



VillageMath Educational Review

An International/Multidisciplinary Journal of
Network for Grassroots Science and Mathematics
Education (The VillageMath Network)

A publication of VillageMath Educational Services
(CAC RC: 4097888)

Volume 6, Issue 1

September, 2024

CODEN: VERIAU

Assessment of Reference and Information Service Delivery for User Satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13777730>

Article History: Received 4th September, 2024; Revised 16th September, 2024; Published
18th September, 2024.

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How to Cite this Article:

Atunku, J. M., Agoh, J., Uganneya, S. & Tor-Akwer, H. (2024). Assessment of Reference
and Information Service Delivery for User Satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries
in Benue State, Nigeria. *VillageMath Educational Review (VER)*, 6(1), 124-133.
<https://ngsme.villagemath.net/journals/ver/v6i1/atunku-agoh-uganneya-tor-akwer>

Abstract

The focus of this study was to assess the reference and information service delivery for user satisfaction in the two State-owned Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The study had three objectives and three research questions. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and questionnaire was used for data collection. A total of 13 library staff and 2120 registered library users from the two State-owned Colleges of Education libraries were sampled out from a population of 2133 for the study. Data were collected and analyzed using frequency count, percentages means and standard deviation. The finding showed that reference and information services were delivered to a large extent while most library reference and information services delivery ratings also had mean scores above the

benchmark of 3.50. It was recommended that all Colleges of Education in Benue State, Nigeria should deliver adequate terms of user education, current awareness service, selective dissemination of information, indexing and abstracting service in order to make users to have satisfaction from the services delivered to them.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Reference and Information Service Delivery, User Satisfaction, Library and Information Science, Colleges of Education

Introduction

The major objectives of every library, including Colleges of Education libraries, is to deliver adequate reference and information services that will enhance the study and research of the user community. By making reference and information services readily available the consequent accessibility by library users could significantly increase their research and the quality of reference and information services delivered would have a bearing on the quality of study and research of the users (Jimoh 2018). Therefore, timeless and reliable reference and information services delivery could be the basic desirable characteristics of any College of Education library.

Reference and information services are direct personal assistance given by the librarian or library staff to a library user who needs information for whatever purpose. The Colleges of Education deliver reference and information services to its users in form of user education service indexing and abstracting service, selective dissemination of information service, bibliographic service, current awareness service, among others. Souter (2016) agrees that the concept of reference and information includes the assistance given to users in their search for information on various subjects. It is an authoritative reference and information source database, website, publication, complied to referred to, rather than for continuous reading. It can be agreed that if all the above-mentioned reference and information services are adequately delivered and effectively utilized, researchers and library users' information needs would be enhanced. Hence users' information needs and researchers are often linked with effective reference and information service delivery.

Services delivery is the sum total of all library activities aimed at facilitating the use of the library and its information services and resources. It is the activities of Colleges of Education libraries or staff within and outside available services which deliver answers to user queries that will meet their information needs. Ajibero (2016) asserts that such services include user education service, current awareness service inter-library loan service, indexing and abstracting service, selective dissemination of information service, information service, bibliographic service and media networking services, among others. Scholars such as Uganneya, Ape and Ugbagir (2014) stated that the much-needed library reference and information services in support of users and researchers' information needs in Nigeria are inadequately delivered in educational institutions generally and Colleges of Education institutes in particular. This has motivated the decision to carry out this study to access types, the methods, usage, satisfaction, and the extent to which these services are delivered and to also evaluate the constraints militating against the delivery and use of reference and information services in the Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Librarians and library staff deliver direct personal assistance through reference and information services to users seeking information for various purposes. The primary goal of libraries is to serve their users, and Colleges of Education libraries employ various strategies to familiarize their patrons with available reference and information services.

The objective of delivering reference and information services is to aid users in obtaining relevant information promptly, prevent duplication of research efforts, and facilitate the introduction of new ideas for researchers. Despite educational initiatives and programs for library users in Colleges of Education, there is a perceived deficiency in their effective utilization of library services. Many students encounter challenges in navigating reference and information services, leading to a multitude of inquiries and concerns for library staff to address (Allen 2016).

