

Institutional-Based Factors and Quality Reference Services by Personnel in Private Academic Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The delivery of qualitative reference service is imperative for any university that wishes to meet library patrons' expectation and satisfaction. A decline in the quality of services rendered in academic libraries has been observed lately. The study therefore investigated institutional-based factor and quality reference service rendered by personnel in selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria. The survey research design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 34 library personnel and 355 undergraduates derived through three stage sampling method in selected five private universities in South-west, Nigeria while total enumeration sampling technique was used for library staff. The questionnaire was the main data collection instrument. Data was analysed with the use of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The prevailing institutional-based factors on institution reference service delivery are funding ($\bar{x} = 3.50$), ICT literacy skills ($\bar{x} = 2.95$), electricity supply ($\bar{x} = 2.65$) and internet connection ($\bar{x} = 2.52$). Factors which determine the service quality are tangibility (2.85), empathy (2.80), assurance (2.77) reliability (2.58) and responsiveness (2.54). Institutional factors significantly influence quality reference service delivery ($\beta = .889$; $t = 25.809$ $p < 0.05$) in these libraries. It has become imperative for academic libraries to ensure effective service delivery. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that every university should provide adequate institutional-based factors so as to ensure quality of reference service delivery.

Keywords: Institutional-based factors, private academic libraries, quality reference services, South-West, Nigeria.

Introduction

Libraries have always been repositories of learning resources. From earliest time, they have been source of information for scholars and researchers. The primary role of the library is to provide information service to support the educational, recreation, cultural, economic and technological endeavours of people in their respective communities (Okolo and Eserada, 2019). Okolo (2019), states that the library is the heart of its parent organisation which it is established to

serve. It is a collection of information resources which cut across both book and non-book materials. The National Policy on Education (2004) also identifies the library as one of the most important aspect of educational support services.

It is imperative for the university library management to always improve the quality of the services to satisfy the modern information needs of users. Frequent evaluation of library services effectiveness to users can enable the university management to identify the strength and weakness of services rendered in the library and also to develop new methods to improve services that will satisfy users' information need. Badmus and Ogunlana (2020) mentioned that university libraries provide bibliographic service, reference service, referral service, Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and multimedia virtual library service, on-line reservation of books, distance learning services, e-database search service, instant message service among others to staff, students and the institution's immediate environment. These services are important to the attainment of the institution's goals as well as for scholarly learning, intellectual and other areas of interest of students, lecturers and staff. These will in turn reflect the quality of teaching and research of the institution. Therefore, reference services rendered in a university library should be of top quality.

Reference services can be rendered manually or through digital means. In any way reference services are rendered to users, it always involves a deliberate act on the part of the reference librarian. Ayanlola and Ekanem (2019) opines that the place of an efficient library reference services cannot be over-emphasised for the success of any library. Okolo and Eserada (2019) state that reference services are the personal assistance librarians in university libraries provide to users that come to make use of information resources, thus librarians need to be properly trained, retrained and educated on how to carry out these services effectively and efficiently. Adams (2017) is of the opinion that assessment of university library services should be considered as a management tool, purposely applied to determine how library is serving the needs and expectations of its users effectively and efficiently. Awodoyin and Aina (2018) affirm that 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. Service quality measurement is one of the significant measurement tools for firms to understand consumers' needs and wants.

Awodoyin and Aina (2018) submitted that quality reference service can also be measured based on users' satisfaction with the services provided, availability of reference tools relevant to 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. Among major factors that could determine the quality or otherwise of reference services of a library are institutional-based factors within the library.

