Assessment of Interpersonal Communication Skills for Provision of Reference Services in Academic Libraries, Kogi State, Nigeria: A Study of Eight Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State

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ABSTRACT: *The study dwells on assessment of interpersonal communication skills for provision of reference services in academic libraries in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study covered eight tertiary institutions in the State. Five research questions in line with the objective of the study were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consists of all professional and para-professional librarians in tertiary Institutions in Kogi State. However, simple random sampling technique was used in selecting fifteen (15) library personnel each from the eight (8) tertiary institutions in Kogi state to make the total of 120 respondents for the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage, frequency count and mean, which was further presented in pie chat and histogram. The result of the findings revealed that academic library personnel in Kogi State possess interpersonal communication skills to a great extent and these skills are quite effective in reference and information service delivery. The study recommended that academic libraries in Kogi State should be proactive in enhancing various reference services so as to be more committed in assisting the users in satisfying their needs. Furthermore, reference librarians and other library personnel should strive to possess various forms of verbal, non-verbal interpersonal communication skills in order to be able to serve their users with the right information, at the right time and to enhance high patronage.*

KEYWORDS: interpersonal communication skills, reference services, academic libraries, Kogi state, Nigeria, tertiary institutions,

INTRODUCTION

A reference service is one of the most professional and vital aspects of the librarian's responsibilities in any academic library, which every proficient librarian must properly grasp. Reference departments serve as the link between the library and its immediate clientele be it public, community or groups of expert users. Reference services is viewed as a personal assistance provided to information seekers or library patrons at the reference section of a library seeking information to meet their varying needs (McGlamery, Susan, Coffman and Steve, 2000). The assistance rendered by professionals in the reference section of

the library is better appreciated by someone who has experienced frustration when in need of information, and being overwhelmed somewhat or confused by the large collection available and the complexities of shifting, through what is available to find what is needed. The experts however, work the patrons through the intricacies of the available information. Such personal assistance is the essence of reference services and it is the fundamental role of the reference librarian (Bopp, 2014).

Reference service cannot stand alone. The library clientele are the hub of reference service. However, the reference librarian and the clientele belong to different communities. The process which integrates the duo and makes reference service happen is interpersonal communication. When the user expresses his/her needs, the reference librarian considers what resources to use to meet them. The reference interview and interaction are the crux of interpersonal communication in reference transactions (Igbinovia and Solanke, 2015).

Communication is the process of sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts and messages with others (Ojomo, 2014). Rothwell (2014) sees communication as a transactional process of sharing meaning with others. Kemoni (2014) citing Ojiambo avers that communication involves the giving and receiving of information, signals or messages by talk, gestures and writing. As a result, communication effectiveness becomes a very vital factor in determining the efficiency with which reference unit performs as a whole. Interpersonal communication involves sending and receiving of messages between two or more people. DeFleur and Dennis (2012) conceptualized interpersonal communication as a process of using language and non-verbal cues to send and receive messages between individuals that are intended to arouse particular kinds of meaning. Rothwell (2014) postulate that interpersonal communication is dyadic communication; it is the process of interacting simultaneously with another and mutually influencing each other, usually for the purpose of managing relationships. Interpersonal communication processes are crucial in elements in functioning of libraries in general and in the reference interaction in particular. Interpersonal communication is used in sharing ideas, knowledge, skills and strategies among personnel managing reference collections. It is also used in fostering good relationship between library personnel and information seekers.

An effective interpersonal communication enhances the quality of services rendered to clients by the reference librarian. For reference librarian to effectively meet the information needs of its clients. It is most important and relevant to librarians and workers whose basic instrument and stock-in-trade rests on continuous exchange of information with their clientele. Effective interpersonal communication between reference librarian and library patrons is one of the most important elements for improving user satisfaction (Ojomo, 2014). Ifidon, (2012) stated that Communication is such an important element of management that it deserves a special treatment. People communicate every day from when they wake up in the morning until they go to bed at night. This process goes on in every unit of society and in every discipline, including librarianship. Interpersonal communication in reference service delivery I suppose to be an inseparable, essential and continuous process just like the circulatory system in the human body.