There seems to be shortfall in the delivery and utilization of reference and information services in the Colleges of Education libraries. This tends to manifest in difficulties faced by users in their research activities leading to unnecessary duplication of research, limited coverage in literature used and obsolescence of academic and research works. This raises concerns about the potential in adequate delivery of reference and information services, which may hinder the ability of users to conduct higher-quality research.

There is, therefore, need for empirical research to ascertain the types, methods and extent of reference and information services delivery in College of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Studies in this particular area appear to be completely lacking. This has prompted the researcher to undertake the study. The findings from this study on the types of reference and information services delivery and user satisfaction in the colleges of education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria may positively influence users information needs and research of reference and information services. The outcomes would also assist educational policy makers in Nigeria to take right decisions which will serve as a guide in formulating and implementing relevant educational policies that will cover Colleges of Education libraries which has core objective of facilitating research, teaching and learning through delivery of reference and information services.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is the assessment of reference and information services delivery for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the types of reference and information service delivery for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.
- ii. To determine methods used by library staff in delivering reference and information services for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.
- iii. To determine the extent of user satisfaction on the reference and information services delivered in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study accordingly.

- i. What are the types of reference and information services delivery for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the methods used by library staff in delivering reference and information services for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the extent of user satisfaction on the reference and information services delivered in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Methodology

This study will use survey research design. A survey research design according to Kayani (2017) is a method aimed at collecting, analyzing data from a sample of the population, institution or items considered to be representative of the entire population. Survey research design will be suitable for the measurement of the variables of this study because it will offer the researcher the opportunity of sampling the opinions of a large number of respondents from the population of the study using questionnaire. The survey research design will enable the researcher to use the information in analyzing data to make generalization with the result using the responses obtained. This study will seek the opinion of respondents on reference and information services delivery for user satisfaction in colleges of education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

This study was carried out in Benue State, Nigeria. The choice of Benue and Colleges of Education is based on the fact that there is a dearth of empirical research assessing how reference and information service delivery has an impact on user satisfaction. By selecting Benue and the Colleges of Education in the state, the researcher is able to present findings and recommendations that assist policy makers in designing and deploying policies to support students and researchers' use of libraries for their own benefits. Therefore, the research work contributes to extending the knowledge in reference and information service delivery using Colleges of Education as a case study.

In regard to this, the researcher deem it fit to carry out a study on assessment of reference and information services delivery for user satisfaction in colleges of education libraries namely: College of Education Katsina-Ala and College of Education Oju in Benue State, Nigeria so as to promote the delivery of reference services to users to help them solve their information problems.

The target population of the study is 2,133 library staff and final-year students registered in the two Colleges of Education in Benue State for the 2023/2024 academic session. The choice of final year students is due to the fact that they are more settled, informed, knowledgeable and familiar with the library and its reference and information services. College of Education Katsina-Ala has a population of eight (8) library staff and 1,247 final year students while College of Education Oju has five (5) library staff and 873 final year students (Offices of the Librarian, College of Education Katsina-Ala and College of Education Oju, 2023/2024).

The sample size for this study, which is 337, was calculated using Taro-Yamane's formula. In arriving at the sample of 337 library staff and final year students, a proportionate stratified random sample was used to select library staff and student in the two Colleges of Education libraries that were to make up the population for the study. By this method, 8 library staff and 190 final-year students from College of Education Library Katsina-Ala and 5 library staff, 134 final year students from College of Education Library Oju, bringing the total number of 337. A simple random sampling technique was used to give every student an opportunity to be selected. This sample is considered appropriate and adequate because they can best provide valid information.

Two sets of instruments will be used for data collection. Questionnaire titled, Assessment of Reference and Information Services Delivery for User Satisfaction Questionnaire (ARISDEUSQ) which is for staff and User Satisfaction of Reference and Information Services Delivery Questionnaire (USRISDQ) for students.