Institutional-based factors are factors which affect the output and the quality of service delivered by any and every of the various arms of the university, the library included which are majorly facilitated and can be rectified by the actions or inactions of the parent institution. By implication, institutional factors in relation to reference services, are factors which affect the reference section of the library positively or negatively due to the actions or inactions on the part of the parent institution. Institutional-based factors in academic library include; funding, organisational culture, policies, management style, staffing, ICT facilities amongst many others. Studies conducted have revealed that most of these factors are either not in place, or in very low measure in most Nigerian institutions. This however tells a lot on the quality of services delivered in the library most especially reference services. Awodoyin and Aina (2018) mentioned that institutional-based factors such as inadequate and obsolete reference collections, inadequate qualified staff, lack of ICT facilities and know-how, inadequate funding, poor communication and telecommunication facilities, epileptic power supply etc have resulted into dissatisfaction among library users. Ajidahun (2004) cited in David-West (2019) affirms that most university libraries in Nigeria have failed to provide adequate reference services to their users because of poor funding, poor acquisition of reference sources, poor reference services and low utilization of available reference sources.

However, the provision of quality reference services by the library is influenced by several institutional-based factors most of which have to do with the availability of adequate funds, provision of ICT facilities, good policies, among others thus, in a developing country such as Nigeria, no one parent institution has been able to supply the funds as and at when appropriate. In view of the essentiality of the provision of quality reference services in university libraries therefore, the library is tasked with the responsibility of thinking outside the box of always waiting hand and foot to get meagre funds from their parent institution, to more cost-effective measures of carrying out their duty effectively. It is therefore important to investigate institutional-based factors

and quality reference services by personnel in selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Reference services are special services provided to users in areas of their information queries, compiling reading lists for users, educating users, engaging in library display, among others to help users to meet up with their academic activities. A drop in the quality of reference services provided by academic libraries to users has been observed by the researcher and also in documented literature. The provision of top-notch reference services in private academic libraries to meet the evolving needs of library users could be influenced and truncated by many factors, part of which is institutional-based factors such as lack the provision of essential facilities like electricity supply, internet facilities, reference materials, ICT facilities, funding etc. The study therefore investigated institutional-based factors and quality reference services by personnel in five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the institutional-based factors as determinants of quality reference service provision in five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the prevailing institutional-based factors that support reference services in the selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria;
- ii. investigate the quality of reference services delivered in the selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria and
- iii. find out the significant relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in the selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

- i. What are the prevailing institutional-based factors in the selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the quality of reference services delivered in the selected five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the significant relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in the selected five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Library is an integral part of all private universities and these libraries provide a range of academic resources, including books, journals, databases and other information materials to support the educational and research needs of institutions' students, faculty and staff. These are libraries that are affiliated with privately funded universities, which are typically supported by tuition fees, donations and endowments rather than government funding. These libraries serve the educational and research needs of the university community and often provide specialized collections and services tailored to their academic programmes (Baker, 2017). The role of private academic libraries extends beyond providing access to information; they also support information literacy, offer research assistance and often serve as cultural hubs on campus. Their collections and services are curated to align with the specific academic programmes and research interests of their private universities (Johnson, 2019).

Every institution has a formal structure and operational guide, a system that includes the library as well as an entity existing within the parent organisation. Among these are rules, regulations, norms and practices that govern interactions and behaviours within an institution which are referred to as institutional factors. In the context of libraries, institutional factors refer to various elements within the organisational structure and policies that influence library operations and services. Institutional-based factors significantly influence the operations and effectiveness of academic libraries. These factors can be broadly categorized into funding, governance, policy frameworks, technological infrastructure, and human resources.

Funding: Academic libraries rely heavily on institutional funding to maintain their resources, services, and infrastructure. Adequate funding is crucial for acquiring new materials, subscribing to journals, and investing in digital resources. According to a study by Singh (2019),

funding is a major challenge for university libraries, impacting their ability to provide quality and comprehensive services and resources to their users.

Governance: The governance structure of a university affects the decision-making processes and the strategic direction of the library. Libraries often operate under the purview of academic administration, which shapes policies and priorities. Wyss (2017), states that effective governance is essential for aligning library goals with the broader mission of the university, ensuring that libraries contribute to academic and research excellence.