Statement of the Problem

Interpersonal communication encompasses many kinds of relationships from the most casual to the most long-lasting, Good interpersonal communication in reference section creates good relationship between patron and reference librarians, it makes the patrons feel free to express their feelings and their information need to reference librarian for anticipation. A reference service is referred to as one of the most professional aspects of the librarian's responsibilities, which every prospective librarian must properly grab. Nwalo (2010) observed that the primary function of reference unit of the library is answering reference questions and user education. Reference librarians are the image maker for the library and the link between the library, library resources and library patrons. Reference libraries are to assist patron when they do not know who to ask or need to look for specific information and do not know where to begin.

Despite the relative assistance reference librarians render to library users, the preliminary investigation carried out by the researcher in academic libraries in Kogi State shows that there is low patronage in the reference section of libraries, which interpersonal communication skill could be one of the factors. This has earlier been observed by Tubs, (2013) and Moss, (2013). Hence, there is need for a study on assessment of interpersonal communication skill in the provision of reference services in academic libraries in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims at assessing interpersonal communication skills for provision of reference services in academic libraries in Kogi State. The specific objectives are:

1.   To determine the services provided by librarians for provision of reference services in selected academic libraries in Kogi state
2.   To know the interpersonal communication skills, possess by librarians for provision of reference services in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State
3.   To know the interpersonal communication skills used by librarians for provision of reference services in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State
4.   To determine the effectiveness of interpersonal communication skills used by librarians for provision of reference in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State.
5.   To identify the barriers to effective use of interpersonal communication skills for reference service provision to information users in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

1.   What are the reference services provided by librarians for provision of reference services in selected academic libraries in Kogi State?
2.   What are the interpersonal communication skills possess by librarians for provision of reference services in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State?
3.   What are the interpersonal communication skills used by librarian for provision of reference services in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State?

4.   How effective are the interpersonal communication skills used by librarians for provision of reference services in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State?

5.   What are the barriers to effective use of interpersonal communication skill for reference services provision to information users in the selected academic libraries in Kogi State?

Justification of the Study

This study is justified because there is a need for reference librarians and library personnel to understand the roles and benefits of interpersonal communication skills in the reference services they provide to library patrons to satisfy their information needs for achievement of academic success. This will in turn, improve the quality of reference services provided and enhance high patronage of the academic libraries by patrons. The study will also help the management of higher tertiary institutions to understand how interpersonal communication enhances high productivity, through creating helpful understanding, and specifically the finding would provide academics libraries with relevant information and increase their knowledge to improve on the management of the reference services they provided.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An academic library has an enormous role to play in the achievement of the visions of tertiary institutions. Keegan, (2013) supported that academic libraries focus on the provision of information sources to enhance teaching, research, scholarship and community development. Hence, an academic library consists of a reference department with skilled staff who deals with rendering one-on-one information assistance on a wide variety of subjects. Adedeji (2013) noted that the reference services provided by an academic library include:

a. Assistance in using the library
b. Answering requests for information
c. Reader education
d. Conducting literature searches
e. Current awareness services

From the above services it imperative to note that reference librarians engage in person-to-person services. They interact with library patrons and interview them to be able to articulate their information needs clearly. They must possess conversational skills which according to Katz (2012) is the ability to talk to all types of people, to find out what they need. The ability to communicate effectively on an interpersonal level will   go a long way in ensuring that they meet the demands of the clientele and also gain their confidence.

Interpersonal communication skills are set of abilities, attitudes and values that enable reference librarians to work efficiently, be good communicators and survive in the new world of work (Haddow, 2013). These skills are further described as the basic tools for creating and nurturing an environment of mutual respect and trust. Muddapur and Agadi (2017) noted that interpersonal skills for library

professionals especially in the reference section of any library is all about possessing effective listening, writing, presentation, decision making, problem solving and leadership skills to create friendly environment for library users, create and promote a positive image and good will for the library and enhance information service delivery. They stated that reference librarians are the most friendly, lively, self-controlled library staff and also have nice sense of humor. Furthermore, Kumar and Hitu (2014) identified and discussed four major interpersonal communication skills that reference librarians must possess if they must succeed in effective delivery of reference services which are; thinking, listening, speaking, nonverbal interpersonal communication. Reference librarians should be able to interact with patrons using body language which includes; gesture, nodding, blinking of the eyes, touching, pinching, etc.

