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**FUNCTIONS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN RENDERING
REFERENCE SERVICES IN TWO UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the functions of interpersonal communication in rendering reference services in two university libraries in Nigeria. They are the federal University of Technology Minna, and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai. The aim was to find out the extent to which interpersonal communication affect provision of reference services in the two university libraries. The survey research method was employed. Questionnaires are the main instrument for data collection. Face to face interview was used to verify the information given in the questionnaire. Frequency, tables, percentages is the main statistical tools used for data analysis. Results of the analysis showed that services enhanced facilities in the reference section of the libraries were effectively communicated to users, teaching people how to find information and getting and getting users information needs satisfied thereby keeping the user abreast of the current information materials available in the libraries. *It was also discovered that the communication skills of the reference librarians were inadequate due to language barrier, stereotype, semantic barrier, and the reference library users possess inadequate communication skill. Some recommendations were proffered to enhance the communication skills of reference librarians and their patrons for better service delivery. Some of these recommendations are: the study recommends that reference librarians must demonstrate a high level of dexterity in interpersonal communication; the study also recommends that more reference staff should be employed by the universities*

Introduction

Communication plays a crucial role in functioning of reference unit effectively in the library. Consciously it involves sharing of ideas, feelings, thoughts, and many other things that humans share. In fact, what the reference unit requires mainly is communication. It is an inseparable, essential and continuous process just like the circulatory system in the human body. Ojomo (2004) defined communication as the process of sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts and

messages with others. Rothwell (2001) sees communication as a transactional process of sharing meaning with others. Kemoni (2004) citing Ojiambo avers that communication involves the giving and receiving of information, signals or messages by talk, gestures and writing. As a result, communication effectiveness becomes a very vital factor in determining the efficiency with which reference unit performs as a whole.

When two or more people are in the same place and are aware of each other being there, then communication is said to be taking place, no matter how subtle or inadvertent it may be. Even without vocalizations, an onlooker may be using prompts of stance (posture), facial manifestation, and garb to impact other's role, poignant situation, persona or intents.

The basic process of communication initiates when a fact is perceived or an idea devised by a single person. That person (the sender) chooses to decipher the perception into a message, and subsequently conveys the message through some communication medium to another person (the receiver). The receiver then must construe the message and supply feedback to the sender indicating that the message has been comprehended and fitting action taken.

Interpersonal communication involves sending and receiving of messages between two or more people. DeFleur and Dennis (2002) conceptualized interpersonal communication as a process of using language and non-verbal cues to send and receive messages between individuals that are intended to arouse particular kinds of meaning. Rothwell (2004) posits that interpersonal

communication is dyadic communication; according to him, it is a transaction that takes place between two people.

Interpersonal communication is the procedure by which people swap information, feelings and impart through verbal and non-verbal messages. This definition underlines the crucial fact that interpersonal communication is not only apprehensive about 'what' is pronounced, i.e., the language employed, but 'how' it is pronounced, e.g., the nonverbal messages sent, such as tone of voice and facial expressions. Interpersonal communication can be seen as the process of interacting simultaneously with another and mutually influencing each other, usually for the purpose of managing relationships

A references service is referred to as one of the most professional aspects of the librarian's responsibilities, which every prospective librarian must properly grasp. It is also defined as a personal assistance provided to users in the pursuit of information. According to Olalokun (2001) it is a major characteristic of reference service in Nigerian libraries to be part of a whole library organization, except where the specific function of the organization concerned is mainly referral. Reference departments serve as the link between the library and its immediate clientele be they public, community or groups of specialist users. The main aim is to provide a wide range of services and facilities, which will enhance exploitative use of the literature through the concepts of assistance and self-direction

Reference librarians are the image makers for the library and the link between the library, library resources, and library patrons. They are the individuals to ask when a patron does not know who to ask, or need to look for specific information and do not know where to begin. The reference librarian interprets information sources to library users and how to explore them.

The growth of learning today according to Katz (2002) no longer can be termed gradual. He noted that finding specific bits of data among the mass of undifferentiated information is a great challenge and the reference librarian is in the best position to meet this challenge, relationships thrive on the maintenance of a good communication link between the parties involved, the reference librarian is expected to be a good communicator who links library users to the resources of their choice.

Statement of the Problem

Different types of learning resources are acquired by the two Academics libraries in Niger State to meet the users' needs. Among this are reference sources, reference services are also provided to help users, it is expected that users will use these resources maximally. Reference librarian are the individuals to ask when a patron does not know who to ask or need to look for a specific information and do not know where to begin, Most reference library users lack the communication skill, Lack of self-confidence from the reference librarian. It was this

undesirable situation that necessitated this study. The study aims to investigate the duties performed by the reference librarian, also to determine the impact of interpersonal communication, what stop user from the use of reference section, what role does interpersonal communication plays, It was against this background that the researchers wanted to find out what role does interpersonal communication plays in this two universities (Federal University of Technology minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Library Lapai), also to figure users perceptions towards these services, and finds out ways to eradicate such problems.