Policy Frameworks: Institutional-based policies that are related to information access, copyright, and data management have direct influence on library operations. Policies can either enable or restrict the scope of services that libraries can offer. This is highlighted by Smith (2020) that policy frameworks within universities must support open access and digital preservation to enhance the accessibility and longevity of scholarly resources.

Technological Infrastructure: Modern university libraries depend on robust technological infrastructure to support digital collections, online databases, and integrated library systems. The availability and quality of technology are critical for quality and efficient library services. Investments in technological infrastructure are vital for university libraries to stay relevant in the digital age, facilitating remote access and digital literacy among users (Jones & Simons, 2018).

Human Resources: The effectiveness of a university library is largely dependent on the skills and expertise of its staff. Continuous professional development and adequate staffing levels are necessary to meet the evolving needs of library users. According to a report by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL 2019), human resources are a cornerstone of library effectiveness, requiring ongoing training and development to keep pace with changes in information science.

These factors collectively shape the operational environment of libraries, impacting their ability to fulfill their mission of providing access to information and supporting educational and research endeavours thereby affecting the quality of services provided by the library positively or otherwise. 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 for the same involves personal efforts to bring together 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 (Ekwelem in Igbokwe et al, 2020). Ranganathan (1964) cited in Sinhababu and

Kumar (2021) defines reference service as personal service rendered to each reader in helping him to find the documents answering his interest at the moment pin-pointedly, exhaustively and expeditiously.

A quality reference service prioritizes the needs and experiences of the users. This involves understanding the diverse information needs of students, faculty, and researchers, and providing personalized assistance. Holmes and Lichtenstein (2019), highlight the importance of a user-centered approach in reference services, emphasizing the need for libraries to adapt to changing user expectations and technological advancements. Librarians providing reference services must possess a high level of professional knowledge and skills. This includes expertise in information resources, research methods, and effective communication. Reference and User Services Association (RUSA, 2013) sets standards for reference service providers, underscoring the necessity of ongoing professional development to maintain high service quality. Quality reference services often incorporate information literacy instruction, helping users to develop critical thinking and research skills necessary for academic success.

Julien et al (2018) in their study, demonstrate the positive impact of information literacy instruction integrated into reference services, enhancing students' research capabilities and academic performance. Ensuring that reference services are accessible and available to all users is essential. This includes offering services through various channels such as in-person consultations, email, chat, and virtual reference platforms. Luo (2020) discusses the growing importance of virtual reference services in providing equitable access to library resources, especially for remote or online learners. Regular assessment and evaluation of reference services help in maintaining quality and addressing areas for improvement. User feedback, service usage statistics, and performance metrics are commonly used evaluation tools. Oakleaf (2018) outlines best practices for assessing the impact and effectiveness of reference services, emphasizing the role of data-driven decision-making in improving service quality.

In measuring service quality, various models have been developed and adopted such as SERVQUAL (Service Quality) or Gaps model, LIBQUAL (Library Quality). The SERVQUAL measure was introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1985) as an instrument for assessing customer perceptions of service quality in service and retailing organisations. According to the SERVQUAL scale, the five dimensions by which users measure service quality are; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. While tangibility refers to the physical outlook of physical

facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials; reliability refers to the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; responsiveness is the users' perception of the willingness of the library staff to help users and provide prompt service; assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to convey trust and confidence; and empathy refers to the caring individualized attention the firm provides its customers. When these dimensions are considered we realize that they are ways by which the minds of users are put at rest and their emotions are pleased. This corroborates Solake and Nwalo (2016) stating that the maximisation of user satisfaction must be the guiding principle for reference services personnel. This is because the failure of reference services to satisfy information needs of users is tantamount to ineffective services.

