

## LIBRARIAN AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (LCRM) IN KOGI STATE POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY LOKOJA

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**ABSTRACT:** This study is conducted to examine Assessment of Librarian and Customer Relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja. One hundred and forty (140) librarians (staff) and customers (students) formed the population and sample for the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected for the study were analyzed using frequency distribution tables and percentages. It was discovered that, there is high response in interacting with customers and provision of information to colleagues and students. Also the respondents have higher satisfaction with photocopying and reference services provided by librarians. The challenges encountered were shortage of computers and lack of trained and skilled manpower that resulted to dissatisfaction with services provided by the library which distorts the relationship of librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja. The study recommended that, library management of Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja should organize and offer in-house computer training programmes for librarians and provide enough computers for customers' usage.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Customer, Librarian, Relationship, Use.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is common in the developed world for libraries to conduct customer satisfaction surveys to improve the level and quality of services offered to customers. Customer's perceptions and satisfaction about library services have largely been ignored by researchers and practitioners of library and information science in developing countries (Hasnain and Mudhei, 2006). A library is an integral part of an academic and research organization, and customers are the key stakeholders who require information. The basic objective of a library or information resource centre is to fulfill customers' information needs. A number of terms like 'patron', 'client', 'user', etc. are used as a synonym to customer. However, 'customer' is a preferred term. Enhancing customer satisfaction is integral to a successful service oriented organization including libraries, because satisfied customers remain loyal, have positive feelings and recommend the service to others. It is only possible when library managers keep in contact with customers and understand their information needs. Customer's information needs and expectations are continuously changing in this age of information and communication technology. Libraries need to update their resources, facilities and services to keep pace with these advancements. Evidence from library evaluation studies has shown that customers are the key stakeholders, and their feedback is the most reliable factor in measuring the usefulness and effectiveness of a library (Shah and Parmar, 2010). Customer Relationship Management offers an integrated approach to archiving this through anticipating and satisfying user need. This broader view of customer relationships and requirements enables libraries and information services to better serve and evaluate progress. Library and information services have adapted management techniques and systems for its development. In a way technological advancements and information explosion have compelled the LIS professionals to work for user centric approach; users are able to access the information from the Internet through various channels, such as websites, blogs, and digital libraries etc. Traditionally, users go to the library for services, such as borrowing/returning books, accessing the reference directory, availing of interlibrary loans and document delivery, and browsing through relevant collections of resources.

### **1.1. Contextual Nomenclatures Assigned to Information Users**

Organizations refer to the people they serve by many different terms: clients, patients, students, readers, passengers, visitors, guests. Such terms make these individuals seem something other than customers. Librarians often prefer the terms patron or user, perhaps to avoid the implication of an exchange occurring between the library and the people using the service. Yet, both words have rather negative connotations, as points out by researchers that the word patron is associated with the act of giving support and protection, such as occurred in the renaissance between royalty and artists. The impression here is one of unequal status, of the powerful protecting the less powerful. This is not the type of relationship that puts libraries on an equal level of partnership with their communities. Further, while user accurately describes someone who uses the library, the term is quite unspecific and is widely associated with the drug culture. Special librarians and subject specialists in university libraries probably come closest to treating their users as clients. In the case of subject specialists, faculty and doctoral students who are repeat users become clients. These librarians know their clientele personally and have insights into their research and related interests. Yet, being a client does not preclude one from being treated like a customer. However, public libraries have different types of customers with different types of interests. These range from the preschooler who comes to a story hour, to the home-less man who wants to read the newspaper, to the businesswoman who needs tax regulation guidelines. All have different interests, but most want materials, information, or a place to sit and use library resources. A customer is the recipient of any product or service- provided by the organization-. That recipient might be either internal, such as a coworker in the same or another unit, or external someone in the community wanting materials or information.

Customer implies payment for a product or service that is a better reflection of what actually transpires between the library and people in the community. With this term the mythology of the “free” library is dispelled, and a more accurate metaphor for service- is substituted. In support, [Jeannette \(2011\)](#) argues that it may be time to replace the word user with customer; the word customer “reminds us of new emphasis on running higher education as a business enterprise.” Some academic librarians argue that students cannot and should not be regarded as customers. Yet students surely are potential customers when they select a school to attend. During high school, they are bombarded with advertising from colleges eager to enroll them. They are customers in the bookstore and food courts on campus, and when they purchase tickets to college sporting and entertainment events. Another interesting notion, now widely accepted, is that organizations- have internal as well as external customers. Internal customers depend on or receive work from another unit of the library. Such work can include information or reports, or processes and activities to be performed. Outsourcing may be one way to meet the needs of internal customers in a timelier manner. Public service staffs members are customers of the various units that acquire, catalog, process, and shelve materials. Whatever the term used to describe the individuals that libraries serve, the people who interact with any library service are the reason for the organization’s existence. Therefore, their needs and desires should drive the service. Although the total quality management (TQM) movement has focused attention on customer service, the idea is not new.