Objectives of the study

This study aims at examining the role of interpersonal communication in effective reference services in two academic libraries in Niger state. The specific objectives include the following

- I. To identify barriers to effective interpersonal communication
- II. To determine the impact of interpersonal communication in reference services.
- III. To examine the duties performed by the reference librarian.
- IV. To determine the reference services provided by the library
- V. To identified ways of improving communication effectiveness

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- I. What are the barriers to effective interpersonal communication?
- II. What duties are performed by the reference librarian?
- III. What are the impacts of interpersonal communication in reference services?
- IV. What are the reference services provided by the library?
- V. What are the ways of improving communication effectiveness?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will help to create knowledge of the role interpersonal communication plays in reference section of the academic library, providing information that will help the management and users of the academic library, understand how communication could be harnessed for high productivity through creating helpful organization and specifically the finding would provide the two academics libraries with relevant information and increase their knowledge to improve on the management of their reference services they provided.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature is reviewed under the following sub headings:

- Communication,
- Interpersonalmmunication,
- Library reference desk,
- Various duties perform by the reference librarian and the impact of interpersonal communication,
- Barriers to effective interpersonal communication,
- Improving communication effectiveness.

Communication

Communication plays a crucial role in functioning of reference unit effectively in the library. Consciously it involves sharing of ideas, feelings, thoughts, and many other things that humans share. In fact, what the reference unit requires mainly is communication. It is an inseparable, essential and continuous process just like the circulatory system in the human body. Ojomo (2004) defined communication as the process of sharing ideas, feelings, thoughts and messages with others. When two or more people are in the same place and are aware of each other being there, then communication is said to be taking place, no matter how subtle or

inadvertent it may be. Even without vocalizations, an onlooker may be using prompts of stance (posture), facial manifestation, and garb to impact other's role, poignant situation, persona or intents. Rothwell (2001) sees communication as a transactional process of sharing meaning with others.

Two common elements in every communication exchange are the sender and the receiver. The *sender* initiates the communication. In a school, the sender is a person who has a need or desire to convey an idea or concept to others. The *receiver* is the individual to whom the message is sent. The sender *encodes* the idea by selecting words, symbols, or gestures with which to compose a message. The *message* is the outcome of the encoding, which takes the form of verbal, nonverbal, or written language. The message is sent through a *medium* or channel, which is the carrier of the communication. The medium can be a face-to-face conversation, telephone call, e-mail, or written report. The receiver *decodes* the received message into meaningful information. *Noise* is anything that distorts the message. Different perceptions of the message, language barriers, interruptions, emotions, and attitudes are examples of noise. Finally, *feedback* occurs when the receiver responds to the sender's message and returns the message to the sender. Feedback allows the sender to determine whether the message has been received and understood through a good and appropriate MEDIUM for the communication to be effective and fully understood by the two parties involved

The elements in the communication process determine the quality of communication. A problem in any one of these elements can reduce communication effectiveness (Keyton, 2011). For example, information must be encoded into a message that can be understood as the sender

intended. Selection of the particular medium for transmitting the message can be critical, because there are many choices. Semantic barriers come from differences in language, education, and culture. Obviously if the sender is speaking in English and the receiver doesn't understand

English, there's a problem. But even if the sender and receiver speak English, they may not speak the same dialect. The words they use may not mean the same thing. Kemoni (2004) citing Ojiambo avers that communication involves the giving and receiving of information, signals or messages by talk, gestures and writing. As a result, communication effectiveness becomes a very vital factor in determining the efficiency with which reference unit performs as a whole.

The basic process of communication initiates when a fact is perceived or an idea devised by a single person. That person (the sender) chooses to decipher the perception into a message, and subsequently conveys the message through some communication medium to another person (the receiver). The receiver then must construe the message and supply feedback to the sender indicating that the message has been comprehended and fitting action taken. Also Communication means a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing, or behavior. In communication process, a sender (encoder) encodes a message and then using a medium/channel sends it to the receiver (decoder)

who decodes the message and after processing information, sends back appropriate feedback/reply using a medium/channel.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication is usually defined by communication scholars in numerous ways, usually describing participants who are dependent upon one another. It can involve one on one conversations or individuals interacting with many people within a society.

It helps us understand how and why people behave and communicate in different ways to construct and negotiate a social reality. While interpersonal communication can be defined as its own area of study, it also occurs within other contexts like groups and organizations. Interpersonal communication is the process that we use to communicate our ideas, thoughts, and feelings to another person. Our interpersonal communication skills are learned behaviors that can be improved through knowledge, practice, feedback, and reflection.