As a result of the foregoing, Awodoyin and Aina (2018) examined the quality reference service delivery as perceived by undergraduates in selected Nigerian university libraries in South-west, Nigeria. The study revealed that users found that these reference services were either low or they were not even available in the university libraries, implying the reference service was not meeting user's needs. This 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. The finding negates the findings of Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare and Ferdinand (2015) that students were satisfied with the overall quality of reference services and the library services.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design of the correlational type. This design involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviours of people (Aina and Ajiferuke, 2002). The population for the study consists of 34 library personnel and 3,550 undergraduates in five selected private universities in South-west, Nigeria which includes Crescent University, Ota, Ogun State; Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo town, Oyo State; Lead City University, Challenge, Oyo State; Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State and Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State.

Total enumeration was used as the sample size for the 34 librarians in the 5 private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria because the population is small and has similar characteristics while three stage sampling was used for the undergraduates' population; this involves the random selection of similar faculties in the five private universities with a sampling

fraction of 10% used to select the sample for the study. To justify this sampling percentage, Gay and Airasan (2003) in their educational research competencies for analysis and application study opines that one rule of thumb for determining an adequate sample size for descriptive research is that it should consist of 10% to 20% of the population under study.

Singh (2006) further asserted in fundamental of research methodology and statistics that one should select 10% - 20% of the accessible population for the sample. A sample size of 355 undergraduates and 34 librarians was used. The instrument used for data collection and analysis was the questionnaire titled: “Institutional-based Factors as Determinants of Quality Reference Service Delivery in Private Academic Libraries in South-west, Nigeria”. A total of 389 questionnaires were administered to the 34 librarians and to the 355 undergraduates which were all retrieved and used for the study. Analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics (mean score and standard deviation) and correlation analysis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents, analysis cum results and discussion of findings.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

| Demographic characteristics of Staff | | |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| MALE | 12 | 35.3 |
| FEMALE | 22 | 64.7 |
| Total | 34 | 100.0 |
| Experience | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| Below 5 years | 10 | 29.4 |
| 6-15 years | 17 | 50.0 |
| 16-25 years | 4 | 11.8 |
| Above 25 years | 3 | 8.8 |
| Total | 34 | 100.0 |
| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| Less than 25 | 14 | 41.2 |
| 25-35 | 15 | 44.1 |
| 36-45 | 5 | 14.7 |
| Total | 34 | 100.0 |
| Marital status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| Married | 26 | 76.5 |
| Single | 8 | 23.5 |

| | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Total | 34 | 100.0 |
| Level of Education | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| BLS | 12 | 35.3 |
| MLS | 22 | 64.7 |
| Total | 34 | 100.0 |
| Demographic characteristics of Students | | |
| Gender | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| MALE | 175 | 49.3 |
| FEMALE | 180 | 50.7 |
| Total | 355 | 100.0 |
| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 16- 20 | 216 | 60.8 |
| 21-25 | 125 | 35.2 |
| 26-30 | 14 | 3.9 |
| Total | 355 | 100.0 |
| Academic Level | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| 100 | 80 | 22.5 |
| 200 | 96 | 27.0 |
| 300 | 58 | 16.3 |
| 400 | 61 | 17.2 |
| 500 | 60 | 16.9 |
| Total | 355 | 100.0 |

Table 1 indicated that 12 (35.3%) of the staff respondents are male and 22 (64.7%) are female. 10 (29.4%) of the staff respondent's years of working experience is below 5 years, 17 (50.0%) fall within 6-15 years, 4 (11.8%) has between 16-25 years and 3 (8.8%) of the staff respondent's years of working experience is above 25 years. Also, 14 (41.2%) of the respondent are between the age range of less than 25, 15 (44.1%) of the respondent are between the age range of 25-35 and 5 (14.7%) of the respondent are between the age range of 36-45 years. Furthermore, 26 (76.5%) of the respondent are married and 8 (23.5%) of the respondent are single. Also, 12 (35.3%) of the respondent level of education is BLS and 22 (64.7%) of the respondent level of education is MLS.

