

Awareness and Undergraduates Perception of the Adequacy of Digital Reference Services of Kenneth Dike Library, University Of Ibadan

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduates in the universities are not aware of digital reference services and those that are aware have negative propagation about adequacy of digital reference services in University of Ibadan. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study constituted undergraduates in University of Ibadan which was 13,191. Stratified sampling technique was used. Sample fraction of 4% was used which gave us sample size of 221. Research instrument used for collection of data was structural questionnaire. The results revealed the electronic queries services 181(89.1%) and online search 178(86.8%) are the digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library. The result also indicated that the level of the undergraduate awareness of digital reference services were high in internet services (e.g.WIFI services) 124(60.8%) and online database 120(58.5%). Also, results on adequacy of digital reference indicated that internet services (e.g. WIFI services) 149(72.7%) and electronic queries services 133(64.9%) were moderately adequate in Kenneth Dike Library. The findings showed that undergraduate perceived that search options are helpful when using the service 118 (57.6%) and claimed augmenting their lecturers' note and handouts with the use of online reference services seems relevant to them 107(52.2%). Results revealed that costs charged are exorbitant 148(72.2%) and irregular power supply 135(65.9%) were the challenges when using digital reference services. The study was concluded university library have responsibilities to perform in ensuring that digital reference services are utilized to ensure effective utilization undergraduates have to be aware of the of these securities and if these services are adequately provided, the student will have positive perception towards the services. It is recommended that university library should diversify into different aspect of digital divide to provide digital reference services, intensify their awareness programme on provision of digital reference services and should ensure that library's budget is increased and enough to cater for the financial need of the library.

KEYWORDS: Digital reference services, perception, awareness,

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I. INTRODUCTION

University library is bedrock upon which any university is built in order to achieve her primary aim of teaching, learning and community services. University libraries are academic libraries established and attached to universities and have major aim of providing information materials that support teaching, learning and research. University libraries are the depositories of knowledge that provide the vital underpinning for national development. Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013) stated that centrality of the university library is the intellectual life of the university community which epitomized in the character and efficiency of the University gauged by its treatment of its central organ, the library. The development and availability of Information and Communication

Technologies (ICTs) in university libraries today have not only increased and broadened the impact of information resources, but also placed more emphasis on effective and efficient services. Bakar (2011) noted that the introduction and development of the Internet and its associated Web technologies in the past decade have significantly affected both the way libraries provide information services to the users and the way users choose to access information. One area of change is in the deployment of the technologies for reference services.

The concept of digital reference service has emerged with the growth of the internet and web development. Digital reference service has been described as an assistance offered by librarians to the users through the internet and web resources. Library web pages and “webliographies” are new forms of delivery for the products of indirect reference service. Digital reference service is also known as virtual reference services. A digital reference service can only be said to have occurred when a question is received electronically and responded to electronically. A digital reference service consists of the following components: the user of the service, the interface (e-mail, web form, chat, videoconference, etc.), the information professional, and electronic resources (including electronic or CD-based resources, web resources, local digitized material etc.). Digital reference services provide many benefits for libraries. They can potentially operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when spread over a number of time zones; they provide services without regard to location or person. Many writers have used the term ‘asynchronous’ and ‘synchronous’ to describe the two major models of digital reference service delivery (McClennen, 2003; Francoeur, 2002 and Berube, 2003). Synchronous digital reference service involves real-time two way communication between the reference librarian and the user, using mechanisms such as ‘chat’, ‘instant messaging’ or ‘voice over IP’. Asynchronous digital reference is made up of one way communication at a time, typically by e-mail or Web forms. It involves the use of FAQs (frequently asked questions), electronic resources, which may include subject guides, lists, journals, and other content, and e-mail, which may be forms-based or address-based. Since the invention of the World Wide Web (www), there has been a great increase in the number of reference services utilizing asynchronous electronic communication media to conduct the reference transaction. Asynchronous transaction involves time delay between the question and answer. Examples include e-mail, web forms and ask-a-service. Therefore, awareness and perception of adequacy of digital reference services is paramount to undergraduates in Nigerian universities; because awareness and the way students perceived digital reference services determine how the student will use the services.

Wyart and Tallon-Baudry (2009) described awareness as the ability to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects, thoughts, emotions, or sensory patterns. Moreover, perception of undergraduates towards the adequacy of digital reference services in the university library entails that the library staff especially the reference librarian has to be proactive. Bagudu and Sadiq (2013) stated that the perceptions of students as to the quality of digital reference collections and services accessible could be judged from the universities’ library websites. Users of library have queries that they want the library’s reference librarian help on; many users do not have time or feel comfortable to present their queries through digital means to the reference librarian. This however, calls for the awareness of users of the usefulness and importance of digital reference services. The library should also ensure the full operation of its digital reference services so that the students can have a positive perception about the adequacy of the library digital reference services. It is only by this, that the students can fully use digital reference services provided by the library.

