings against what they already offer in the collection. The final step is to determine how to provide access to this information. In performing these steps, librarians must keep their community and users in mind (Poe, 2006). Librarians must be very careful when informing a user about a service provider. They must treat the information in the resources file as they would materials in the collection. Librarians should not rate the service or remove the agency from the resource file if the agencies are not performing to the user’s or librarian’s satisfaction. This may cause the resource file to be slanted or otherwise incomplete. In addition, users should also be given more than one service provider when possible. This should be done in order for the user to make up his or her mind who to use to ensure that the library is not promoting one provider over another.

Influence of Selective Dissemination of Information on Students’ Perception of Information Resources

Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) is a type of Current Awareness Service (CAS) meant to keep the user abreast with the latest developments in the field of his interest. It is a personalized service meant for the individual or a group of users having identical information needs. According to the Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science (ODLIS), selective dissemination of information, which is a type of current awareness service, is a service or publication designed to alert scholars, researchers, readers, customers, or employees to recently published literature in their fields of specializations, and institutions in which access to current information is essential. Such services can be tailored to fit the interest profile of specific individual or group (Reitz, 2014). It is a quick service which provides the pinpointed and exhaustive information to the users. It refers to tools and resources used to keep a user informed of new resources on specialized topics. Ashikuaman (2014) defined SDI as a type of current awareness service meant to keep the user abreast with
the latest developments in the field of his interest. It is a type of service meant for individual users, mainly specialists, which is exclusively restricted to the area of interest of the user concerned. It involves the screening of document and selecting the information according to the specific information needs of each user or group of users (homogeneous). Abdullahi and Mamza (2014) asserted that there are, basically, three level of services that a user might likely receive from the reference unit: Conservative Level (pointing to where the reference material may be found); Moderate Level (teaching the user how to use the reference resources) and Liberal (providing the resources or even the answer to the user because of the librarian's passion for work). Odeinde (2006) noted that selective dissemination of information services motivate researchers' minds and knowledge skills toward providing quality and current awareness literature. The main objective is to keep the user well-informed and up-to-date in his area of interest; and failure to do this would lead to a defeat of the purpose of the service. Majid (as cited in Gunasekera, 2010) posited that the adequacy of collection, services, and facilities were closely linked to the perceptions of library effectiveness.

The basic objectives of the SDI are to pass users on with all the latest information exclusively matching with their requirements and this service is to take place at a regular and fixed intervals. According to Applegate (as quoted by Abdullahi and Mamza, 2014) users' satisfaction can only be achieved when there is an innate expression of contentment by the library users or patrons especially when their needs are adequately met by the library's offerings. It is not enough that the information resources are made available to the users in the library, but the resources should be relevant to the users' needs at that particular time. The effectiveness and efficiency of selective dissemination of information satisfaction would, to a large extent, represent what the users perceive of the reference service as a whole. The evaluation criteria should match with the satisfaction of the users, and the feedback should give the opportunity to improve and have control over the accuracy (Rehmann, Shafique and Mahmood, 2011). The profiles of users' interest or the target group stored in a computer generated system with its updating and their profiles are further matched with the resources available through the libraries and information centers. These activities are frequently and largely visible in academic libraries and special libraries. Selective dissemination of information is considered a guidance service, and the users' perception on selective dissemination of information satisfaction can go a long way to determine the success of the reference section of the library in carrying out this service. Just as Malik and Mahmood (2011) had suggested for reference service, for there to be a high level of perception by users on selective dissemination of information satisfaction, the processed information is usually distributed to end-users in different ways. Most times, the reference librarian gives out the information to end-users on a face-to-face encounter or discussion, or it can be delivered to the user as packaged information that is delivered to the user.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter reviewed the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and related empirical studies. For the theoretical framework, the study adopted the Kano model theory and the assimilation-contrast theory. The choice of these theories is because they deal with customers'/users' perception and satisfaction with products and services. The underlying assumption behind Kano model is that the user's satisfaction is not always proportional to how fully functional the service is or in other words, higher quality does not necessarily lead to higher satisfaction for all product attributes or services requirements. From the reviewed literature, it was observed that for quick factual information, the concept is based on duration of time and fact. For there to be a good user perception and satisfaction, quick and factual information are gotten in a few minutes while some take a longer time but seldom more than half an hour, and anything longer than that will defeat its purpose. Referral was seen as the active process of linking a person with a need or problem with a service which will meet the need or solve the problem. Selective dissemination of information provides the pinpointed and exhaustive information to the users. It is a service used to keep a user informed of new resources on specialized topics.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This involves the collection of data about a given population using a selected sample and putting together the results of findings obtained from analysis of the sample as representative of the whole population and later generalizes the results obtained for the whole population. Udoh and Joseph (2005) supported this by positing that the survey researcher is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristics of whole population and they normally study samples drawn from a population of interest. From these samples, the researcher infers the characteristics of the defined population. The survey research design was adopted for this study due to the fact that the researcher worked with a selected sample of the whole population and with which, results gotten were used as the general result representative of the whole population.