Interpersonal communication involves sending and receiving of messages between two or more people. DeFleur and Dennis (2002) conceptualized interpersonal communication as a process of using language and non-verbal cues to send and receive messages between individuals that are intended to arouse particular kinds of meaning. Rothwell (2004) posits that interpersonal communication is dyadic communication; according to him, it is a transaction that takes place between two people.

Interpersonal communication is the procedure by which people swap information, feelings and impart through verbal and non-verbal messages. This definition underlines the

crucial fact that interpersonal communication is not only apprehensive about ‘what’ is pronounced, i.e., the language employed, but ‘how’ it is pronounced, e.g., the nonverbal

messages sent, such as tone of voice and facial expressions. Interpersonal communication can be seen as the process of interacting simultaneously with another and mutually influencing each other, usually for the purpose of managing relationships, In other words interpersonal communication includes message sending and message reception between two or more individuals. This can include all aspects of communication such as listening, persuading, asserting, nonverbal communication, and more. A primary concept of interpersonal communication looks at communicative acts when there are few individuals involved unlike areas of communication such as group interaction, where there may be a large number of individuals involved in a communicative act.

Individuals also communicate on different interpersonal levels depending on who they are engaging in communication with. For example, if an individual is communicating with a family member, that communication will more than likely differ from the type of communication used when engaged in a communicative act with a friend or significant other.

Overall, interpersonal communication can be conducted using both direct and indirect mediums of communication such as face-to-face interaction, as well as computer-mediated-communication. Successful interpersonal communication assumes that both the message senders and the message receivers will interpret and understand the messages being sent on a level of understood meanings and implications. Interpersonal communication is real-time, face-to-face or voice-to-voice conversation that allows immediate feedback. Interpersonal communication plays

a large role in any manager's daily activities, but especially in organizations that use teams. Bateman and Zeithaml (1990) described some of the characteristics of supervisors who receive high marks from their employees. First, these managers tend to communicate more than other managers, explaining the reasons behind decisions and providing advance warning of changes. Second, they tend to employ an egalitarian rather than controlling style when communicating with subordinates, asking for instead of demanding their compliance. Third, they tend to take others' needs and feelings into account when communicating. Finally, most effective managers are good listeners, giving careful consideration to employee concerns and taking the time to respond to questions and complaints.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication plays an important part in the success of reference encounters. Bissy Genova¹⁹⁸¹ looked at intermediaries in research interviews. She sought to determine the nonverbal behaviors that facilitated or hindered the “smooth interaction flow of the interview,” the correlation between these behaviors, and the satisfaction level of user and librarian.

Overall, Genova found that librarians were generally less satisfied than users. She also found that:

- When librarians used computer terminals, users were most satisfied.
- Librarians were less satisfied with long or interrupted interviews.

These findings indicated that interpersonal dimensions involving nonverbal communication entered into the process even when content-oriented thinking would say that the relevance of computer output (i.e., citations retrieved) should be the only factor to affect user and/or librarian satisfaction.

LIBRARY REFERENCE DESK

The **reference desk** or **information desk** of a library is a public service counter where professional librarians provide library users with direction to library materials, advice on library collections and services, and expertise on multiple kinds of information from multiple sources.

Reference service is one of the library's primary practices, besides acquisition, classification, cataloguing and physical planning. The term reference services, or sometimes referred to as reference and information services, is a difficult concept to define. Davinson (1980: 13) noted that reference and information service can refer to the provision of information and/or materials to people entering a reference library and requesting help from the library staff. In the same vein, Keenan and Johnston (2000) defined reference service as provision of information in response to requests.

Huling (2002: 867) defined reference service as 'personal assistance provided to library users seeking information'. Assistance referred to all of the many ways that libraries help their users to gain access to and use of the collection (Bailin and Grafstein, 2005: 317).

Bunge and Bopp (2001) noted that such personal assistance is the essence of reference services and is the fundamental role of the reference librarian. The goal of the reference librarian is to meet the information needs of the users. How and to what extent this is done varies from library to library and depended on the type of library. In the same vein, Tyckoson (2001) stressed:

'For anyone using libraries today, reference service is a standard feature.

Regardless of the type of library, the size of its collection, or the demographics of its users, patrons expect to get help with everything from complex research projects to finding materials in the collections. Service has become almost synonymous with libraries' (p. 183).

A large library is likely to have a reference section of several staff who deals with a wide variety of subjects. They may also be responsible for a function or a subject area. A large library will have a separate reference desk and a loans desk to meet the need of the users. A smaller organization may have only one or two staff who must provide a wide variety of services,

although in a more specialized subject area. Huling (2002) pointed out that academic libraries focus on teaching users how to find information, special libraries primarily find information and package it for their users, and public libraries practice some of both approaches.