More so, 175 (49.3%) of the student respondents are male and 180 (50.7%) are female. 216 (60.8%) of the student respondents are between the age range of 16-20 while 125 (35.2%) of the respondent are between the age range of 21-25 and 14 (3.9%) of the respondent are between the age range of 36-45 years. 80 (22.5%) of the student respondents are 100 level students, 96 (27.0%) of the respondent are 200 level students, 58 (16.3%) of the respondent are 300 level students, 61

(17.2%) of the respondent are 400 level students and 60 (16.9%) of the respondent are 500 level students.

Analysis and results

This section discusses the research questions and analyses the results obtained from the data collected.

Research Question 1: What are the prevailing institutional-based factors in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 2: Frequency distribution on the prevailing institutional-based factors

| S/N | Institution factors | SA | A | D | SD | Mean \bar{x} | SD |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|-------|
| | Funding | | | | | | |
| 1 | The library has constant and stable financial source to support library services. | 48 98.0% | - | 1 2.0% | - | 3.96 | .286 |
| 2 | My library is dependent solely on funds that come from the university. | 22 44.9% | 11 22.4% | 12 24.5% | 4 8.2% | 3.04 | 1.020 |
| 3 | There are special intervention funds set aside for the library by the university. | 9 18.4% | 18 36.7% | 13 26.5% | 9 18.4% | 2.55 | 1.001 |
| 4 | The bulk of the library's money comes from the institution and is strictly for library project. | 12 24.5% | 13 26.5% | 15 30.6% | 9 18.4% | 2.57 | 1.061 |
| Weighted mean = 3.50 | | | | | | | |
| | Electricity supply | | | | | | |
| 5 | Constant electricity supply is available in the library. | 12 24.5% | 16 32.7% | 14 28.6% | 7 14.3% | 2.67 | 1.008 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------|-------|
| 6 | There are alternative sources of electricity supply (like generator and solar) in the library | 13 26.5% | 12 24.5% | 16 32.7% | 8 16.3% | 2.61 | 1.057 |
| 7 | Electricity supply is not a problem of a library. | 12 24.5% | 15 30.6% | 15 30.6% | 7 14.3% | 2.65 | 1.011 |
| 8 | The presence of stable power supply in the library would not make library reference services difficult | 11 22.4% | 17 34.7% | 15 30.6% | 6 12.2% | 2.67 | .966 |
| Weighted mean = 2.65 | | | | | | | |
| Internet connection | | | | | | | |
| 9 | There is Internet connectivity in my university library | 13 26.5% | 15 30.6% | 13 26.5% | 8 16.3% | 2.67 | 1.049 |
| 10 | There is quick response to network/connectivity problems in my library | 9 18.4% | 17 34.7% | 14 28.6% | 9 18.4% | 2.53 | 1.002 |
| 11 | Only some designated sections operate under good Internet connection in my library | 11 22.4% | 12 24.5% | 17 34.7% | 9 18.4% | 2.51 | 1.043 |
| 12 | There is a central support unit in my library which helps with technical problems | 10 20.4% | 13 26.5% | 17 34.7% | 9 18.4% | 2.49 | 1.023 |
| 13 | The Internet in the library is just for computers in the cybercafé for users | 11 22.4% | 16 32.7% | 14 28.6% | 8 16.3% | 2.58 | 1.007 |
| Weighted mean = 2.52 | | | | | | | |
| ICT literacy skills | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Librarians are aware and trained on new ICT tools in my library | 14 28.6% | 18 36.7% | 11 22.4% | 6 12.2% | 2.82 | .993 |
| 15 | I have knowledge of the technicality in library partnership | 11 22.4% | 22 44.9% | 13 26.5% | 3 6.1% | 2.84 | .850 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------|-------|
| 16 | There is sufficient and capable manpower in my library | 18 36.7% | 30 61.2% | - | 1 2.0% | 3.33 | .591 |
| 17 | The overall ICT skill level of staff in my library can support quality reference service | 9 18.4% | 21 42.9% | 9 18.4% | 10 20.4% | 2.59 | 1.019 |
| Weighted mean = 2.95 | | | | | | | |
| Total Weighted mean = 2.82 | | | | | | | |