As [Arnold \(2012\)](#) notes, “Customer service was not a concept invented by total quality management experts. The concept dates to the nineteenth and early twentieth century’s and to practices found in retail trade and hotel management. Some librarians dislike library service being equated with “customer and commodity.” They perceive libraries and their activities to be on a higher plane than their retail or commercial counterparts, and decry the evaluation of rather basic processes, functions, and services as pedestrian and unsuitable. Indeed, one library educator has criticized suggestions for measures that reflect the percentage of students and faculty who check out library materials or the number of courses requiring use of library resources as having “no direct connection to learning, research or intellectual activities in general. Rather they deal with the handling of things. What that author fails to understand is that the library’s contributions to facilitating education, promoting a love of learning, and aiding research very much depend on how well the library “handles things.” None of these higher order conditions can occur unless the library handles things in such a way that individuals find and are able to use the materials and information they seek.

### **1.2. The Concept of Customer Relationship Management**

Customer Relationship Management, Generally known as CRM is a process or methodology or strategy used to learn more or about to develop customer stronger relationship with them. CRM is a strategy for studying, analyzing and learning about the customer’s needs and expectations. CRM methodologies, software, and usually internet capabilities that help an enterprise manage customer

relationships (Zablah, 2004) The emergence of services organizations in the corporate sector, the growing competition due to liberalization and the growing expectations of customers propelled by globalization and facilitated by IT revolution – are defining new rules of game for existing private and public enterprises in India. Telecom is one of the fast growing sectors among the services. The mobile revolution has created a new wave of interest among people to utilize telephone services. The firms offering the services are vying with each other to capture this sudden spurt in demand. They are using their technology and marketing prowess to attract new customers and simultaneously retain their existing customers, make inroads into competition and at the same time build entry barriers to competition to defend their position. Customer-driven initiatives to attract, retain and build intimate long term relationship with profitable customers, innovation and delivery of Quality Service have become the key elements in the marketing strategies. Relationship Management with the three focal points- Customer Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty – has become key success factor in achieving sustained customer patronage and profitability to the firm. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an effective tool to achieve this goal. The philosophy and practices of CRM in telecom has caught the attention of policy makers, academicians and researchers.

### **1.3. Customer Relationship Management and Libraries**

CRM can be defined without any reference to IT or particular information systems implemented, but it is the collective developments of IT and the internet that help to facilitate the realization for more effective customer personalization management. According to the IT employed and the sophistication/integration of the information system used, the CRM development stages can be divided into four stages (Stefanou, 2003).

1. The first stage: the preliminary, manual, and non-IT-assisted stage.
2. The second stage: IT is adopted to assist the predominately manual process. Spreadsheets, database systems and statistical packages can be used to analyze collected customer-related data.
3. The third stage: the IT-automated CRM stage by using a number of technologies, such as the internet and telephone/computer integration.
4. The fourth stage: the integrated CRM (i-CRM) stage by employing sophisticated CRM information systems providing highly integrated back-office, front-office and internet functions in order to pursue customer personalization, high level of services and customer satisfaction. (Bradshaw and Brash, 2000).

### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customers as they realize that they are given importance, and efforts are being made to remove the deficiencies and improve the services. Improving the quality of customer services is a matter of deep concern for the libraries of the modern age. Traditionally, the term ‘customer’s service’ refers to the functions of, and interactions within, library public services. In order to provide better library services, it is imperative to establish a good librarians and customers’ relationship. This would make information service provision easy, rewarding and continuous. Furthermore, studies have identified the significance of customers in information services business in libraries and information centers and have as such, concentrate on customer oriented studies (Wells, 2009). However, the absence of good librarian and customer relationship creates more gap between the information seeker and the information resources. The researcher observed that in Kogi State Polytechnic Library there is weak librarian-customer relationship, the consequences of which could further lead to low patronage, wastage, redundancy and many more. Therefore, in order to salvage the situation, there is need for an investigation.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

1. What type of relationship exists between librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja?
2. How satisfied are customers with services provided by librarians in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja?
3. How do librarians meet the information needs of customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja?
4. What are the challenges that distort librarians and customers relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja?

## **1.6. Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the type of relationship that exists between librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja.
2. To examine how customers satisfied with services provided by librarians in promoting relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja.
3. To discover how the information needs of the customers is met by Librarians in increasing relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja.
4. To find out the challenges encountered by librarians and customers that distorts the relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja.

Traditionally librarian is known as a person located in the library building carrying out the tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving the printed documents besides helping the readers in locating the information needed by them. In the last decades of the twentieth century this picture has rapidly changed under the influence of advances in computer and communication fields. Librarians know that customers enjoy many benefits from using library resources. When customers use the services, librarians can easily demonstrate their advantage over the Internet. We provide outstanding customer services to customers, in ways that the Internet cannot. (Omekwu A. and Charles, 2004). In "Reflections on Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library science," Leiter (2003) said that people who have reflected on these laws or who are just now reading them "will have their interest rekindled and, in the process, have their professional enthusiasm and inspiration rejuvenated as well". He continues to say that if we lose focus on our profession customer service skills, we will also lose enthusiasm, creativity, and our "professional soul". "Our professional orientation is toward service always and as we strive for (and often achieve) excellence in service, it is not surprising that we are taken for granted!"