Effectiveness in reference work as stressed by scholars in the field of librarianship requires the acquisition and possession of good communication skills. Such communication skills include verbal skills, extra-verbal skills and listening skills. According to Adedeji (2013) the effectiveness of interpersonal communication skills in reference service delivery in libraries is perceived in the quality of the references services provided to clients. He noted that as long as the reference librarians are able to effectively conduct reference interviews, answer queries, provide general an specific information to clienteles, provide advisory services, assist in the use of reference materials and other services to meet the client's needs, it is an evidence of the effectiveness of the quality of interpersonal communication skills possessed by reference librarians. Edom (2013) also revealed that interpersonal communication skills are very essential and effective for successful reference transactions in academic libraries. This is because, the interpersonal components of reference services are known as reference interview which attempt to understand and appreciate the user and his query.

There are several factors that affect the communication process. Edom (2013) observed that some of these factors have to do with the sender of messages, others with the receiver or both the sender and receiver. In reference services also, there are some barriers to effective communication. These barriers are include; inferiority complex, stereotype, etiquette and decorum, boundaries in relationship, low level of education and noise. Another hindrance to effective interpersonal communication in reference services is snap judgments. Snap judgment occurs when a reference librarian draws conclusion hastily or without enough evidence. This can occur when a user's character and information needs are judged based on a single meeting with the user, or his/her appearance, speech, etc. Information obtained in this manner rarely holds true, and deters true understanding of the person in question (Burstein, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method adopted for the study is quantitative research method, particularly the survey design. According to Karasar, (2005), survey research design is commonly used for collecting information about a population of interest that is large in number. The survey design is considered appropriate in this study as it allows for the use of questionnaire as a data collection instrument and

because of the low cost and easy accessibility of information from respondents. This design will help the researcher to obtain general result about the sample.

The population of the study is 185, consists of all professional and para-professional librarians in tertiary Institutions in Kogi State. The professional librarians are those with first degree and other higher academic qualifications, while the para-professionals are those with National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) qualifications. The library personnel were drawn from all the tertiary institutions in Kogi State namely: Federal University Lokoja, Federal Collage of Education Okene, Federal Polytechnic Idah, Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja, Collage of Education Ankpa, Kogi State University Ayingba, Salam University Lokoja and Confluence University of Science and Technology Osara.

Simple random technique was used in selecting fifteen (15) library personnel each from the eight (8) tertiary institutions in Kogi state to make the total of 120 respondents for the study. Therefore, 15 library staff was selected from Federal University Lokoja, 15 from Federal Collage of Education Okene, 15 from Federal Polytechnic Idah, 15 from Kogi State University Ayinba, 15 from Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja 15 from Kogi State Collage of Education, 15 from Salem University Lokoja and 15 from Confluence University of Science and Technology Osara.

To achieve the objectives of this study, questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The choice of this instrument is also valid given the geographical spread of the library personnel in tertiary institutions within Kogi State. Anthony (2006) sees questionnaire as an impersonal survey method and has an advantage of low cost, reduction in biasing error, greater anonymity, considered answer and consultation including accessibility. The questionnaire is divided into two parts; Section A elicited responses about Personal data of respondent while Section B provides data relating to the issue related to the research questions for this study. This part was further divided into five sections in line with the research questions raised in the study. The data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage, frequency count, mean and standard deviation. This was further presented in pie chat and histogram. This method was adopted because of their simplicity and easy understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCURSION

Table 1: Response based on the Institution Studied

Institution		
Institution	Frequency	Percent
C.U.S.Tech Osara	12	11.4
F.C.E. Okene	15	14.3
F.U.L Lokoja	15	14.3
F.P Idah	13	12.4
K.S.P Lokoja	13	12.4
K.C.O. E Ankpa	12	11.4
P.A.U. Ayingba	14	13.3
S.U. Lokoja	11	10.5
Total	**105**	**100.0**
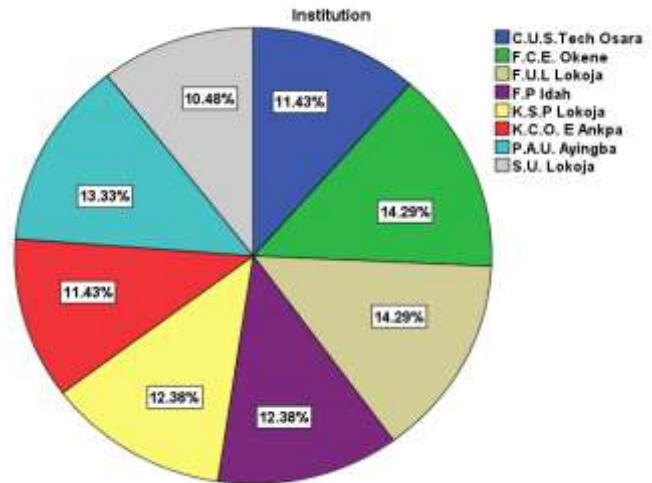
Figure 1: Institution Studied