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution on prevailing institutional-based factors in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria. The library has constant and stable financial source to support library services. ($\bar{x}=3.96$) was ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by sufficient and capable manpower in my library for library services ($\bar{x}=3.33$), My library is dependent solely on funds that come from the university ($\bar{x}=3.04$), I have knowledge of the technicality in library partnership ($\bar{x}=2.84$), Librarians are aware and trained on new ICT tools in my library ($\bar{x}=2.82$), Constant electricity supply is available in the library ($\bar{x}=2.67$), The presence of stable power supply in the library would not make reference services difficult ($\bar{x}=2.67$), There is Internet connectivity in my university library ($\bar{x}=2.67$), Electricity supply is not a problem of my library. ($\bar{x}=2.65$), There are alternative sources of electricity supply (like generator and solar) in the library ($\bar{x}=2.61$), The overall ICT skill level of staff in my library can support quality reference service ($\bar{x}=2.59$), The Internet in the library is just for computers in the cybercafé for users ($\bar{x}=2.58$), The bulk of the library's money comes from the institution and is strictly for library project. ($\bar{x}=2.57$), There is special intervention funds set aside for the library by the university ($\bar{x}=2.55$), There is quick response to network/connectivity problems in my library ($\bar{x}=2.53$), only some designated sections operate under good Internet connection in my library ($\bar{x}=2.51$) and There is a central support unit in my library which helps with technical problems ($\bar{x}=2.49$) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of 2.82 which is greater than the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the prevailing institutional factors in the five private university libraries in South-west, Nigeria are funding ($\bar{x}=3.50$), followed by ICT literacy skills ($\bar{x}=2.95$), electricity supply ($\bar{x}=2.65$) and internet connection ($\bar{x}=2.52$), and the factors are prevailing institutional factor for quality service delivery.

Research Question 2: What is the quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 3: Frequency distribution on the quality of reference services delivered