Area of Study

The area of study is the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo. The University of Uyo was formerly known as the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS). On October 1, 1991 the Federal
Government of Nigeria established it as a Federal University and with this the name was changed to the University of Uyo. The university inherited students, staff, academic programs and the entire facilities of the erstwhile University of Cross River State established by Cross River State in 1983. The University of Uyo has about 13 faculties and a library that is expanding.

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised all 4,888 (Post Graduate- 217 and Undergraduate- 4671) registered users of the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo for the 2017/2018 academic session. See Appendix for the population distribution.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 488. The number represents 10% of the entire population which, according to Adetoro (1986), a sample size of 20% is sufficient for a population of up to 1,000 to ensure representativeness, 10% for a population of up to 5,000 and 5% for a population of up to 10,000. The users were selected using accidental sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the collection of data was a researcher developed questionnaire titled “Reference Services and Students’ Perception of Information Resources Questionnaire (RSSPIRQ)”. The questionnaire was made up of three (3) sections and contained 24 items in all and these were used to elicit information from the respondents. Section A elicits information on demographic data of respondents, Section B sought information on influence of reference services and Section C sought information on the students’ perception. All responses were based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, for Section B; Very Satisfied (VS) = 4, Satisfied (S) = 3, Not Very Satisfied (NVS) = 2 and Not Satisfied (NS) = 1 for Section C.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was submitted to two validates for face validation to ensure that the instrument measured what it intended to measure. These validates were expected to scrutinize the instrument, make necessary corrections such as adding additional information where necessary, dropping irrelevant sentences, etc. The items on the instrument were validated in terms of its clarity of instruction to the respondents. The observations, comments, criticisms and recommendations of the validators served as a guide to the modifications of the items in the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to trial testing to ensure its reliability. The researcher carried out a split-half reliability method using 20 users of the Akwa Ibom State University Library, Ikot Akpaden, Mkpat Enin LGA which is outside the area of study but shares the same characteristics with the study population. Copies of the instrument were administered to the 20 library users and their scores divided into two parts (even and odd numbers). The scores were analyzed using the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability method. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was discovered. The figure was considered high enough to make the instrument reliable to measure the identified phenomenon with consistency.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents who were registered users of the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo. The copies of the questionnaire were retrieved immediately by the researcher upon completion.

Method of Data Analysis

The data generated were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and the dependent t-test was employed to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter was designed to analyze the data collected from the targeted respondents. A total of 488 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 488 students used for the study by the researcher. This helped to ensure that 100% was completed and returned because the researcher used the accidental sampling technique to conduct the research.

Analysis of Research Question

Answer of research items on Influence of Quick Factual Information on students’ Perception of Information Resources

Mean and standard deviation were used in answering this question. The result of the analysis is as presented in table 1.
Table 1: Mean scores of the respondents on Influence of Quick Factual Information (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Influence of Quick Factual Information</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Needed information is provided within a very short time</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Information are provided from a single source</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>There is the interpretation of information material</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Staff has good knowledge of information resources</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cluster Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5.76</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.27</strong></td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in the table 1 shows the Mean response of students on influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library. The Mean score of 6.31 for item 1 indicates that the respondents agreed that they got needed information and this is provided within a very short time. The Mean score of 5.49 for item 2 indicates that the respondents agreed that the information provided are from a single source. Item 3 with a Mean score of 6.11 means that the respondents agreed that there is interpretation of information material. Item 4 with a Mean score of 5.12 indicates that the respondents also agreed that staff has good knowledge of information resources. However, the cluster Mean of 5.76 for all items indicates that the respondents, to a great extent, were influenced by quick factual information.

**Answer of research items on Influence of Referrals on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien Library**

Mean and standard deviation were used for answering these questions; the result of the analysis is as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Mean scores of the respondent on Referrals (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Influence of Referrals</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I am referred to experts in specialized fields.</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I am directed on how to find experts in specialized fields.</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I am referred to secondary sources of information.</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>My need is provided in anticipation.</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I get advice from the reference librarian.</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cluster Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.27</strong></td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in the table 2 shows the Mean response of students on the influence of referrals. The Mean score of 7.49 for item 5 indicates that the respondents agreed that they were referred to experts in specialized fields. The Mean score of 6.32 for item 6 indicates that the respondents agreed they were directed on how to find experts in specialized fields. Item 7 with a Mean score of 8.79 means that the respondents agreed that they were referred to secondary sources of information. Item 8 with a Mean score of 6.11 indicates that the respondents also agreed that there needs were provided in anticipation. Item 9 with Mean score of 7.72 indicates that the respondents also agreed that they got advice from the reference librarian. However, the cluster Mean of 7.30 for all items indicates that the respondents to a great extent were influenced by referrals.