From table 1 and Figure 1 above, a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed for the study with 15 questionnaires distributed in each institution. Federal Collage of Education Okene and Federal University Lokoja had the highest respondents with 15(14.3%) respondents each. Followed by Prince Abubakar University Ayingba with 14(13.3%). Federal Polytechnic Idah and Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja had 13(12.4%) respondents each. Confluence University Osara and Kogi State Collage of Education Ankpa had 12(11.4%) respondents, while Salem University Lokoja had 11(10.5%) respondents. Hence, a total of 105 questionnaire were adequately filled and returned, which represents 87.5% response rate.

Table 2: Distribution Library Personnel based on Sections in the Library

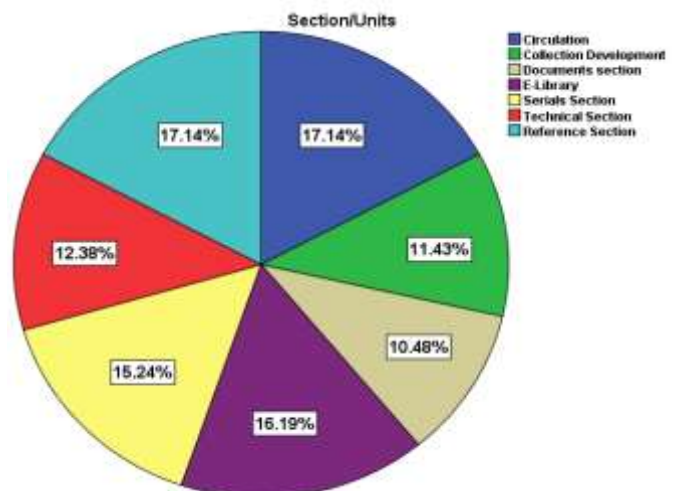| Sections/Unit		
Sections/Unit	Frequency	Percentage
Circulation	18	17.1
Collection Development	12	11.4
Documents section	11	10.5
E-Library	17	16.2
Serials Section	16	15.2
Technical Section	13	12.4
Reference Section	18	17.1
Total	**105**	**100.0**

Figure 2: Library Personnel based on Sections in the Library

Table 2, Figure 2 above shows that 18(17.1%) respondents work in Circulation and Reference Sections of the library. 17(16.2%) are in the e-library section, 16(15.2 are in Serials Section while 13(12.2%), 12(11.4%) and 11(10.5%) are in Technical Section, Collection Development and Document Sections respectively.

Table 3: Professional Status of Library Personnel

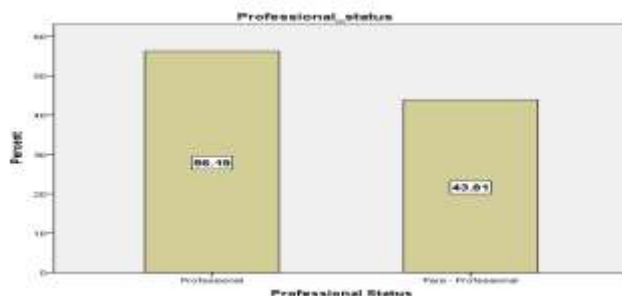| Professional Status		
Professional Status	Frequency	Percentage
Professional	59	56.2
Para - Professional	46	43.8
Total	**105**	**100.0**

Figure 3: Professional Status of Library Personnel

Table 3 above show that 59(56%) respondents are professional librarians while 46(43.8%) are para-professional librarians