Gosling (1999) noted that the reference services provided by a library include:

- a. assistance in using the library
- b. answering requests for information
- c. reader education
- d. conducting literature searches
- e. current awareness services

The distinguishing feature of reference services is that it specifically ensures the optimum uses of information resources through substantive interaction with the users on direct and indirect levels as follows:

- a. Reference or information services consist of personal assistance provided to users in pursuit of information.
- b. Formal and informal instruction in the use of the library or information center and its resources may range from the explanation of the use of the bibliographical aids (for example catalogues, information databases) to more formal assistance through interpretive tours and lectures.

c. Indirect reference service reflects user access to a wide range of informational sources (for example bibliographies, indexes, information databases) (Katz and Clifford, 1982: 9-10).

Chowdhury (2002) noted that the provision of such personalized information services has remained the central theme of the library and information profession. The importance of reference services grew over time with the introduction of new technologies and services in libraries. Bunge (1999: 185) categorized reference services into three broad groups:

a. information services that involve either finding the required information on behalf of the users, or assisting users in finding information;

b. instruction in the use of library resources and services (broadly defined as information literacy skills); and

c. user guidance, in which users are guided in selecting the most appropriate information sources and services.

The reference services and sources to be provided by a university library depend upon curriculum, research programmes, method of teaching, and objectives of the university. Ibegbulam (2000) observes that reference services in Nigerian university libraries use mostly print reference works, and that reference services no longer center on one-on-one service

delivered face-to-face in the library. Lessick (2000) and Palmer (1999) report that user enquires at the reference desk are declining. Reference services have been changing rapidly as a result of changes in information and communication technology and user demand for increase access. Librarians have been considering how to adjust services to the new environment (Han and Goulding 2003).

Edison (2000) believes that reference librarian specialist training and subject skills will help mediate user information needs. Librarians should develop the competencies they need to be more successful. Corroborating this, Osunnilu (2003) noted that, poor reference service will create a poor image for the library. Kresh (2001) states that an explosion of information and the popularity of the Internet and commercial search engines have opened the way for new demands and expectation from users.

Purpose and Usage

Library users can consult the staff at the reference desk for help in finding information. Using a structured reference interview, the librarian works with the library user to clarify their needs and determine what information sources will fill them. To borrow a medical analogy, reference librarians diagnose and treat information deficiencies. The ultimate help provided may consist of reading material in the form of a book or journal article, instruction in the use of specific searchable information resources such as the library's online catalog or subscription bibliographic/fulltext databases, or simply factual information drawn from the library's print or online reference collection. Typically, a reference desk can be consulted either in person, by telephone, through email or online chat, although a library user may be asked to come to the library in person for help with more involved research questions. A staffed and knowledgeable reference desk is an essential part of a library. The services that are provided at a reference desk may vary depending on the type of library, its purpose, its resources, and its staff.

Various duties of reference librarian and the impact of interpersonal communication in reference services.

Relationships thrive on the maintenance of a good communication link between the parties

involved, the reference librarian is expected to be a good communicator who links library users to the resources of their choice. The essence of reference work is personal service. The primary function of the reference department as observed by Nwalo (2000) among other things is answering reference questions and user education. Katz (2002) also highlighted the following as some of the duties of a reference librarian:

- a. To promote an end product: the information sought by the user
- b. Teaching people how to find information. Such instructions can range from the individual explanation of information sources or creation of guides and appropriate media to formal assistance.

One of the major ways through which these duties or functions can be performed effectively is through interpersonal communication between the reference librarian and the library user.

Reference librarians engage in person-to-person services. They interact with library patrons and interview them to be able to articulate their information needs clearly. They must possess conversational skills which according to Katz (2002) is the ability to talk to all types of people, to find out what they need. The ability to communicate effectively on an interpersonal level will

go a long way in ensuring that they meet the demands of the clientele and also gain their confidence.

Rothwell (2004) notes that communication skills are critical to landing a job, receiving a promotion and performing effectively in the workplace. Skill in interpersonal communication is one of the factors that distinguish a reference librarian. Interpersonal communication in reference services facilitates understanding of users' queries and enhances articulation of answers to users' inquiries. Tolle (2001) confirms in his study that many users do not know where to begin their research and most users who walk into libraries have little or no idea of how to use the online catalogue or perform searches in a database. It is therefore necessary for reference librarians to spend extra time with users to guide them through the search process. Avery (2001) agrees that librarians must examine what people need and determine what will provide the best reference service.

Various methods are used to provide reference services in university libraries. Tajer (2009) affirms that new reference service models have been designed and developed roving reference, reconfiguring the reference desk, no reference desk, consolidating service points,

tiered, outreach, and virtual reference. Heiling (2001) describes virtual reference service, where reference services are provided via email and telephone.