The questionnaire for staff will find out the types of reference and information services delivered to the final-year students at Colleges of Education in Benue State, the methods used by library staff in delivering reference and information services, the extent of delivery of reference and information services, problems of the delivery of reference and information services and the solutions preferred. The staff questionnaire has 54 items which are sectionalized into 5 clusters, cluster 1 has 12 items which deals with the types of reference and information services with 4 response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D). Cluster 2 has 14 items which deal with methods used in delivering reference and information services with 4 response options Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D). Cluster 3 has 14 items which deals with the extent of delivery with 4 response options: High Delivery (HD), Moderate Delivery (MD), Low Delivery (LD) and No Delivery (ND). Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D). Cluster 4 has 7 items which deals with problems in the delivery of reference and information services with a response option, tick as appropriate. Cluster 5 has 7 items which deal with strategies to overcome the identified problems with a response option tick as appropriate.

The questionnaire for students sought to find out the extents of usage of reference and information services delivered, the satisfaction of users with reference and information service delivered to the final-year students at colleges of education in Benue State, Nigeria. To find out the problems of usage associated with the dissatisfaction and proffer possible solutions to the problems. This has 51 items which are sectionalized into 4 clusters. Cluster 1 is about the extent of usage of reference and information service which has 15 items with 4 response options, Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Cluster 2 is about satisfaction with the reference and information service delivery which has 13 items with 4 response options, Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Cluster 3 is about problems in the use of reference and information service delivery which has 12 items with 4 response options, Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Cluster 4 is about strategies of overcoming problems of reference and information service delivery which has 11 items with an option, tick as appropriate.

The researcher sought the help of three (3) experts for validation. Two (2) were from the field of Library and Information Science and one (1) is from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Joseph Sarwuan Tarkaa University, Makurdi. The experts were asked to check the various items on the instrument in order to ensure their relevance to the objective of the study. The face and content validation of the instrument is established by librarians and measurement experts. The librarians established the content of the instrument where the objectives of the study were used as guide and any of the items that was not in line was asked to be removed. The mode of response was corrected in line with the research questions voided. All the suggestions made by the validators were strictly adhered to and effected.

In order to establish the consistency of the instruments, the questionnaire was administered to 35 respondents of College of Education Akwanga, in Nasarawa State which is not part of the study area but has similar characteristics with the study. The result of the questionnaire administered was used to calculate the reliability coefficient of the instrument using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha was used because the items have varying point values that could not be dichotomously scored. The reliability coefficient obtained for each of the cluster are: cluster 1 = 0.780, cluster 2 = 0.740, cluster 3 = 0.676, cluster 4 = 0.784, and cluster 5 = 0.646 while the overall reliability estimate of the instruments is 0.806. Based on the value, it can be said that the items of the instrument are reliable. This according to Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010), a scale of 0.567 and above is accepted. The reliability of the instrument is also justified by Denga (2003), who states that reliability level that is above 0.60 is considered reliable.

A total of 337 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the library staff and final-year students of the two Colleges of Education under study. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were selected and trained on how to administer and retrieve copies of the questionnaire from the respondents. Specifically, two lecturers, one each from College of Education, Katsina-ala and College of Education, Oju served as the research assistants because of their closeness to both the staff and students of the selected institutions.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered satisfactory while mean scores less than 2.50 were rejected and considered not been satisfactory.

Results and Discussion

Results of the study are presented according to research questions.

Research Question One

What are the types of reference and information services delivery for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Types of Reference and Information Services Delivery for User Satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

Types of Reference and Information Services Delivery	Mean	SD	Remarks
Reservation service	3.68	.768	SA
User education service	3.27	.714	SA
Referral service	3.69	.684	SA
Readers' advisory service	3.35	.898	SA
Inter-library loan service	3.38	.547	SA
Compilation of bibliographies	3.48	.583	SA
Maintenance of vertical files	3.77	.592	SA
Maintenance of clippings	3.86	.544	SA
Instruction service	3.34	.549	SA
Information Services	3.86	.512	SA
Guidance service	2.90	.956	SA
Cooperative service	2.73	1.047	SA
Cluster Mean	3.42	-	SA

This result in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation values for each of the reference and information services delivered in the two libraries. The data on the table revealed a Strongly Agree cluster mean of 3.42

This finding corroborates with Fosket theory (1967) which state that reference and information services are information system concerned with the retrieval and transfer of information required by the library user. This involves translating a request into terms that can be met by a given reference source. This study is also in line with Souter (2016) which explained that reference and information are ways for libraries to meet the needs of their users communities, especially in colleges of education libraries, that means need for information is unlimited, so people seek information from different sources and formats for undertaking a variety of jobs and task, they use information for decision making discovering new phenomenon, developing new techniques and technologies and improving existing knowledge and theories.