Customer service is key to the future of academic libraries, and, therefore, the future of academic librarianship. What sets us apart from other organizations is customer service. Customers want answers. When they work with a librarian, they see librarians verify answers, check sources, and explain results. They expect the same from Google. They do not often understand, again, the higher level of customer service they receive at the library. Whereas Google retrieves results, a librarians retrieves, interprets, and organizes information. We construct, instruct, and deconstruct. Customers who go to Google and type in a search term do not expect Google to explain how the information was generated. They only expect good results. If we can impart the importance of data verification to customers, they will learn to question their results in the spirit of intellectual inquisition. Information literacy is our catch phrase, but without the inter-action between librarian and patron, the analysis might be forgotten. The customers might assume all information to be correct (Nwafor, 2005). Customer service makes our profession unique in the information age. It is our "gig." Let's promote that! In "The Visible Librarian: Asserting your value with marketing and advocacy," Siess (2003) says, "Our customers have choices in the acquisition of information and the library or information center may not be the first choice". Our potential library constituents might not know why librarians exist or what we do. Therefore they don't know why they need us. The Internet has it all, they believe, and these user groups can simply choose to completely ignore us. It's the people whose staff the library who make the library experience memorable. The marketing activity of delivering effective information while highlighting our personal qualities and professional attitudes is key to promoting ourselves." Pave the way with good customer service wrap up a transaction by giving a patron a memorable experience. The library experience should be all about the customer. Providing this level of service will promote positivity for our profession. Library service is all about what the customer needs, wants, and uses. We should develop a better understanding of this and emphasize this, instead of investing our energies trying to promote random, untargeted or not completely thought out offerings. We cannot expect customers to use what we offer if it is not in fact what they want or need, just because the services exist.

The Library environment necessitates the adoption of new roles, skills and attitudes by librarians. Wigell-Ryynänen (2008) explains that librarians are not the only professionals in this generation who have to deal with such a change. Interestingly, she cites the example of doctors who are reportedly encountering more patients claiming to have diagnosed their own health conditions using information obtained through the Internet and going to the doctors only for prescriptions to enable them to purchase medicine. She suggests, therefore, that librarians have to acknowledge that sometimes information seekers may know the best answers to their own questions in their own contexts. She adds that this may arise in circumstances where there is no right or wrong answers: true answers (in the sense that they are helpful)



are based on contextual relevance, which most of the time is best judged by the customers themselves. Thus, she explains, the Library environment creates a new demand for increased cooperation and collaboration between librarians and customers in areas which were hitherto the preserve of professional librarians. She suggests that this emerging need requires a considerable attitude change on the part of the librarians, who now must make a choice of what to let go and what to defend. There is a common misperception that all emerging information needs in the environment require a technological response. Librarians should avoid this misperception, because sometimes customers just feel a need to interact with a human being. In such cases, librarians may consider using human-based information services. One of the creative information service models which may be applicable in such Library scenarios is the 'borrow a person' concept, which emerged in Denmark in 2000, also known as the 'human library' approach. The foundation of the concept is to create a forum for library customers to meet people whose perspectives, experience or skills they are interested in. Libraries such as Toronto Public Library actually have volunteers who act as 'human books' whom customers 'borrow' and converse with in the library. In Sweden, the concept has been expanded to enable library customers to come face to face with their prejudices in the hope of altering their preconceived notions ([Agence France-Presse, 2005](#)).

[Oakleaf \(2010\)](#) explains that research and academic libraries are under great pressure to prove their worth. Therefore librarians are increasingly being required to document and articulate the value of research and of academic libraries and their contribution to institutional missions and goals. Some librarians have acknowledged that they have failed to communicate the value of their services effectively and that there is an increasing risk that most of what libraries actually do may be invisible in a virtual environment. It is becoming increasingly important for libraries to demonstrate that the services that they provide contribute substantially to the achievement of institutional goals. Librarians working in the environment will be expected to conceptualize, compile and disseminate reports to donors, sponsors, parent institutions and other stakeholders, demonstrating their worth. To accomplish this, the librarians will need to devise a creative way of demonstrating success and explains, the success of any information service transaction not to only judged by the quality of the information accessed but also by the positive or negative impact of the librarian-user interaction.

A customer is an important component in a library and information system along with documents and library staff. Right information to the right customer at the right time in right format is regarded as highly essential as the philosophy of librarianship. But it has been observed that the customer has usually been neglected and removed at the margins by none other than the service providers, the librarians. The librarians have always focused more on the other elements (document acquisition, its processing, etc) other than the user, the nerve centre of the academic library. One of the major goals of an academic library is to provide pin-pointed, exhaustive and expeditious information to users. In order to achieve this goal the library establishes a purposive contact between the user and the information embodied in the variety of documents acquired carefully in an academic library. In the communication of information cycle in an academic library, customers are generally placed as the last link or the last recipient of the information. Probably this is why they are usually described as the end customers of information. S. R. Ranganathan would have still loved to call visit the premises of library for reading books, journals, and other literature of his/her interest. The term "Reader" had been extensively since Ranganathan used introduced in it, but library has now replaced with probably a more comprehensive. There are a number of terms used as synonyms or near synonyms to "customer" These include, such terms as patron, client, user, reader, member, etc. (some of them seem to have been borrowed from the field of Business Management). According to [Kenneth \(2010\)](#), a customer may be de services at least once a year. A customer can be called a person who needs information which can be provided by specific library services. Similarly, a user is also one who derives a measurable advantage from information services.

It could be further observed that a customer is a person who visits a library for one or more of the following purposes:

1. to browse through a collection of the latest arrivals in the library, current journals, and similar other documents;
2. to seek a particular document for consultation or study in the library or borrow the same;
3. to obtain the current references on a specific topic or bibliography of references over a period;
4. to obtain factual information on a topic, event, activity, etc., through reference sources;
5. to obtain a photocopy of a journal article, a conference paper or a technical report; and so on.