**Answer of research items on Influence of Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien Library**

Mean and standard deviation were used for answering these questions; the result of the analysis is as presented in table 3.
Data in the table 3 shows the Mean response of students on the influence of selective dissemination of information. The Mean score of 12.34 for item 10 indicates the respondents agreed that the information provided meet their needs. The Mean score of 11.92 for item 11 indicates that the respondents agreed that service keeps them abreast with latest developments in their area of interest. Item 12 with a Mean score of 10.64 means that the respondents agreed that the information matches the services required by them. Item 13 with a Mean score of 11.49 indicates that the respondents also agreed that the information provided was in exhaustively. Item 14 with Mean score of12.51indicates that the respondents also agreed that information delivered was as in an accepted format. However the cluster Mean of 11.78 for all items indicates that the respondents to a great extent were influenced selective dissemination of information.

**Data in the table 3 shows the Mean response of students on the influence of selective dissemination of information.** The Mean score of 12.34 for item 10 indicates the respondents agreed that the information provided meet their needs. The Mean score of 11.92 for item 11 indicates that the respondents agreed that service keeps them abreast with latest developments in their area of interest. Item 12 with a Mean score of 10.64 means that the respondents agreed that the information matches the services required by them. Item 13 with a Mean score of 11.49 indicates that the respondents also agreed that the information provided was in exhaustively. Item 14 with Mean score of12.51indicates that the respondents also agreed that information delivered was as in an accepted format. However the cluster Mean of 11.78 for all items indicates that the respondents to a great extent were influenced selective dissemination of information.

**Answer of research items on Users' Perception of Reference Services**

Mean and standard deviation were used for answering these questions; the result of the analysis is as presented in the table 4.
Table 4: Mean scores of the respondents on Users’ Perception of Reference Services (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>User’ Perception of Reference Services</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The librarians are not approachable.</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.32</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Librarians are able to identify users’ needs.</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Librarians are able to provide the most appropriate resources.</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Users perceive librarians as not being able to provide course advisory service.</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>10.64</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The service provides feedback for library management to evaluate library services.</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Reference collection is well organized.</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12.51</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Reference collection is easy to retrieve.</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Reference collection includes new materials.</td>
<td>1044</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Reference collection includes updated materials</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The environment of the reference unit (noise level, heating/cooling, furniture, cleanliness, etc) is conducive and comfortable.</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>13.62</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster Mean | 11.78 | 2.56  | Agreed

The data in the table 4 shows the Mean response of students on their users’ perception of reference services. The Mean score of 12.32 for item 1 indicates the respondents agreed that the librarians are approachable. The Mean score of 14.08 for item 2 indicates that the respondents agreed that the librarian is able to identify their needs. Item 3 with a Mean score of 11.79 indicates that the respondents agreed that the librarian is able to provide the most appropriate resources. Item 4 with a Mean score of 10.64 indicates that the respondents also agreed that they were provided in anticipation of their need. Item 5 with Mean score of 13.49 indicates that the respondents also agreed to the fact that the service provides feedback for library management to evaluate library services. Item 6 with Mean score of 12.51 indicates that reference collection is well organized. Item 7 with Mean score of 12.11 indicates that reference collection is easy to retrieve. Item 8 with Mean score of 13.11 indicates that reference collection includes new materials. Item 9 with Mean score of 12.52 indicates that reference collections include updated materials. Item 10 with Mean score of 13.63 indicates that environment of reference unit is conducive and comfortable. However, the cluster Mean of 11.798 for all items indicates that the respondents, to a great extent, have positive perception towards reference service.

Hypotheses Testing

The dependent t-test was adopted to test the hypotheses and the results of the analysis are as presented below.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
Table 5: t-test analysis of the influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo. (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick Factual Info. Services</td>
<td>30.01</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Perception</td>
<td>34.49</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant at .05 level, df = 486

The result as shown in Table 5 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.11 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance and 486 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significance influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Referrals on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referrals</td>
<td>42.22</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>7.61</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Perception</td>
<td>32.01</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant at .05 level, df = 486

The result as shown in Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-value of 7.61 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance and 486 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.