There is usually interplay of interpersonal, inter-cultural, and interdisciplinary communications that take place during reference services. People from various cultural and professional backgrounds visit the library for various reasons; to consult materials, gather

information on various research topics, to find out what the collections of the library is, etc. The likely person they will be directed to is the reference librarian who must be very skillful in communication in order to understand their information needs and be able to meet them. Katz observes that half of the battle in reference and information work is to discover exactly what a reader wants. The implication of these reference librarians is that they must demonstrate a high level of dexterity in interpersonal communication. The reference department serves as a meeting point between the library and its external environment. It is one of the major areas of the library where contact is made with the public; the reference librarian therefore serves as the contact annel. The effectiveness and efficiency of this contact is premised on the ability of the reference librarian to communicate effectively with the users which in turn promotes the public image of the library and improves library patronage.

Barriers to Effective interpersonal Communication in Reference Services

There are several factors that affect the communication process. Kemoni (2004) observed that some of these factors have to do with the sender of messages, others with the receiver or both the sender and receiver. In reference services also, there are some barriers to effective communication. These barriers are as highlighted here under:

Inferiority complex

Self-confidence is important for effective delivery of reference services. Lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for reference librarians to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable clients which in turn make them feel inferior to these groups

of users. Inferiority complex arises as a result of low self-esteem. Lin (1997) described it as an abnormal or pathological state which due to the tendency of the complex to draw unrelated ideas into itself, leads the individual to deprecate him- or herself to become unduly sensitive, to be too eager for praise and flattery, and to adopt a derogatory attitude towards others. This can affect communication between the reference librarian and the client. A reference librarian who has low self- esteem may perceive the client to have higher qualifications and superior knowledge. A reference librarian who lacks social skills and is withdrawn will not be able to tease out questions from clients and cannot help them to articulate their information needs. This makes the librarian want to quickly dispatch the client to avoid further queries.

Stereotype

Reference service is about relationship. Stereotyping makes one presumptuous about certain persons, cultures, languages, belief systems. It involves making assumptions about individuals or groups, usually as a result of information that may or may not be true. McKay, Davis, and Fanning (2003) describe stereotyping as a shortcut to forming impression of others. Stereotypes in reference services introduce background noise and interference in communication which makes decoding of queries posed by stereotyped patrons nearly impossible, because the reference librarian has a bias towards such an individual or group. This will adversely affect the quality of reference service such persons would have enjoyed.

Frustration due to poor working conditions

This is another factor that constitutes a barrier to communication in reference services. If references librarians are not happy with the system they work for, are not well-motivated, and

work without commensurate remuneration, there is a tendency to take it out on clients through transferred aggression. Such librarians might not be attentive to the demands of clients, which may be done deliberately to frustrate the system. The initial verbal and non-verbal responses of the librarian will influence the depth and level of the interaction between the librarian and the

patron (Katz, 2002). A reference librarian who is frustrated will not be interested in any conversation, not to talk of trying to understand and meet the information needs of clients.

Etiquette and decorum

There are acceptable norms, standards, and official language in relating to others, especially in a corporate setting. These standards enable one show courtesy and mutual respect for others. Showing respect toward patrons allows them to feel honoured and eager to visit the library again. A reference librarian, who lacks finesse in language, lacks decorum and good disposition towards the clientele, and whose gestures are demeaning, may not be able to retain users. Patrons will feel ridiculed and resolve to avoid the reference desk or even locate someone else who will assist them in meeting their information needs.

Boundaries in relationship

There should be a clear-cut demarcation between formal and informal relationships in rendering reference services. Reference librarians should be able to create boundaries in relating with clients not taking undue advantage of them or attempting to project their private needs in an official relationship. Unsolicited comments by the reference librarian should be avoided in order

not to send wrong signals that have the ability to irritate the clientele and discourage them from seeking help when information is needed.

Low level of education

Nwalo (2003) opines that one major step in the reference process is the question clarification process. For reference services to be well delivered, reference librarians must be able to interact at the level of their clientele and answer queries. They must build enough capacity to be able to sustain a high level of communication with clients. Low level of education

manifests in diverse ways which include but not limited to lack of capacity to understand user needs and wrong feedbacks as a result of inability to comprehend user requests. It also affects all the other barriers listed above.

Improving Communication Effectiveness

Effective communication is a two-way process that requires effort and skill by both sender and receiver. Administrators will at times assume each of these roles in the communication process. In this section, I discuss guidelines for improving communication effectiveness, including senders' and receivers' responsibilities, and listening.

a. Sender's Responsibilities

Several communication theorists (Cheney, 2011; Keyton, 2011; Tourish, 2010) have gleaned Ten Commandments of good communication, which are particularly applicable to the sender. These commandments, together with a basic understanding of the communication process itself, should provide a good foundation for developing and maintaining an effective set of

interpersonal communication skills, which any administrators can use when communicating with various clients

1. ***Administrators need to clarify their ideas before communicating.*** The more systematically administrators analyze the problem or idea to be communicated, the clearer it becomes.. This is the first step toward effective communication. Many communications fail because of inadequate planning. Good planning must consider the goals, attitudes, and needs of those who will receive the communication and those who will be affected by it.