Classification of library customers as suggested by [Werner \(2012\)](#) on the basis of their approach to information in libraries is given below:

**Potential customer:** It is the one who needs information but may not be able to express herself/himself properly, hence it can be provided by specific library services oriented to her/him.

**Expected customer:** It is the one who is known to have the intention of using certain information services.

**Actual customer:** It is the one who has actually used an information service regardless of whether he/she has derived any advantage from it or not.

**Beneficiary customer:** It is the one who derives a measurable advantage from the information services provided by the library [Werner \(2012\)](#) however sees that, the academic library also has the following types of customers visiting its premises regularly, and seeks more demanding information services.

**Students:** They constitute the largest number of academic library users, be it a school or college or a university library. In the case of a university or an institution of higher learning, the student community comprises of post-graduate and M. Phil. Students as well as research scholars. Most of them usually seek access to text books as suggested by teachers or recommended in their curricula. They can also have access to some advanced books on their subject of interest. Besides, once in the library, they can also read general knowledge books, reference sources, and other literature which may enhance their reading interests such as fiction books or biographical accounts, etc. The goal of an academic library rests in preparing the students for the knowledge-based society facing new challenges

**Teachers:** This is another very important type of academic library users. They constitute the second largest group in terms of numbers to be expected in the library. As teachers, like students, are concerned with education, they may be interested in imparting values, attitudes, embodying knowledge, judgment, understanding and wisdom. Thus they need almost every type of information that concerns educational and research pursuits. They are also engaged in research activities in order to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of literature on the subject of their interest, hence require micro level information from the library. This will help create a vibrant community of teachers with intellectual freedom and optimism on the university campus.

**Research Scholars:** These are those customers who have crossed the formal student life of education and after earning post-graduate degrees in their respective subjects, are now pursuing research to make some new contribution to extend the boundaries of knowledge in a particular subject. They would test the available information and knowledge on a given subject, verify, and if found valid, would formalize the same for further research. Research scholars, in their pursuit of new knowledge would require a variety of scientific, social, political, cultural, linguistic, etc information. Academic libraries may monitor these developments and prepare themselves to meet the practical challenges arising from them.

**Administrative Staff:** They are the supporting staff working for the academic institution. Their number is quite large in a university environment, but not as large in a school or a college set up. They usually carry out the jobs which are usually done in any office of an institution. Those who prefer to visit the library of their institution may be looking for some light reading such as fiction, biographies, local history, inspirational readings, informational material, and so on. Some of them, who intend to improve their educational qualifications, may also look for some kind of text books to help them learn more about the subject of their study. Further, some of the administrative staff members may prefer to improve their competencies and skills in a particular trade and find useful information for the purpose.

**Management Committee Members:** These are other stakeholders in the library of their institution. They are required to solve various problems and take appropriate decisions in the interest of the institution. They take decisions at different levels hence require information from the library considered useful from every point of view.

## **1.7. Type of Relationship exists between Librarians and Customers**

Many sources have been used as a base for understanding the importance of creating a relationship between librarians and library customers. This includes an overview on research about librarians' views according their profession and the library as well as library customers' views on librarians and the library. Furthermore we will present information about creating a professional identity and different roles of a librarian in relation to the development of the library. [Niyonsenga and Bizimana \(2006\)](#) opined that, the evaluation was indeed brought about for more than ten years ago, but we believe it is still relevant for our survey. The researchers investigated how library customers considered library services being performed. They asked students, lecturers and researchers about their opinion. The result showed that most customers were dissatisfied with services provided by the library. However it was also shown that the library was frequently used, but this was thought to be a consequence of students using the library as a reading room.

Those areas where customers wanted a better performance were within the reference desk, where more trained personnel was requested. The customers were not satisfied with the reference service. The customers also wanted more recent periodicals. Furthermore there were not enough copy machines, no well function circulation service and no efficient schedules for personnel (Niyonsenga and Bizimana, 2006). Customer satisfaction differed between lecturers/researchers and students, where lecturers and researchers were less dissatisfied than the students. This might be affected by the fact that lecturers and researchers had other privileges provided by librarians and therefore expected more from the start. Most customers needed library personnel to borrow books and used the library to search for documents in the card catalogue on their own. Despite this, these services were not fully used according to circulation statistics. These were the main aspects that Niyonsenga and Bizimana (2006) revealed in their paper. There were no suggestions regarding neither how to improve library services nor how to solve other issues that customers criticized.

Aparac-Jelusic. and Petr. (2002) investigate librarians' self-image and library customers' opinions about librarians, the library as well as library services. This constitutes research that is unanimous with our study according to our purpose. Aparac-Jelusic & Petr studied librarians' identity and reception of the library and librarians in society in order to improve services provided by the library. They articulate, "every profession has the urge to question and investigate its own identity as well as its reception by the society". Aparac-Jelusic. and Petr. (2002) study is conducted in Croatia and therefore involves similarities as well as differences to our study. They relate their examination to librarianship in Western developed countries. The similarities are pointed out in their result and illustrate that images of libraries and librarians are not as good as in other developed countries. They claim that investigated libraries were not ready to be institutions in society providing services where people during and after education can retrieve information. Librarians program should contain a profile for the library and a description to show how the library should be presented. The purpose of this is to produce an identity that unifies personnel and is a base on how they should obtain their daily work and how to appear towards customers. Furthermore the program will help librarians to work towards a common goal within the same organization. Otherwise it could be possible that different departments in the same organization work against each other, even though it is not on purpose. Another advantage with a developed program is that it creates a common base for the personnel how they can work to make their services visible for customers. The program should be well implemented among the personnel in all different departments, even if the departments are apart both psychically and according to what they do.