Table 7: t-test Analysis of the Influence of Selective Dissemination of Information on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo (N=488)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDI</td>
<td>49.32</td>
<td>11.01</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Perception</td>
<td>40.01</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant at .05 level, df = 486

The result as shown in Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value of 8.12 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 level of significance and 486 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo.
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Influence of Quick Factual Information on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien Library of the University Of Uyo

The results on tables 1 and 5 on influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo indicate that the respondents agreed that quick factual information has a significant influence on students’ perception of information resources and the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources. These results agrees with Ajibero’s (2001) opinion that one of the means of accomplishing high level of patronage of the library by users is through the provision of quick and factual information to users of the library. With efficient and effective library services, the users will have a good perception of the reference section of the library. In the other hand, the result disagrees with Bickley and Corrall (2011) that due to poor perception of staff, the users are reluctant to approach the librarians.

Influence of Referrals on Students’ Perception of Information Resources in the Nyong Essien Library of the University of Uyo

The results on tables 2 and 6 on influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo indicate that the respondents agreed that there is significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources and the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources. This finding corroborates with Poe (2006) who posited that for there to be satisfaction on referral services, users need to have a positive perception as regards the service and in order for users to have good perception of referrals, libraries that are going to offer such services must first determine what they can do to assist their users by investigating the community to determine what information services exist, checking their findings against what they already offer in the collection, and determining how to provide access to this information. In performing these steps, librarians must keep their community and users in mind. The study, in turn, disagrees with Chiu (2000) who opined that when compared to lecturers, teaching assistants and classmates, the librarians were perceived to be the least likely to provide useful help by the users, and as such, are rated poorly, believing them to be unlikely to be able to help and thus the extent to which students believe reference librarians can offer academic assistance varies, although librarians are not considered as the first source of help to approach.

Influence of Selective Dissemination of Information on Students’ Perception Of Information Resources In The Nyong Essien Library Of The University Of Uyo Students’

The results on tables 3 and 7 on influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo indicates that the respondents agreed that Selective Dissemination of Information has a great influence on students’ perception on information resources and the null was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources. This agrees with Majid (as cited in Gunasekera, 2010) who posited that the adequacy of collection, services, and facilities were closely linked to the perceptions of library effectiveness. Thus, for a library to be worth its salt, the resources and services it renders must meet the needs of its users. This also agrees with Ogunmodede and Ermeahar (2010) that the effectiveness and efficiency of reference services would, to a large extent, represent what the users perceive of the whole library service.

Summary

This study was on reference services and students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo. The study adopted the Kano model theory and the assimilation-contrast theory. The choice of these theories is because they deal with customers/users’ perception and satisfaction with products and services. In an effort to properly undertake the study, the descriptive survey research design was used to carry out the study. The area of study is Nyong Essien library. The population for the study comprised all 4,888 registered users of the University of Uyo library for the 2017/2018 academic session. The sample size for this study was 488. The users were selected using accidental sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire. The instrument was submitted to two validates for face validation to ensure that the instrument measured what it intended to measure. The instrument was subjected to trial testing to ensure its reliability. The researcher carried out a split-half reliability method using 20 users of the Akwa Ibom State University Library, Ikot Akpada, Mkpat Enin LGA which is outside the area of study but shares the same characteristics with the study population. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents who were registered users of the Nyong Essien library. The data generated were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and the
dependent t-test was employed to test the null hypotheses at .05 significant level.

From the findings of the study, all the null hypotheses were rejected. This shows that there is significant influence of quick factual information on students’ perception of information resources, that there is significant influence of referrals on students’ perception of information resources and that there is significant influence of selective dissemination of information on students’ perception of information resources.

**Implication of Findings**

The result of this study has a number of implications for students and librarians. First, it has been able to show that reference services have significant influence on students’ perception on information resources. Even though there may be great amount of collection in the library, without a good reference service, the student will not be able to have a positive perception about the resources in the library. The study has also made it possible for one to know that there is need for evaluation and feedback programmes so as to enable librarians know the areas where they are lagging behind so as to improve on such areas. The students too will be able to know that it is their right to have quality services as it has to do with their needs for information.

**CONCLUSION**

Going by the findings of the study, it was concluded that for there to be an influence of reference services on students’ perception of information resources in the Nyong Essien library of the University of Uyo, the librarians should make themselves approachable by the students. Information should be provided to the students at the right time, or within an acceptable time frame. The environment of the reference unit of the library should always be conducive for study with the reference materials properly shelved for easy retrieval and in good shape too. The service should provide feedback for library management to evaluate library services.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The librarians should ensure that needed information is provided within a very short time.
2. Students should be referred to experts in specialized fields and they should be told how to get to these experts.
3. Information should be provided exhaustively.

**REFERENCES**