Research Question Two

What are the methods used by library staff in delivering reference and information services for user satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Methods Used by Library Staff in Delivering Reference and Information Services Delivery for User Satisfaction in Colleges of Education Libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

	Methods of Reference and information services delivery	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	User education service	3.36	.619	SA
2	Instruction service	3.80	.505	SA

3	Internet service	3.81	.553	SA
4	Guidance service	3.87	.454	SA
5	Cooperative service	3.80	.538	SA
6	Indexing and abstracting service	3.56	.680	SA
7	Selective dissemination of information service (SDI)	3.27	.580	SA
8	Audio-visual service	2.97	.232	SA
9	Current awareness service (CAS)	3.96	.265	SA
10	Translation service	3.76	.596	SA
11	Recreational service	3.42	.662	SA
12	Reprographic service	2.50	1.058	SA
13	Inter-lending service	3.13	.806	SA
14	Compilation of bibliographies	3.49	.959	SA
	Cluster Mean	3.62	-	SA

This result in Table 2 indicates that current awareness services is the method that is used the most in delivering reference and information services for user satisfaction in the colleges of Education libraries in Benue State. The cluster mean of 3.62 indicate that respondents in this study agree strongly that all these methods are used for delivering reference and information services. This finding of study corroborates Agu (2018) which state that current awareness service is a service designed to alert scholars, researchers, readers, customers or employees to recently published literature in their field of specialization. Study is also in line with Reitz (2014) which agree that current Awareness service (CAS) is one of the best ways to bring services to colleges of Education library users. This will in turn lead to greater demand for library services and answers giving opportunity to the library to prove its value and justification for the money spent on it.

Research Question Three

What is the extent of user satisfaction on the reference and information services delivered in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 3: The extent of user satisfaction with the reference and information services delivered

Usage of Reference and information services delivery	Mean	SD	Remarks
Answering user queries	3.25	.514	SA
Instruction services	2.66	1.250	A
Compilation of bibliographies	3.89	.417	SA
Current awareness service	3.31	.571	SA
Referral services	3.23	.821	SA
User education services	2.55	1.434	A
Reservation services	3.82	.505	SA
Inter-library loan services	3.90	.368	SA
Maintenance of vertical files	3.46	.533	SA

Maintenance of clippings	3.36	.567	SA
Guidance services	3.68	.672	SA
Reader's advisory services	3.85	.545	SA
Inter-lending services	3.79	.560	SA
Internet Service	3.30	.712	SA
Indexing and abstracting service	2.63	1.050	A
Cluster Mean	3.38	-	SA

Table 3 reveals that all the 15 items have means ranging from 3.90 to 2.55 and standard deviation 1.050 – 0.417 with a cluster mean of 3.38. This result indicates that inter-library loan services is the highest respondents strongly agree on the extent of usage of reference and information services delivered. These findings corroborate with Jack (2106) who states that inter-library loan service takes place when an information required by a library user and is not available in the library, the librarian will arrange for a loan from another library on behalf of his or her user. The result is in line with Hirchi (2015) who in his findings agrees that, with technological development, inter-library loan services among reference librarians in libraries are made easy, because request can be processed electronically, and it is faster when both borrowing and lending libraries belong to the same electronic utility.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that, the respondents agree that all the types of reference and information services were being delivered to them. From the study, the library staff accepted that all the methods mentioned were used in delivering services to users in their libraries to a great extent. The respondents strongly agree that they use these services to solve their problems. The respondents agree that they are satisfied with the delivery of reference and information services.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Adequate staffing in the reference section of every library is crucial. Colleges of education should ensure that there are enough trained personnel to assist users in the library and addressing their information needs. Regular training programs for both staff and users on how to effectively use reference and information services should be conducted.
- ii. Colleges of education should actively promote awareness of available reference and information services among users. This can be achieved through orientation programs, workshops, and the developments of user guides that explain how to access and utilize reference and information services.
- iii. Colleges of education should allocate a specific budget for acquiring and renewing reference and information facilities ensuring that they remain up-to-date and relevant to needs of users.

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