Statement of the problem

The deployment of Information and Communication Technologies to library services in the university library has brought about digital reference services which have in turn improved the provision of library reference services. However, despite the tremendous importance of digital reference services to undergraduates. Literature search and researchers observation indicate that student level of awareness of digital reference services is relatively low, therefore students do not query or use it. Another reason for the lack of digital reference service by students may be that that the student negative perception about the adequacy of digital reference services in solving and answering their information queries. The study therefore, aims at investigating the awareness and undergraduates’ perception on the adequacy of digital reference services in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To identify various online reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan to users;
- ii. To find out the level of awareness of undergraduates of online reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan;
- iii. To determine the adequacy of online reference services available to undergraduates in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan;

- iv. find out perception of undergraduates on the adequacy of online reference services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan;
- v. find out the challenges faced by undergraduates in using of digital reference services in University of Ibadan.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ogunsola, Akindojutimi and Omoike (2011) averred that the role of university libraries as cost effective information service and provider of knowledge products to a resident community of scholars. Ogbuyi and Omeluzor (2013) were of the view that the aim of university library is to support teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. Ashaver and Bem-Bura (2013) argued that university libraries are the depositories of knowledge that provide the vital underpinning for national development. The term reference service according to Udensi and Akor (2014) is a direct personal assistance to readers seeking for information in the library. Younus (2014) asserted that with the advent of the internet, libraries expanded the role of reference service beyond the use of mail, telephone and fax and started to provide reference service through the Internet. One of the first reference services provided through the Internet was ‘Electronic Access to Reference Service (EARS)’, which was launched by the University of Maryland Health Sciences Library, Baltimore, USA in 1984. According to Nicholas (2011) digital/electronic reference services may be divided into two main categories – asynchronous or delayed, and synchronous or real-time service. Asynchronous services include services such as web-based email, web form service, ‘ask-a’ service, and online pathfinders. Nicholas (2011) further stated that recently, there has been an increased usage of Web 2.0 applications, mobile technologies, and virtual world in the provision of reference services. Utoni (2014) described digital reference services as “Internet based question-and-answer services that connect users with individuals who possess specialized subject or skills expertise”.

In order to satisfy the diverse information needs and interest of the users in the communities in which the library is located, the digital library system must be adequate in terms of quantity, quality and currency (Agyen-Gyasi and Atta-Oteng, 2014). Negahban, Selvaraja and Venkatesha (2011) argued that adequacy of provision of digital reference services is very paramount.

Dhawle and Karambelkar (2013) averred that to manage better electronic reference services, awareness of these modern references amongst students through orientation is necessary and development of modern library website with social networking, Blog, RSS feeds etc. which can give access to reference services and sources. Adequate and relevant digital reference services is essential in all spheres of university library are needed for the development of entire library system; as its availability or non-availability can dictate the level of queries by users. The provision of quality digital reference services available at any material moment will invariably have positive impact on the patronage of the library (Agyen-Gyasi and Atta-Oteng, 2014). Popoola and Zaid (2012) stated that what is fundamental to digital reference services’ provision is to create users’ awareness. Madukoma (2015) studied users’ perception of electronic services in Babcock University Library, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. Data was collected for the study through questionnaire distributed among library users of the institution’s library. The result of the study revealed that level of awareness of electronic reference services at Babcock University Library was high in internet services, e-mail services, scanner ,SMS (Short Message Service) and Cellphones. But their level of awareness was low in CD-Rom databases, I-Pod, video conferencing and Facsimile. Bagudu and Sadiq (2013) studied students’ perception of digital reference services in International Islamic University, Malaysia. The result shows that most of the students perceived the digital reference positively. They perceived that digital reference services search option was helpful, helpful to their studies, Digital reference are authentic information system. Ukonu, Wogu and Ekwueme (2013) averred that some university libraries have bandwidth and other logistic problems that may further discourage quering of digital reference services by students. Equipment configurations and replacement cycles are problems that can affect student’s use of libraries.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study is descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students in the University of Ibadan total 13,191. The sampling technique that will be used for this study is stratified sampling technique. Therefore, the population is divided into strata and each stratum that has high number of students will be used. However, the sample size will be determined by the population of each stratum. Three strata that have high number of students are Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Education. In order to get the sample size, sample fraction of 4% is used for the population. The research instrument that used for data collection is structured questionnaire. The data analysis method that used is descriptive statistical measures such as percentages and frequency distribution which will show the questionnaire response rate.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic information of respondents

This part of the study revealed the demographic information of the respondents used for the study.