| S/N | TANGIBILITY | SA | A | D | SD | Mean \bar{x} | SD |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| 1 | Facilities in the library are attractive | 116 32.7% | 231 65.1% | 7 2.0% | 1 0.3% | 3.30 | .517 |
| 2 | Library materials are arranged appropriately | 173 48.7% | 104 29.3% | 49 13.8% | 29 8.2% | 3.19 | .959 |
| 3 | Technology adopted in the library are modern and useful | 63 17.7% | 151 42.5% | 90 25.4% | 51 14.4% | 2.64 | .936 |
| 4 | Library has visually appealing equipment | 68 19.2% | 130 36.6% | 80 22.5% | 77 21.7% | 2.53 | 1.034 |
| 5 | Appearance of the physical facilities are consistent with the type of service rendered in the library | 89 25.1% | 100 28.2% | 90 25.4% | 76 21.4% | 2.57 | 1.085 |
| Weighted mean = 2.85 | | | | | | | |
| | RELIABILITY | | | | | | |
| 6 | Response promised are delivered within specified time | 81 22.8% | 108 30.4% | 92 25.9% | 74 20.8% | 2.55 | 1.060 |
| 7 | Exact query of users are followed specifically | 87 24.5% | 90 25.4% | 111 31.3% | 67 18.9% | 2.55 | 1.057 |
| 8 | Statement or reports given by the librarian are free of errors | 82 23.1% | 105 29.6% | 98 27.6% | 70 19.7% | 2.56 | 1.052 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------|-------|
| 9 | Service provided in the library right from the first visit is worthy of dependence | 74 20.8% | 131 36.9% | 99 27.9% | 51 14.4% | 2.64 | .968 |
| 10 | There is sincere interest in solving users' problems and reassurance of such when another problem arise | 87 24.5% | 101 28.5% | 100 28.2% | 67 18.9% | 2.59 | 1.055 |
| Weighted mean = 2.58 | | | | | | | |
| S/N | RESPONSIVENESS | | | | | | |
| 11 | When there is a problem, library staff respond to it quickly | 69 19.4% | 112 31.5% | 102 28.7% | 72 20.3% | 2.50 | 1.023 |
| 12 | Library staff are willing to answer users' questions | 73 20.6% | 99 27.9% | 113 31.8% | 70 19.7% | 2.49 | 1.029 |
| 13 | Libraries give specific time for service delivery to users | 65 18.3% | 102 28.7% | 114 32.1% | 74 20.8% | 2.45 | 1.016 |
| 14 | Situations in the library are treated with care and seriousness | 65 18.3% | 116 32.7% | 98 27.6% | 76 21.4% | 2.46 | 1.014 |
| 15 | Library provides prompt service delivery to users | 102 28.7% | 123 34.6% | 81 22.8% | 49 13.8% | 2.78 | 1.012 |
| Weighted mean = 2.54 | | | | | | | |
| S/N | ASSURANCE | SA | A | D | SD | | |
| 16 | Library has a good reputation | 68 19.2% | 157 44.2% | 96 27.0% | 34 9.6% | 2.73 | .880 |
| 17 | It is safe to enter the library premises and to use the equipment | 111 31.3% | 200 56.3% | 24 6.8% | 20 5.6% | 3.13 | .768 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------|-------|
| 18 | Library staff use technologies quickly and skillfully | 123 34.6% | 215 60.6% | 8 2.3% | 9 2.5% | 3.27 | .630 |
| 19 | Documents and other information resources provided for use are held securely | 60 16.9% | 139 39.2% | 58 16.3% | 98 27.6% | 2.45 | 1.068 |
| 20 | Users can be confident that services provided will be delivered correctly | 45 12.7% | 119 33.5% | 77 21.7% | 114 32.1% | 2.27 | 1.046 |
| Weighted mean = 2.77 | | | | | | | |
| EMPATHY | | | | | | | |
| 21 | Librarians are knowledgeable and easy to talk with | 69 19.4% | 133 37.5% | 26 7.3% | 127 35.8% | 2.41 | 1.162 |
| 22 | Library staff understand the needs of their users | 115 32.4% | 232 65.4% | 7 2.0% | 1 0.3% | 3.30 | .516 |
| 23 | Librarians have the best interest of the users at heart | 170 47.9% | 104 29.3% | 50 14.1% | 31 8.7% | 3.16 | .972 |
| 24 | Librarians operate conveniently at user hours | 61 17.2% | 152 42.8% | 88 24.8% | 54 15.2% | 2.62 | .941 |
| 25 | Librarians give users individual attention | 69 19.4% | 127 35.8% | 79 22.3% | 80 22.5 | 2.52 | 1.045 |
| Weighted mean = 2.80 | | | | | | | |
| Total Weighted mean = 2.71 | | | | | | | |

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution on the quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria. Facilities in the library are attractive (\bar{x} = 3.30) was ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by Library staff understand the needs of their users (\bar{x} = 3.30), Library staff use technologies quickly and skillfully (\bar{x} = 3.27), Library materials are arranged appropriately (\bar{x} = 3.19),