Table 4: Sex of Respondents

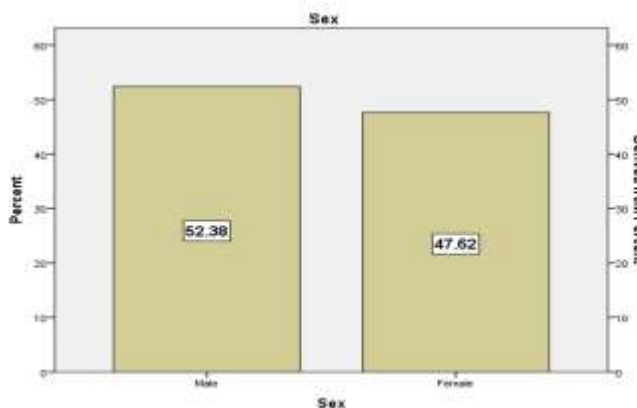| Sex		
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	55	52.4
Female	50	47.6
Total	**105**	**100.0**

Table 4 Figure 4 above show that 55(52.4%) are males while 50 (47.6%) are females

Table 5: Types of Reference and Information Services Provided by Librarians

S/No	Type of Reference Services	Yes	No
1.	Assisting users in using the library	90(85.7%)	15(10.3%)
2.	Answering users request for information	100(95.2%)	5(4.8%)
3.	Reader Education	88(83.8%)	17(16.2%)
4.	Literature Searches on behave of Users	86(81.9%)	19(18.1%)
5.	Current Awareness Services	85(80.6%)	20(19.4%)
6.	Online Reference Services	87(82.6%)	18(17.4%)
7.	Information and Referral Service	86(81.9%)	19(18.1%)
8.	Selective Dissemination of Information	86(81.9%)	19(18.1%)
9.	Ready reference services	96(91.4%)	9(5.6%)
10.	Selection of Information Resources	69(65.7%)	36(34.3%)
11.	Directional Services	70(66.7%)	35((33.3%)

Table 5 above revealed the types of reference and information services provided by librarians in the area studied to include: Answering users request for information 100(95.2%), ready reference services 96(91.4%), assisting users in using the library 90(85.7%), reader education 88(83.8%), Online Reference Services 87(82.6%). Information and Referral Service, Selective Dissemination of Information and Literature Searches on behave of Users has 86(81.9%) respondents respectfully. Other types of reference services include: Current Awareness Services 85(80.6%), Directional Services 70(66.7%) and Selection of Information Resources 70(66.7%). This is in tandem with the study conducted by Adedeji (2013) who noted that the major reference services provided most academic libraries include: assistance in using the library, answering requests for information, reader education, conducting literature searches, Current awareness services and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI).

Table 6: Interpersonal Communication Skills Possessed by Library Staff

S/N	Interpersonal Communication Skills Possessed by Library Personnel for the Provision of Reference and Information Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Mean $\overline{X}$
1.	Active listening skills	34(32.4%)	47(44.8%)	12(11.4%)	12(11.4%)	2.98
2.	The ability to speak fluently to the users	27(25.7%)	50(56.5%)	15(14.3%)	10(9.5%)	2.92
3.	The ability to understand and satisfactorily respond to patrons queries	25(23.8%)	55(52.4%)	13(12.4%)	12(11.4%)	2.89
4.	Empathy and emotional handling skills	18(17.1%)	58(55.2%)	14(13.3%)	15(14.3%)	2.75
5.	Message interpretation skills	29(27.6%)	49(46.7%)	13(12.4%)	14(13.3%)	2.89
6.	The ability to provide guidance to patrons properly after listening to their query	33(31.4%)	48(45.7%)	14(13.3%)	10(9.5%)	2.99
7.	The ability to serve the users with the right information	34(32.4%)	49(46.7%)	11(10.5%)	11(10.5%)	3.01
8.	The ability to send the users answer to their query using appropriate channel	31(29.5%)	53(50.5%)	9(8.6%)	12(11.4%)	2.99

Table 6 above shows the interpersonal communication skills possessed by library personnel. It was discovered that library staff possessed the ability to serve the users with the right information (3.01), the ability to send the users answer to their query using appropriate channel and the ability to provide guidance to patrons properly after listening to their query (2.99), active listening skills (2.98), the ability to speak fluently to the users (2.92), the ability to understand and satisfactorily respond to patrons queries and message interpretation skills (2.89) and empathy and emotional handling skills (2.75). This implies that academic library personnel in Kogi state possess interpersonal communication skills to a great extent. In line with the findings, Katz (2012) in his study maintained that very library personnel must possess all forms of conversational skills which include active listening, speaking fluently, ability to manage emotions, nonverbal interpersonal communication, etc.