Söderberg (2006) also focus on the importance of creating an identity. Her article declares that librarians' view on their own profession needs to be close to library customers' views on them and the libraries. Furthermore she claims that: "the one who does not know who she is cannot show to others who she is". Even though Söderberg not explicitly speaks about a program as Kirby does, she also declares the significance of a common goal for library activities. Goals and how you can reach them should be well implemented with the personnel. According to Omekwu W. (2006), a current view on librarian's role is that they support customers when they are searching for information. The task could seem unobtainable for customers, because the tremendous amounts of existing information. It is here that the librarian is helpful by providing expertise within areas on how to search, and also comes to a conclusion regarding what the user needs instead of only finding what the user wants. Providing good service towards customers is also one of the best ways of promoting the library. When a user visits the library they should be provided with more than they seek Söderberg (2006). Librarians' practice of their knowledge sends out signals to library customers and creates reputation, trust, confidence and ethical solidity. Negative attitudes of librarians affect how librarians behave even more important, how they are perceived by library customers. As a customer you should be able to get information that is required for creation of knowledge. This is still unarticulated in many African libraries. The library customers' image of the library as well as of the librarians is created every time a user comes in contact with: "any aspect of the organization [library] and gets an impression of the quality of its service". Segal describes seven sins and working methods towards a good quality service. The seven sins are: One: apathy; when the librarian does not show any interest for customers' needs. Two: brush-off; the person at the desk is busy filing and therefore does not have time for serving the user. Three: coldness; unfriendliness towards the user while providing service. Four: condescension; the librarian possesses a superior attitude, asking: have you looked in the card catalogue? Five: robotics; the librarian is acting more like a robot than a human. Six: rule book; unbending to the laws. Seven: run-around; sending the user to several possible places or persons without really knowing if it is the right place or person. Segal underlines that it is the lowest educated and paid members of the library staff that have most of the contact with customers and who tend to serve at the reference desk.

Furthermore it is of importance to have knowledge and contacts with the outside world and be aware of ongoing processes. With a developed market strategy it is easier to act in a proper way during times of change. This since a strengthened picture of the identity creates a solid base for accurate decisions (Söderberg, 2006). For a library to be able to work efficiently the library's view on itself should be as close as possible to the expectations and views on its customers. Nawe (2006) declares that it is essential for libraries to promote their services to be able to create a link between the library and its customers. In order to do that, the librarians need to collect information about their customers to be able to develop their services and to be able to promote them more dynamically. (Avafia. and Kwami, 2005) states that the librarians' role is to achieve a "dynamic fusion between information and library customers". Avafia writes in the context of the Anglophone African countries. To be able to create this kind of fusion the library has to be equipped with books, periodicals and other material and have these organized in a way that makes them easy to retrieve. To an extent the library ought to provide tools for the customers' need in order to educate themselves and at the same time support lifelong learning.

### **1.8. Librarians and Customers Satisfaction with services provided**

Customers satisfaction with academic library performance was conducted by Aghojare and Ferdinand. (2015) the study revealed that customers were satisfied with the photocopying and scanning services, current books on shelves, access to electronic information resources such as books and journals, complete relevant journals, friendly customers card catalogue to locate resources, longer hours to locate resource via the internet and the opening hours were suitable. Ikolo (2015) examined user's satisfaction with library services: a case study of Delta State University Library. It was discovered that library customers were not satisfied with reference services, inter-library loan services, electronic database services, photocopying services, bindery services, weekend library services, book lending services, CD-ROM services and indexing and abstracting services. It was also seen that library customers were not satisfied with the existing textbooks available on shelves, internet services, newspapers/ magazines, journals and the inability to borrow books from the library. But they were satisfied with working hours of the library, thesis/ dissertation services. Despite the availability of studies on customers satisfaction with library resources and services in university libraries. However, no study was found to have been conducted on user's satisfaction with library resources and services in the College of Health Sciences Library, Niger Delta University. It is in the light of the above that this study tends to fill this gap in knowledge. A library plays an important role in providing information services and resources to assist customers in their studies and research activities. It possesses information in the form of books, periodicals, audio-visual and electronic media. Customers are very important. Libraries exist because of them. They should therefore be satisfied with the service they receive. Zeithalm and Bitmer (2000) define satisfaction as "the customers' evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations. Failure to meet needs and expectations is assumed to result in dissatisfaction with the product or service". From this explanation we derive the notion that for satisfaction to result there has to be a need from the user and that need has to be fulfilled. If it is fulfilled the user becomes satisfied and the library as a provider achieves its mission if it succeeds in doing this regularly for most users.