Librarians have the best interest of the users at heart ($\bar{x}=3.16$), It is safe to enter the library premises and to use the equipment ($\bar{x}=3.13$), Library provides prompt service delivery to users ($\bar{x}=2.78$), Library has a good reputation ($\bar{x}=2.73$), Technology adopted in the library are modern and useful ($\bar{x}=2.64$), Service provided in the library right from the first visit is worthy of dependence ($\bar{x}=2.64$), Librarians operate conveniently at user hours ($\bar{x}=2.62$), There is sincere interest in solving users' problems and reassurance of such when another problem arise ($\bar{x}=2.59$), Appearance of the physical facilities are consistent with the type of service rendered in the library ($\bar{x}=2.57$), Statement or reports given by the librarian are free of errors ($\bar{x}=2.56$), Response promised are delivered within specified time ($\bar{x}=2.55$), Exact query of users are followed specifically ($\bar{x}=2.55$), Library has visually appealing equipment ($\bar{x}=2.53$), Librarians give users individual attention ($\bar{x}=2.52$), When there is a problem, library staff respond to it quickly ($\bar{x}=2.50$), Library staff are willing to answer users' questions ($\bar{x}=2.49$), Situations in the library are treated with care and seriousness ($\bar{x}=2.46$), Libraries give specific time for service delivery to users ($\bar{x}=2.45$), Documents and other information resources provided for use are held securely ($\bar{x}=2.45$), Librarians are knowledgeable and easy to talk with ($\bar{x}=2.41$) and Users can be confident that services provided will be delivered correctly ($\bar{x}=2.2$) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of 2.71 which is greater than the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria is high. The factors with their weighted mean according to the standard of quality are tangibility (2.85), empathy (2.80), assurance (2.77) reliability (2.58), and responsiveness (2.54), and are quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What is the significant relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 4 PPMC summary on the relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | DF | R | Sig | P |
|----------|---|------|----|----|---|-----|---|
|----------|---|------|----|----|---|-----|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Institutional-based factors | 49 | 53.75 | 10.89 | 47 | .988 | .000 | <0.05 |
| Quality reference service delivery | 355 | 53.92 | 11.34 | 353 | | | |

Table 4 show the significant relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria. The result revealed that there is significant positive relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria; $r = .988$ $p < 0.05$. This implies that institutional-based factors had strong influence on quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria. The higher the institutional factors, the higher the quality reference service delivery. That is, institutional-based factor is a potential determinant and predictor of quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

It is ascertained in this study that factors such as funding, electricity supply, internet connection and ICT literacy skills are prevailing institutional-based factors for quality service delivery, and the availability of these institutional-based factors in the five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria is high.

The study also revealed that most of the undergraduates perceived the reference library staff to understand the needs of their users, librarians have the best interest of the users at heart, librarians operate conveniently at user hours, and librarians give users individual attention. The undergraduates also perceived that the reference librarian appeared knowledgeable about their queries and were easy to talk to. The findings further revealed that the quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria is high. Factors such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy order have high levels quality of reference services delivered in the five private academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria.

These findings corroborates earlier studies of Ijiekhuamhen, Aghojare and Ferdinand (2015) that students were satisfied with the overall quality of reference services and also supports

the findings of Udem, Ikewe and Ugwuamoke (2020) that undergraduates perceived provision of reference services is of high/good quality, commendable and encouraging. This finding however negates the findings of Awodoyin and Aina (2018) that reference services were either low or they were not even available in university libraries, and that the majority of the undergraduates in academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria are not fully satisfied with the quality of reference delivery modus operandi.

It is also glaring from the study that there is significant relationship between institutional-based factors and quality reference service delivery in the five private universities. This implies that institutional-based factors has strong influence on quality reference service delivery in five private academic libraries in Southwest, Nigeria

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the study, it is clear that there was a relationship between the availability of institutional-based factors and quality of reference services delivered. This implies that the availability of factors provided by the institution will improve the quality of services delivered in the library, and the reference services delivered in particular. Furthermore, the study identified the unavailability of a central support unit which helps with technical problems in library as the greatest challenge to reference service quality in academic libraries in South-west, Nigeria. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

1. Continuous overall improvement of reference service quality by reference librarians through time-saving methods and provision of a central support unit which helps with technical problems in library.
2. The library management should sustain the high level of user satisfaction by improving on providing current and relevant information resources, modern facilities and befitting services that would meet the needs and expectations of users.
3. Library staff should show greater willingness in answering reference queries as and at when due.
4. Reference staff should try their best at better understanding information needs of users, such that users can be confident that services provided will be delivered correctly.

5. It is also recommended that academic libraries in Nigeria provide the institutional-based factors necessary for enhancement of quality reference services to ensure user satisfaction.

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