Table 7: The effect of interpersonal communication skills on the provision of reference and information services in academic libraries

S/N	Effect of Interpersonal Communication Skills Possessed on the Provision of Reference and Information Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Mean $\bar{X}$
1.	Enhances quick understanding and response to quarries for timely provision of information	31(29.5%)	51(48.6%)	11(10.5%)	12(11.4%)	2.96
2.	Helped me in maintaining good relationship with patrons	32(30.5%)	52(49.5%)	13(12.4%)	8(7.6%)	3.03
3.	Effective in teaching patrons how to find information in the library	24(22.9%)	53(52.4%)	13(12.4%)	13(12.4%)	2.75
4.	It enhances mutual interaction between librarians and patrons	29(27.6%)	52(49.5%)	15(14.3%)	9(6.6%)	2.96
5.	It helps in cultivating confidence in staff and patrons	30(28.6%)	51(48.6%)	14(13.3%)	13(9.5%)	2.99
6.	It reduces stress in reference transactions	31(29.5%)	44(41.9%)	17(16.2%)	13(12.4%)	2.88
7.	It facilitates enthusiasm among staff and students	32(30.5%)	43(41.0%)	16(15.2%)	14(11.4%)	2.89
9.	It has improved the quality of reference services in my library	29(27.6%)	51(48.6%)	13(12.4%)	12(11.4%)	2.92
10.	It has led to increase in patronage of the reference section and the library services entirely	31(29.5%)	49(46.7%)	13(12.4%)	11(10.5%)	2.93
11.	It enables librarians to easily identify the patrons salient information needs effectively	34(32.4%)	46(43.8%)	11(10.5%)	14(13.3%)	2.95

Table 7 above show that interpersonal communication skills possessed had positive effect on the provision of reference services. It helped me in maintaining good relationship with patrons (3.03), helps in cultivating confidence in staff and patrons (2.99), enhances quick understanding and response to quarries for timely provision of information and enhances mutual interaction between librarians and patrons (2.96). It also enables librarians to easily identify the patrons salient information needs effectively (2.95), led to increase in patronage of the reference section and the library services entirely (2.93), has improved the quality of reference services in the library (2.92), facilitates enthusiasm among staff and students (2.89), reduces stress in reference transactions (2.88) and very effective in teaching patrons how to find information in the library (2.75). This is in consonance with the opinion of Adedeji (2013) who noted that the effectiveness of interpersonal communication skills in reference service delivery in libraries is perceived in the quality of the references services provided to clients. Therefore, effective interpersonal communication should lead to improved library services and patronage, quick response to queries, provision of information resource, etc.

Table 8: Limitations to engaging interpersonal communication skills for the provision of reference and information services in academic libraries

S/N	Limitations to engaging interpersonal communication skills for the provision of reference and information services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Mean $\overline{X}$
1.	(Inferiority Complex) Lack of self-confidence in communication makes it difficult for librarians to handle difficult questions	23(21.9%)	27(25.7%)	31(29.5%)	24(22.9%)	2.46
2.	Frustration due to poor working conditions/environment	25(23.8%)	35(33.3%)	16(15.2%)	27(25.7%)	2.57
3.	Low level of education of some library personnel	24(23.9%)	26(24.8%)	26(24.8%)	29(27.6%)	2.43
4.	(Language barriers) inability to communicate in language the patrons understand as well as the inability of understanding the language of the patrons	27(25.7%)	28(26.7%)	26(24.8%)	24(23.9%)	2.55
5.	Physical distraction in the library such as background noise and interference which makes coding of queries nearly impossible	26(24.8%)	24(23.9%)	26(24.8%)	29(27.6%)	2.45
6.	Boundaries in relationship make it difficult for library users to freely express their query which makes it difficult for the librarians to understand them	26(24.8%)	28(26.7%)	26(24.8%)	25(23.8%)	2.52
7.	Job stress/pressure	25(23.8%)	29(27.6%)	24(23.9%)	27(25.7%)	2.50
8.	Lackadaisical, punitive and impatience attitude of some library staff	26(24.8%)	28(26.7%)	27(25.7%)	24(22.9%)	2.53
	Emotional and psychological issues affecting librarians and users	27(25.7%)	28(26.7%)	26(24.8%)	24(23.9%)	2.55