Satisfaction may lead to customers using the services of the library over and over again and even recommending it to others. Humans always communicate experiences, whether good or bad, meaning that if they also receive a bad service they might also tell others about it. "Customers' satisfaction is considered as a reliable criterion for determining library effectiveness." (Thong. and Yap., 2006). It is therefore very important for the library to keep their customers satisfied. It is not only a reliable criterion; it is also perhaps the most vital one. Thakuria (2007) describes different factors which contribute to customers' satisfaction: Availability of up-to-date information brings about satisfaction in the users, accessing the facility and assistance. The library should organize its facilities to be visible to the customers. The library services and resources should be easily accessible. The library staff should be very courteous and friendly in their engagements with the users. The appearance of a library, its facilities, collection, staff and services should be attractive and pleasant. This explains the importance of the library's appearance and its contribution towards user satisfaction. The customers should find the environment user friendly and comfortable.

According to Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) the primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's mission and goals. In addition, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency to support the institution curriculum. As a result of this, university libraries are often considered



as the most important resource centre of an academic institution. According to [Forrest \(2009\)](#), the library's success should be measured not in terms of what it has (inputs) but of what it does, the activities it supports, its outputs for example circulation transactions, reference questions answered, classes taught and students enrolled. This also explains the significant role of the library staff, as they have to treat the customers as important guests and in that way they will contribute to their satisfaction. "The library's success is measured by what happens as a result of those activities and encounters, the impacts or outcomes (for example fostering student learning success, supporting faculty productivity, enhancing institutional reputation). If we can frame experiences for our students, faculty and visitors – our guests – that linger in their memory long after they have left our libraries and our campuses, we will continue to remain central to the academic enterprise" ([Forrest, 2009](#)).

## **1.9. Information Needs of the Customers**

Libraries and librarians/library staff are to make available adequate resources and services to library users. Hence, understanding students' information needs is essential to the management of libraries. [Salaam and Fatokun \(2010\)](#) submit that libraries acquire materials primarily to make the materials available and accessible to users. Therefore, the utility of these materials can be determined by carrying out a survey on customers' needs and the success in meeting them. Library's effectiveness is measured by how well the library meets the needs of its users, relative to the library goals and objectives. [Popoola \(2008\)](#) submits that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among students and faculty. [Nnadozie \(2005\)](#) recommends adequate funding and prudent management of available funds. He emphasized that, "increased funding would enable libraries management to implement motivational schemes for staff, purchase current publications, acquire multimedia materials, procure other infrastructure, and working tools." [Feather and Sturges \(2007\)](#) define information needs as "the expression used in a wide range of ways to refer to any context where information is sought and it represents all forms of information seeking". ([Case, 2002](#)) states that an information need is the recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal. Such an identified information need may lead to information seeking and the formulation of requests for information ([Ingwersen and Järvelin, 2005](#)). People need accessible information in order to solve problems in their everyday lives. This information provides them with a sense of security, achievement and control. [Feather and Sturges \(2007\)](#) define information needs as "the e to refer to any context where information is sought and it represents all forms of information seeking". Research into the information needs of disadvantaged communities in South Africa undertaken by [Fairer-Wessels \(2000\)](#), attempted to isolate the particular information needs of urban black women, based on a survey conducted in Mamelodi. Her research indicated that health, money and education were the three main problem areas for this group ([Fairer-Wessels, 2000](#)). Writing in the late 1980's [Bekker and Lateg](#) the general information needs of residents living in the black urban areas. This remains true today, as there have been little or no studies identifying the information needs and information seeking behaviour of residents living in non-white urban areas, signifying a significant gap in the literature.

They identified "articulated" problems associated delivery process and transport as the three areas in which they experienced the most difficulty. Other issues included access to health services, water, fuel, sanitation and schooling. They also emphasized that priorities in one specific community may not be priorities in another, and the information needs of each community should be assessed individually. [Bekker and Lategan \(2008\)](#) the areas in which problems might be experienced by a community, it is essential that each community decides for itself what its priority areas are. This point of view is reason why the present study is so vital, and although there have been various studies regarding disadvantaged communities, each community is unique and has their own information needs. Study on the informant outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, data was gathered by means of a house-to-house survey. The findings of the study concluded that the majority of the participants could not articulate their information needs. Other instances examined the information needs of urban residents in California. It involved 1040 interviewees of 12 years and older. Her findings indicate that there were many information needs and that a number of them are not being met. It also found that well well-off societies are differentiated from poor ones in terms of the situations they have to deal with and the way in which they give meaning to these situations. The conclusion of the study was that libraries must focus more on human dimensions of information use and less on demographics as a means of organizing their services and getting to know their customers. Another conclusion is that information needs depend on a specific situation and time. Therefore, needs must be evaluated on a continuous basis.

### **1.10. Challenges to Librarians and Customers Relationship**

New tools of information technology have absolutely changed the role and responsibilities of librarians. A number of studies have been conducted to explore the challenges faced by librarians. Given section reviews the studies conducted at International level in general and particularly in developing countries to investigate the problems confronted by the librarians. Libraries depend on ethical principles more than any other institution because library services are essentially human-oriented, stressing the facts that librarians must follow the intellectual freedom principle and have a moral responsibility to the customers.