2. ***Administrators need to examine the true purpose of each communication.*** Before administrators communicate, they must ask themselves what they really want to accomplish with their message—obtain information, initiate action, or change another person's attitude. Administrators need to identify their most important goal and then adapt their language, tone, and total approach to serve that specific objective. Administrators should not try to accomplish too much with each communication. The sharper the focus of their message, the greater its chances of success.

3. ***Administrators need to consider the total physical and human setting.*** Meaning and intent are conveyed by more than words alone. Many other factors influence the overall impact of a communication, and administrators must be sensitive to the total setting in which they communicate: the circumstances under which an announcement or decision is made; the physical setting whether the communication is made in private or otherwise; the social climate that pervades work relationships within the school or department and sets the tone of its

communications; custom and practice the degree to which the communication conforms to, or departs from, the expectations of the audience. Be constantly aware of the total setting in which you communicate. Like all living things, communication must be capable of adapting to its environment.

4. *Administrators need to consult with others, when appropriate, in planning communications.* Frequently, it is desirable or necessary to seek the participation of others in planning a communication or in developing the facts on which to base the communication. Such consultation often lends additional insight and objectivity to the message. Moreover, those who have helped plan the communication will give it their active support.

5. *Administrators need to be mindful, while communicating, of the overtones as well as the basic content of the message.* The administrator's tone of voice, expression, and apparent receptiveness to the responses of others all have tremendous impact on those the administrator wishes to reach. Frequently overlooked, these subtleties of communication often affect a listener's reaction to a message even more than its basic content. Similarly, the administrator's choice of language particularly her awareness of the fine shades of meaning and emotion in the words used predetermine in large part the reactions of the listeners.

6. *Administrators need to take the opportunity, when it arises, to convey something of help or value to the receiver.* Consideration of the other person's interests and needs trying to look at things from the other person's point of view frequently points up opportunities to convey

something of immediate benefit or long-range value to the other person. Staff members are most responsive to administrators whose messages take staff interests into account.

7. *Administrators need to follow up their communication.* An administrator's best efforts at communication may be wasted, and she may never know whether she has succeeded in expressing her true meaning and intent if she does not follow up to see how well she has put her message across. An administrator can do this by asking questions, by encouraging the receiver to express his or her reactions, by follow-up contacts, and by subsequent review of performance. An administrator needs to make certain that every important communication has feedback so that complete understanding and appropriate action result.

8. *Administrators need to communicate for tomorrow as well as today.* Although communications may be aimed primarily at meeting the demands of an immediate situation, they must be planned with the past in mind if they are to maintain consistency in the receiver's view. Most important, however, communications must be consistent with long-range interests and goals. For example, it is not easy to communicate frankly on such matters as poor performance or the shortcomings of a loyal staff member, but postponing disagreeable communications makes these matters more difficult in the long run and is actually unfair to your staff.

9. *Administrators need to be sure that their actions support their communications.* In the final analysis, the most persuasive kind of communication is not what administrators say, but what they do. When leaders' actions or attitudes contradict their words, others tend to discount what

they have said. For every administrator, this means that good supervisory practices such as clear assignment of responsibility and authority, fair rewards for effort, and sound policy enforcement serve to communicate more than all the gifts of oratory.

10. *Administrators need to seek, not only to be understood, but to understand be a good listener.* When an administrator starts talking, he often ceases to listen, at least in that larger sense of being attuned to the other person's unspoken reactions and attitudes. Even more serious is the occasional inattentiveness a leader may be guilty of when others are attempting to

communicate with him. Listening is one of the most important, most difficult, and most neglected skills in communication. It demands that the administrator concentrate not only on the explicit meanings another person is expressing, but also on the implicit meanings, unspoken words, and undertones that may be far more significant. Thus, an administrator must learn to listen with the inner ear if he is to know the inner person.

b. Active Listening

Active listening is a term popularized by the work of Carl Rogers and Richard Farson (n.d.) and advocated by counselors and therapists (Brownell, 2009; Burstein, 2010). The concept recognizes that a sender's message contains both verbal and nonverbal content as well as a feeling component. The receiver should be aware of both components in order to comprehend the total meaning of the message. For instance, when a staff member says to her supervisor, "Next time you ask me to prepare a report, please give me some advance notice." The content conveys that the staff member needs time, but the feeling component may indicate resentment

for being pressured to meet a deadline with such short notice. The supervisor, therefore, must recognize this feeling to understand the staff member's message. There are five guidelines that can help any administrators to become more active listeners (Rogers & Farson, n.d.).