Table 1 Showing the distribution of demographic information

S/N	Demographic information	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Age Bracket		
	15 - 20 yrs	66	32.2
	21 - 25 yrs	92	44.9
	26 - 30 yrs	44	21.5
	31 - 35 yrs	3	1.5
	TOTAL	205	100
2	Gender		
	Male	107	52.2
	Female	98	47.8
	TOTAL	205	100
3	Level of Study		
	100 Level	54	26.3
	200 Level	49	23.9
	300 Level	42	20.5
	400 Level	56	27.3
	500 Level	4	2.0
	TOTAL	205	100
4	Religion		
	Christianity	129	62.9
	Islam	76	37.1
	Traditional worshipper	-	-
	TOTAL	205	100
5	Marital status		
	Single	191	94.6
	Married	14	5.4
	TOTAL	205	100

The result of demographic information in Table 4.2 revealed that both male and female participated in the study. The results showed that male respondents 107(52.2%) participated more than the female 98(47.8%). The highest age bracket of the respondents was between 21 - 25 yrs representing 92(44.9%), while 31 - 35 yrs had the least of 3(1.5%). The table further reveals the marital status of the respondents. It indicates that 191(92.6%) of the respondents were single, while 14(5.4%) were married. The table also showed the distribution of demographic information of the respondents on their level of study in University of Ibadan. The highest level of study of respondents that participated in the study was 400 level representing 56(27.3%), while 500 level had least with 4(2.0%). The table shows the religion status of the respondents, 129(62.9%) were Christians while 76(37.1%) are practising Muslim.

Presentation of findings from research questions

Research Question 1: What are the various digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan to users?

The foregoing shows the data distribution and analysis on the various digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library to respondents in University of Ibadan. The distribution is revealed in Table 2

Table 2 Data distribution on digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan to users

S/N	Online reference service	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Electronic queries services	15	6.8	181	89.1	9	4.1	-	-
2	Online search	22	10.7	178	86.8	4	2.0	1	0.5
3	OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	41	20.0	148	72.2	16	7.8	-	-
4	Internet services (e.g. WIFI services)	31	15.1	154	75.1	20	9.8	-	-
5	Online databases	34	16.6	154	75.1	17	8.3	-	-
6	Electronic mail reference services	50	29.4	147	71.7	8	3.9	-	-
7	Webliographies (Library website services)	60	29.3	138	67.3	7	3.4	-	-
8	Video conferencing/Web camera services	26	12.7	153	74.6	26	12.7	-	-
9	Mobile library services	127	43.1	146	49.5	13	4.4	9	3.1
10	Social networking services	43	21.9	144	70.2	18	8.8	-	-
11	Chat services	44	21.5	142	69.3	19	9.3	-	-

The results from Table 4.3 reveal that most of the respondents indicated that electronic queries services are the digital reference services mostly provided by Kenneth Dike Library with 181(89.1%). Other digital reference services provided as pointed out by the respondents in the results are online search 178(86.8%), internet services (e.g. WIFI services) and online databases 154(75.1%) respectively. However, Webliographies (Library websites services) 138(67.3%), social networking services 142(70.2%) and chat reference services were the least digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library.

Research Question 2: What is the level of awareness of undergraduates of online reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan?

As shown in Table 3, it reveals the distribution of data analysed on the respondents' level of awareness on digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.

Table 3: Distribution of data level of awareness of undergraduates of online reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan?

S/N	Online reference service	Very High		High		Low		Very Low	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Electronic queries services	17	8.3	107	52.2	85	41.5	-	-
2	Online search	67	32.7	116	56.6	17	8.3	5	2.4
3	OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	10	4.8	45	22.0	130	63.4	20	9.8
4	Internet services (e.g. WIFI services)	124	60.5	69	33.6	12	5.9	-	-
5	Online databases	45	22.0	120	58.5	30	14.6	10	4.9

6	Electronic mail reference services	68	33.2	104	50.7	31	15.1	2	1.0
7	Webliographies (Library website services)	3	1.5	47	22.9	127	62.0	28	13.7
8	Video conferencing/Web camera services	2	1.0	30	14.6	123	60	50	24.4
9	Mobile/phone library services	7	3.4	60	29.2	102	49.8	35	17.1
10	Social networking services	59	28.8	114	55.6	25	12.2	5	2.4
11	Chat reference services	11	5.4	59	28.8	90	43.9	43	21.0

The result from findings in Table 4.4 reveals that the digital reference services the respondents' level of awareness was highest in internet services (e.g. WIFI services) 124(60.5%). The respondents' level of awareness was also high in online database 120(58.5%), online search 116(56.6%) and electronic queries services 107(52.2%). While the respondents indicated that their level of awareness of digital reference services was low in video conferencing/web camera services 30(14.6%), OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) 45(22.0%), webliographies (Library website services) 47 (22.9%) and chat reference services 59(28.8%).