The trends and issues in preparing new era librarians and information professionals was reported that the following trends are essential for new era librarians' i.e. a vision towards information and knowledge rich society, globalization of information, integrated and widespread ICT applications, growth of electronic/internet resources, role of digital/electronic/virtual library, access role replace custodial role, strategic alliances, partnership and collaborations, librarians need new management knowledge and skills, specialized knowledge & skills in library and information management, trend to develop digital contents to facilitate access. It was concluded that new era librarian will become a guardian of digital information and digital librarians with newly acquired skills can play a meaningful and leading role in the networked information society of the millennium. A studied of the role of a digital librarian in the management of digital information systems, stressed that the multimedia nature of the next generation of digital libraries requires the digital librarians (DL) to be essentially a type of specialist librarian who has to manage and organize the digital library, handle the specialized tasks of massive digitization, storage, access, digital knowledge mining, digital reference services, electronic information services, search co- ordination, and manage the archive and its access. He should be well-versed in markup languages, cataloguing, metadata, multimedia indexing and database technology, user interface design, programming, and Web technology.

Library and information science education in developing countries suffer from lack of financial support by governments, information literacy is vital skill set for citizens of information societies. Researchers suggested that the librarian must support learning at all levels. They are needed to pass skill set of technological and media literacy's to citizens at all levels of society for economic, social and personal empowerment. Library education in Bangladesh was found that majority of the institutions in Bangladesh do not have well-equipped computer labs or sufficient numbers of computers for students. A sufficient number of classification and cataloguing tools (DDC, LC, Sears list of subject headings for practical were not present. Many institutions either have no library or inadequate collection of textbooks. Professional's status was also found very low, low pay scale and limited opportunities for promotion. In Sri Lanka, there were challenges encountered by the librarians of developing world in providing library services to support open and distance learning. It was concluded that the attitude of the government towards libraries in Sri Lanka has been changed during the last few years and the government has made several approaches to develop the libraries particularly University libraries. Government also identified the capacity of distance education to accommodate the huge number of A/L completers who cannot gain admission to learn. It was found very important for the OUSL to boost the process of achieving its development goals to upgrade the quality and maintain the standards of distance education in Sri Lanka.

This study views librarians as a person located in the library building carrying out the tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving the printed documents besides helping the readers in locating the information needed by them. A customer is an important component in a library and information system along with documents and library staff. Right information to the right customer at the right time in right format is regarded as highly essential as the philosophy of librarianship. On the types of relationship between librarians and customers, it is discovered librarians' practice of their knowledge is how they send out signals to library customers and create reputation, trust, confidence and ethical solidity. It affects how librarians behave and as even more important, how they are perceived by library customers. The customers satisfaction with services provided by librarians, study revealed that customers were satisfied with the photocopying and scanning services, current books on shelves, access to electronic information resources such as books and journals, complete relevant journals, friendly customers card catalogue to locate resources, longer hours to locate resource via the internet and the opening hours were suitable. On the information needs of the customers, study submits that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among students and faculty. Also, recommends adequate funding and prudent management of available funds. However, the challenges distort librarians and customers' relationship in providing library services to support open and distance learning.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey research method was adopted for the study. Statistics Canada (2003) stated that survey is any activity that collects information in an organized and methodical manner about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures, and compiles such information into a useful summary form. The reason for the adoption of this method was that survey method enabled the researcher to collect data quantitatively in order to measure naturally occurring status of Assessing Librarians and Customers relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. The population of the study consists of 55 librarians (staff) and 85 customers (students) in Kogi State Polytechnic Lokoja. Sampling producer refers to the method used in selecting respondent from a given population. Bernard (2012) asserts that if a population of a study is less than two hundred (200) the entire population should be used for the study. The study will be restricted to library staff (Librarians) and students (customers) of Kogi State Polytechnic Library, Lokoja. The instrument used for collecting data in this research was questionnaire. The questionnaire was on 4 point Linker method of; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). A total of 140 questionnaires were administered and 130 were successfully returned. The copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents were collected by the researcher. The statistical techniques used in the analysis and interpretation of data were descriptive statistical techniques, employing table of frequency counts and percentages.

## 3. RESPONSE RATE

In carrying out this research a total of One hundred and forty (140) copies of questionnaire were administered and one hundred and thirty (130) were completed and returned. This gave a 92.9% response rate. The data collected give room for statistical analysis using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distribution tables.

**Table 1.** Type of relationship that exists between librarians and customers

Types of Relationship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Interacting with Customers	35	27
Assistance in Research activities	10	8
Work activities	15	12
Teaching on searching materials	20	15
Provision of information to colleagues and students	30	23
Developing teaching materials for academic programme	20	15
Total	130	100

**Source:** Field work

**Table 1** elucidates type of relationship that exists between librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. The table shows that there is high response of interacting with customers 35(27%) followed by provision of information to colleagues and students 30(23%), while 10(8%) and 15(12%) response for assistance in research activities and work activities respectively. From this table there is high response in interacting with customers and provision of information to colleagues and students type of relationship that exists between librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja.