1. ***Listen for message content.*** The receiver must try to hear exactly what the sender is saying in the message.

2. ***Listen for feelings.*** The receiver must try to identify how the sender feels in terms of the message content. This can be done by asking: "What is he trying to say?"

3. ***Respond to feelings.*** The receiver must let the sender know that her feelings, as well as the message content are recognized.

4. ***Note all cues, verbal and nonverbal.*** The receiver must be sensitive to the nonverbal messages as well as the verbal ones. If the receiver identifies mixed messages, he may ask for clarification.

5. ***Rephrase the sender's message.*** The receiver may restate or paraphrase the verbal and nonverbal messages as feedback to the sender. The receiver can do this by allowing the sender to respond with further information

c. Receiver's Responsibilities

Communication depends on the ability not only to send but also to receive messages. So the ability to listen effectively greatly enhances the communication process. But many of us are not

good listeners. Effective listening skills can be developed, however. Summarized following are ten rules for good listening (Kneen, 2011):

1. ***Stop talking.*** You cannot listen if you are talking. For example, Polonius in *Hamlet* said: "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."
2. ***Put the talker at ease.*** Help a person feel free to talk. This is often called a permissive environment.
3. ***Show a talker that you want to listen.*** Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while someone talks. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.
4. ***Remove distractions.*** Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?
5. ***Empathize with talkers.*** Try to help yourself see the other person's point of view.
6. ***Be patient.*** Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt a talker. Don't start for the door or walk away.
7. ***Hold your temper.*** An angry person takes the wrong meaning from words.
8. ***Go easy on argument and criticism.*** These put people on the defensive, and they may clam up or become angry. Do not argue: Even if you win, you lose.
9. ***Ask questions.*** This encourages a talker and shows that you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

10. *Stop talking.* This is first and last, because all other guides depend on it. You cannot do an effective listening job while you are talking.

Nature gave people two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that they should listen more than they talk. Listening requires two ears, one for meaning and one for feeling. Leaders who do not listen have less information for making sound decisions.

Summary

The literature reviewed shows that all agreed on the fact that interpersonal communication plays a very important role in the transfer of information between the reference librarian and reference users, Interpersonal communication involves sending and receiving of messages between two or more people, Communication refers to the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and emotions through speech, signals, writing, or behavior. They all see reference service as personal assistance provided to library reference users and also all agreed that teaching people how to find information in a good communication medium like face to face interaction is part of the reference librarian's duty, they also agreed that barriers like stereotype, low level of education, boundaries in relationship all affect interpersonal communication. They all agreed that communication can be improved effectively through the senders' and receivers' responsibility to listen effectively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was used to carry out this study with target audience on the entire 810 reference staff and users of the two university libraries. The total number of staff and users chosen for the study was 82 for the Federal University of Technology Library, Minna and 82 for Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Library, Lapai, making a total population of 164.

PROCEDURE

The researchers administered the instrument with the assistance of some librarians in the selected university libraries. All the 164 questionnaire distributed were returned and found usable. This represent a return rate of 100 per cent. Completed questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and percentyages.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis is carried out in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the barriers to effective interpersonal communication

Table 1:

Lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for reference librarians to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable clients which in turn make them feel inferior to these groups of users.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	17.1%
Agree	73	44.5%
Disagree	54	32.9%
Strongly disagree	9	5.5%
Total	164	100%

From the table above, 28(17.1%) strongly agree with the question, 73(44.5%) have agree, 54(32.9%) have disagree with the question, and 9(5.5%) strongly disagree with the question. It implies lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for the reference librarians to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable clients

Research Question 2: What are the duties perform by reference librarian

Table 2:

Which of the following duties are normally performed daily by the reference librarian?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Promoting an end product	28	17.1%
Teaching people how to find information	136	82.9%
Total	164	100%

The table above shows that 28(17.1%) of the staff go with the option promoting an end product (the information sought by the user), 136(82.9%) go with teaching people how to find information in the unit.

Research Question3: What are the ways of improving communication effectiveness?

Table 3

Does face-to-face communication help in assisting patrons to locate their information resources?

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	95	57.9%

Agree	54	32.9%
Disagree	13	8.0%
Strongly disagree	2	1.2%
Total	164	100%

The above table shows that 95(57.9%) strongly agree that face-to-face communication help in assisting patrons to locate their information resources, 54(32.9%) have agree, and 13(8.0%) have disagree, 2(1.2%) have strongly disagree. This implies that interpersonal communication plays an important role in communication in the reference service unit.

Research Question4: What are the barriers to effective interpersonal communication?

Table 4

A language barrier has affect communication negatively in the reference services.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	28	17.1%
Agree	81	49.4%
Disagree	54	32.9%

Strongly disagree	1	0.6%
Total	164	100%

From the above table, 28(17.1%) have strongly agree to the question, 81(49.4%) have agree, and 54(32.9%) have disagree and 1(0.6%) strongly disagree with the question.