Research question 3: What is the adequacy of online reference services available to undergraduates Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan?

This part of the study shows the data analysis on adequacy of digital/online reference services available to respondents in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. This is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Data distribution on adequacy of online reference services available to undergraduates Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan

S/N	Online reference service	Moderately Adequate		Adequate		Inadequate	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Electronic queries services	133	64.9	47	22.9	20	9.8
2	Online search	124	60.5	65	31.7	13	6.3
3	OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	60	29.3	115	56.1	30	14.6
4	Internet services (e.g. WIFI services)	149	72.7	41	20.0	15	7.3
5	Online databases	134	65.4	46	22.4	20	9.8
6	Electronic mail reference services	106	51.7	86	42.0	9	4.4
7	Webliographies (Library website services)	26	12.7	69	33.6	110	53.7
8	Video conferencing/Web camera services	35	17.1	44	21.5	124	60.5
9	Mobile/phone library services	124	60.5	51	24.9	28	13.7
10	Social networking services	23	11.2	41	20	140	68.3
11	Chat reference services	121	59.0	51	24.9	29	14.1

Table 4 shows the distribution of data on adequacy of digital reference services indicated by the respondents in University of Ibadan. Therefore, the respondents indicated that internet services (e.g. WIFI services) 149(72.7%) are moderately adequate in Kenneth Dike Library. So also, electronic queries services 133(64.9%), online search 124(60.5%) and online database 134(65.4%) are moderately adequate in the university library. However, webliographies (Library website services) 26(12.7%), video conferencing/web camera services 37(17.1%) and social networking services are least adequate.

Research question 4: What is the perception of undergraduates on adequacy of online reference services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan?

The foregoing shows in detail the data analysis on perception on adequacy of online reference services in Kenneth Dike Library as indicated by the respondents in University of Ibadan. The distribution is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Data distribution on perception of undergraduates on adequacy of online reference services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan

S/N	Perception of online reference services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Online reference services helps to improve my academic performance	13	6.3	92	44.9	69	33.7	31	15.1
2	Online reference collections have authentic information system	9	4.4	46	22.4	109	53.2	41	20.0
3	Search Options are Helpful when using the services	75	25.4	118	57.6	10	22.0	2	9.8
4	I prefer using the library catalogue cards to OPAC	8	3.9	42	20.5	115	56.1	40	19.5
5	Augmenting my lecturer's notes and handouts with the use of online reference services seems relevant to me.	57	27.8	107	52.2	33	16.1	8	3.9
6	I think the use of online reference services is too technical for me to understand	8	3.9	28	13.7	134	65.4	35	4.9
7	Learning to use online reference services has been fascinating to me	48	23.4	98	47.8	47	22.9	11	5.4
8	Using online reference services is not as exciting as using printed resources	4	2.0	19	9.3	129	62.9	53	25.9

Table 5 reveals the respondents' perception of digital reference services in University of Ibadan Library. 118 (57.6%) of the respondents mostly agreed that search options are helpful when using the service, 107(52.2%) of them claimed augmenting their lecturers' note and handouts with the use of online reference services seems relevant to them, 98 (47.8%) agreed that learning to use online reference services has been fascinating to them and 92(42.9%) noted that online services help to improve their academic performance. However, the respondents least perceived that they preferred using the library catalogue cards to OPAC with 42(20.5%), 28(13.7%) least thought the use of online reference services is too technical for them to understand, and 19(9.3%) least perceived the using of online reference services is not as exciting as using printed resources.

Research question 5: What are the challenges faced by undergraduates in using of digital reference services in University of Ibadan?