**Table 2.** Customers Satisfaction with Services Provided by Librarians

S/N	Services provided by Librarians	VGS	GS	S	NS
a.	Reference services	55(42%)	35(42%)	30(23%)	10(8%)
b.	Inter-library loan services	10(8)	20(15%)	25(19%)	75(58%)
c.	Electronic database services	5(4%)	18(14%)	20(15%)	87(67%)
d.	Photocopying services	60(46%)	30(23%)	25(19%)	15(12%)
e.	Bindery services	15(12%)	20(15%)	27(21%)	68(52%)
f.	Weekend library services	10(8%)	17(13%)	25(19%)	78(60%)
g.	CD- ROM services	5(4%)	10(8%)	35(27%)	80(61%)
h.	Book lending services	20(15%)	30(23%)	35(27%)	45(35%)
i.	Indexing and abstracting services.	10(8%)	25(19%)	40(31%)	55(42%)

**Source:** Field work

According to the findings in Table 2, reported that 60(46%) of the respondents very great satisfied with photocopying service provided by librarians while 15(12%) of the respondents not satisfied with photocopying service provided by librarians. 55(42%) of the respondents very great satisfied with reference service provided by librarians while 10(8%) of the respondents not satisfied with reference service provided by librarians. 10(8%) of the respondents very great satisfied with inter-library loan service provided by librarians while 75(58%) not satisfied with inter-library loan service provided by librarians. From the foregoing discussion, the respondents have higher satisfaction with photocopying and references services provided by librarians than other services provided by librarians.

**Table 3.** Information Needs of the Customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja

Information needs of the customers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Periodicals/journals	5	3%
Books/monographs	40	31%
Conference Proceedings	10	8%
Government publications	2	2%
Feasibility reports	3	2%
Bulletin/Newsletters	10	8%
Newspapers/magazines	12	9%
Trade literature	1	1%
Gazette	6	5%
Radio/Television	8	6%
Internet/mail services	10	8%
On-line Databases/OPAC	1	1%
Telephone services	2	2%
Inter-lib. Loan services	5	3%
Lending services	10	8%
Reprographic services	5	3%
Total	130	100

**Source:** Field work

The analysis of table 3 reveals how librarians satisfy the information needs of customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. 40 (31%) of the respondents are on the opinion that librarians of the institution provide books/monographs in meeting information needs of the customers and 10(8%) of the respondents agree that librarians of the institution provide conference proceeding, bulletin, newspaper, and lending service in meeting information needs of the customers. While 1(1%) of the respondents says librarians of the institution provide trade literature in meeting information needs of the customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. From the above discussion, most of the respondents agree that librarians of the institution provide books/monographs in meeting information needs of the customers.

**Table 4.** Challenges to Distortion of Librarians and Customers Relationship

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
1	Shortage of computers	65(50%)	52(40%)	8(6%)	5(4%)
2	Budgetary constraints	60(46%)	45(34%)	15(12%)	10(8%)
3	Lack of awareness programs	55(42%)	35(27%)	25(19%)	15(12%)
4	Inadequate space	50 (38%)	42(32%)	28(22%)	10(8%)
5	Inadequate library materials	65(50%)	50(38%)	10(8%)	5(4%)
6	Lack of trained and skilled manpower	50(38%)	45(34%)	20(15%)	15(12%)
7	Lack of appropriate government policy	55(42%)	40(31%)	28(22%)	7(5%)
8	Lack of information literacy	60(46%)	43(33%)	18(13%)	9(7%)

**Source:** Field work

The table 4 above shows that 65 (50%) of the respondents strongly agree that shortage of computers are challenges encountered by librarians and customers that distorts the relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja and 5(4%) of the respondents strongly disagree with the opinion. Moreso, 50(38%) of the respondents strongly agree that lack of trained and skilled manpower are challenges encountered by librarians and customers that distorts the relationship while 15(12%) of the respondents strongly disagree with it. Summary from above table reveals that most respondents of the institution encountered challenges of shortage of computers that distorts the relationship of librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja.



The purpose of this study was to investigate Assessment of Librarians and Customers Relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. The study tried to find out what type of relationship exists between librarians and customers, how satisfied are customers with services provided by librarians, how do librarians meet the information needs of customers and what are the challenges distort librarians and customers relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. In order to achieve the objectives of the study five research questions were develop using a survey research method to conduct the study. The sample size was made up of the library staff (Librarians) and students (customers) of Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja. A total of 130 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. Questionnaire served as an instrument used for data collection in this study. The data collected for the study were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings from the descriptive analysis were presented in tables, showing frequencies of responses and their corresponding percentages.

## 5. FINDINGS

Based on the data collected and analyzed for this study, the following are the major findings:

1. The study discovered that, there is high response in interacting with customers and librarians in provision of information in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja.
2. The finding from study revealed that the respondents have higher satisfaction with photocopying and references services provided by librarians than other services provided by librarians.
3. The research study reveals that most of the respondents agree librarians of the Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja provide books/monographs in meeting information needs of the customers.
4. The finding from the study shows that most respondents in the institution encountered challenges of shortage of computers and lack of trained and skilled manpower that resulted to most customers dissatisfaction with services provided by the library that distorts the relationship of librarians and customers in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Assessment of Librarian and Customer relationship in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja investigated how library customers considered library services rendered. The results showed that most customers were dissatisfied with services provided by the library. However it was also shown that the library was frequently used, but this was thought to be a consequence of students using the library as a reading room. It is concluded that most of the professional's librarians do not possess high level of computer skill and their use of computer and technology is still maturing.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Efforts should be geared towards areas where customers wanted a better performance within the library's sections such as circulation section, reference section and serial section where more trained personnel was requested in order to improve the type of relationship exist.
2. The customers should be provided with the electronic database and reference service. The customers also wanted more recent periodicals.
3. It is recommended that library management of Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja should organize and offer in- house computer training programmes for librarians and enough computers should be provided in this regard.
4. The study recommended that more attention and funds should be provided for training and procurement of ICT infrastructure in Kogi State Polytechnic Library Lokoja.

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