Table 8 above show that the main limitation to engaging in interpersonal communication skills for the provision of reference and information services among library personnel in academic libraries include: Frustration due to poor working conditions/environment (2.57); (Language barriers) inability to communicate in language the patrons understand as well as the inability of understanding the language of the patrons, alongside emotional and psychological issues affecting librarians and users (2.55), lackadaisical, punitive and impatience attitude of some library staff (2.53), boundaries in relationship make it difficult for library users to freely express their query which makes it difficult for the librarians to understand them (2.52) and Job stress/pressure (2.50). The finding contradicts the study conducted by Edom (2013) discovered that some of the barriers to effective interpersonal communication include; inferiority complex, stereotype, etiquette and low level of education and noise. This could be due to level of exposure and environmental differences.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDING

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:
1.   The types of reference services provided by library personnel in academic libraries in Kogi state include answering users request for information, ready reference services, assisting users in using the library, reader education, online reference services, information services, referral service, Selective

Dissemination of Information, Current Awareness Services, directional Services and literature Searches. Hence, academic library personnel in Kogi state possess interpersonal communication skills to a great extent.

2.   The library personnel in academic libraries in Kogi State possessed the ability to serve the users with the right information, the ability to send the users answer to their query using appropriate channel, ability to provide guidance to patrons properly after listening to their query, active listening skills, ability to speak fluently to the users, ability to understand and satisfactorily respond to patrons queries, message interpretation skills and empathy and emotional handling skills.

3.   The interpersonal communication skills possessed by library personnel had positive effect on the provision of reference services as it helped them in maintaining good relationship with patrons, developing confidence in staff and patrons, enhances quick understanding and response to quarries for timely provision of information, enhances mutual interaction between librarians and patrons, enables librarians to easily identify the patrons salient information needs effectively, led to increase in patronage of the reference section and the library services entirely, improvement in the quality of reference services in the library, facilitates enthusiasm among staff and students, reduces stress in reference transactions and enhanced effective teaching of patrons on how to find information in the library.

4.   The main limitation to engaging in interpersonal communication skills for the provision of reference and information services among reference librarians and other library personnel in academic libraries are frustration due to poor working conditions/environment, Language, emotional and psychological issues affecting librarians and users, lackadaisical, punitive and impatience attitude of some library staff, boundaries in relationship make it difficult for library users to freely express their query which makes it difficult for the librarians to understand them and Job stress/pressure.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis and summary of the findings, it could be concluded that academic library personnel in veracious tertiary institutions in Kogi State possess interpersonal communication skills to a great extent and these skills are quite effective in reference and information service delivery. This is because the users are only going to be served well when effective communication takes place during reference and information services. The study has proved that interpersonal communication is the bedrock of understanding users' queries and meeting their information needs. The fact that interpersonal communication has to some extent been effective in academic libraries studied, the need for some other factors are challenged to be re-evaluated to remedy the decline in library patronage. Therefore, it is pertinent to note that effective interpersonal skills are essential in reference and information service delivery in any academic library.

Recommendations
Based on the major findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made. That:

1.   Academic libraries in Kogi State should be proactive in enhancing various reference services so as to be more committed in assisting the users in satisfying their needs.

2.   Reference librarians and other library personnel should strive to possess various forms of verbal, non-verbal interpersonal communication skills in order to be able to serve their users with the right information, at the right time and to enhance high patronage.

3.   Reference librarians should be adequately trained to be able to use the ability to speak fluently to the users, the ability to understand the users query as parts of interpersonal communication skills they utilized in the provision of reference and information services in academic libraries in Kogi State.

4.   To enhance the effectiveness of interpersonal communication skills for reference and information services delivery, every library personnel must demonstrate a high level of dexterity in interpersonal communication between them and their patrons and the need to have good listening skills so as to satisfy the needs of users in academic libraries in Kogi State.

5.   The management of tertiary institutions and academic libraries in Kogi state should ensure the improvement of working conditions/environment of librarian and other emotional and psychological issues affecting librarians and users in order to enhance effective reference and information services delivery in their libraries.

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