This aspect shows the data distribution on the challenges being faced by the respondents in using the digital reference services in the University Library. The distribution is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Data distribution on challenges faced by undergraduates in using of digital reference services in University of Ibadan

S/N	Challenges	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Inaccessibility to these facilities	17	8.3	48	23.4	132	64.4	8	3.9
2	Inadequate number of these facilities	21	10.2	133	64.9	49	23.9	2	1.0
3	Unskilled to use these facilities	75	36.6	101	49.3	19	9.3	7	3.4
4	Irregular power supply	51	24.9	135	65.9	12	5.9	3	1.5
5	Inadequate of online databases	58	28.3	130	63.4	14	6.8	1	0.5
6	Costs charged are exorbitant	34	16.6	148	72.2	21	10.2	2	1.0
7	Frequent computer breakdown	37	18.1	124	60.5	31	15.1	7	3.4
8	Frequent down time of server	71	34.6	121	59.0	10	4.5	3	1.5
9	Saving information into storage media is not allowed	60	29.3	108	52.7	28	13.7	9	4.4
10	Technophobia	28	13.7	109	53.2	47	22.9	21	10.2

Table 6 reveals that 148(72.2%) of the respondents mostly claimed that costs charged are exorbitant, 135(65.9%) indicated irregular power supply 133(64.9%) agreed that inadequate number of these facilities and 124(60.5%) agreed to frequent computer breakdown were the challenges they faced in using digital reference services in the University of Ibadan. However, the respondents least agreed that 48(23.4%) have inaccessibility to these facilities.

V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents claimed that the digital reference services provided by Kenneth Dike Library in University of Ibadan are electronic queries services, online search, internet services (e.g. WIFI services) and online database services. So also, the least provided services include webliographies (Library website services), social networking services and chat reference services. This corroborated Ukachi (2008) who outlined the internet, online-search, e-query and online public access catalogue as ICT facilities that promote effective reference services in academic libraries. Fax, e-mail, chatting and instant messaging (IM), Facebook, and Twitter are the viable means of delivering digital reference services to remote users. Ramos and Abrigo (2011) noted that the provision of Digital Reference Service in university libraries is a response of librarians to the ever growing information needs and changing information seeking patterns and behavior of the clients – who are becoming less visible in the library.

The findings from the revealed that the level of respondents' awareness of digital reference services were high in electronic queries services, internet services (e.g. WIFI services), online search and online database, and low in video conferencing/web camera services, OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), webliographies (Library website services) and chat reference services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. The finding was in line with Dhawle and Karambelkar (2013), they averred that to manage better electronic reference services, awareness of these modern references amongst students through orientation is necessary and development of modern library website with social networking, Blog, RSS feeds etc. which can give access to reference services and sources.

The findings from the study showed that the respondents indicated that internet services (e.g. WIFI services), electronic queries services, online database and online search were adequate while webliographies (Library website services), video conference/web camera services and social networking services were the least adequate digital reference services in Kenneth Dike Library. The assertion of Agyen-Gyasi and Atta-Oteng (2014) corroborated the finding of this study which is that adequate and relevant digital reference services is essential in all spheres of university library are needed for the development of entire library system; as its

availability or non-availability can dictate the level of queries by users. The provision of quality digital reference services available at any material moment will invariably have positive impact on the patronage of the library.

The findings from the study also showed that the respondents claimed they perceived that search options are helpful when using the service, augmenting their lecturers' note and handouts with the use of online reference services seems relevant to them, learning to use online reference services has been fascinating to them and online services help to improve their academic performance. While least perceived that they preferred using the library catalogue cards to OPAC, thought the use of online reference services is too technical for them to understand and using of online reference services is not as exciting as using printed resources on digital reference services in University of Ibadan Library. This is in consonance with Issa et.al (2011), the success of efforts at electronic reference services in the library depends not only on how well the system works, but also on how well it is received by its intended users, which is reflected in users' perception towards it and predictive of their behavior.

The findings revealed that the respondents indicated that costs charged are exorbitant, irregular power supply, inadequate number of these facilities and frequent computer breakdown were the challenges facing the respondents in using the digital reference services in Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan. Issa et al (2011) stated that the most severe inhibitor to querying of digital reference systems in the libraries was inadequate funding by the government. Other inhibitors were low man power, irregular supply of electricity, poormaintenance culture, lack of basic infrastructure and lack of spare parts.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that digital reference services which can be services rendered in electronic forms are important services that if undergraduates make use of them will be at the top of their academic excellence in the academic programme. It is expedient for the university library to provide these reference services adequately and effectively with adequate infrastructure; undergraduates' perception towards the services will be satisfactorily. The following recommendations were made that university library should endeavour to explore more of these digital reference services and diversify into different aspect of digital divide in using them to provide these services to undergraduates in University of Ibadan and university librarian should inform the university authority on provision of adequate infrastructure (information and communication technology infrastructure) that will ensure efficient provision of digital reference services in the University library.

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