Research Question5: What are the factors that determinine the reference services provided by the reference librarians?

Table 5:

Interpersonal communication in reference services facilitates understanding of users' queries and enhances articulation of answers to users' inquiries, are you satisfied

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	141	86.0%
NO	23	14.0%
Total	164	100%

From the table above, 141(86.0%) go with the option Yes, and 23(14.0%) have say No, which implies that 86.0% are satisfied.

Research Question6 : What are the impact of interpersonal communication?

Table 6:

The ability to communicate effectively on an interpersonal level will go a long way in ensuring that the reference librarians meet the demands of their clientele and also gain their confidence

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	65	39.6%
Agree	86	52.4%
Disagree	11	6.7%
Strongly disagree	2	1.3%
Total	164	100%

From the table above, 65(39.6%) have strongly agree, 86(52.4%) have agree, 11(6.7%) have disagree, and 2(1.3%) strongly disagree. This shows that, the ability to communicate effectively on an interpersonal level will go a long way in ensuring that they meet the demands of their clientele and also gain their confidence.

Research Question7: What are the barriers to effective interpersonal communication?

Table 7:

Semantic barriers come from differences in language, education and culture in interpersonal communication

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	41	25.0%
Agree	92	56.1%
Disagree	26	15.9%
Strongly disagree	5	3.0%
Total	164	100%

From the table above, 41(25.0%) have strongly agree, 92(56.1%) have agree with the question, 26(15.9%) have disagree, and 5(3.0%) have strongly disagree. Which indicate that majority of the respondent agree with the question.

Summary of Findings

This study examines the role of interpersonal communication in reference services in Academic Libraries in Niger State. The aim was to find out the extent to which interpersonal communication affect a provision of reference services. The two academics Libraries were used in this study. Federal University of Technology Minna, and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger State. The study reviewed relevant literature related to the study in order

to obtain background information for the study. The literature was carried out through consultations of relevant information resources such as books, journals and other relevant sources.

To obtain relevant data and information for this study, various methodologies are used to guide the researcher to efficiently carry out the study and obtain relevant data needed for the work. The survey research design was used to examine the role that interpersonal communication plays in the reference service unit of the two academics libraries in Niger State. The survey was carried out on one hundred and sixty four (164) staff and student in the two institutions. However, in order to collect relevant data for the study, a questionnaire was design and administered on the 164 respondent selected for this study. The questionnaires were administered to the respondent by the researcher personally.

The questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher. The data and information from the questionnaires were collected, analyzed and interpreted. The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages to reveal the data obtained in the questionnaires administered. Consequently, the study made out relevant findings from the research work in order to meet the objectives of the study and to answer the research question formulated for this study. Also, based on the findings of the study, recommendation was given in the study in order to find possible solution to the problems identified from the research process.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This chapter contains the discussion of findings of the study and is done according to the objectives of the study.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1:

The findings from the study revealed that research question one, received respond with high respondent of 17.1% of the respondent **Strongly agree** that lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for reference librarian to handle difficult questions from supposedly highly knowledgeable client with 44.5% of the respondent **agree** with it leaving only 32.9% of the respondent **Disagreeing** and 5.5% of the respondent **Strongly Disagree**. Which according to Lin (1997) described it as an abnormal or pathological state which due to the tendency of the complex to draw unrelated ideas into itself, leads the individual to deprecate him- or herself to become unduly sensitive, to be too eager for praise and flattery, and to adopt a derogatory attitude towards others. This can affect communication between the reference librarian and the client. It shows that in all the options 61.6% of the respondent go with the research question while 38.4% of the respondent against it.

Research question 2:

From the research question 2, it shows that among the various duties perform by the reference librarian, 17.1% of the respondent go with the option promoting an end product (information sought by the user) while 82.9% of the respondent go with teaching people how to locate

information. It shows that the essence of reference work is personal service with the primary function of answering reference question and user education as observe by Nwalo(2000).

Research question 3:

The study also revealed that from the research objectives, face-to-face communication plays an important role in interpersonal communication, which revealed from respondent that 57.9% **Strongly Agree** that face-to-face communication help in assisting patrons to locate their information resources, 32.9% **Agree**, and 8.0% **Disagree** with only 1.2% **Strongly Disagree**. The growth of learning today according to Katz (2002) no longer can be termed gradual. He noted that finding specific bits of data among the mass of undifferentiated information is a great challenge and the reference librarian is in the best position to meet this challenge, relationships thrive on the maintenance of a good communication link between the parties involved .This implies that interpersonal communication plays an important role in communication in the reference service unit between reference librarians and their clientele.

Research question 4:

The findings from the study revealed that objectives question three, received respond with high respondent with 17.1% **Strongly Agree** that lack of self-confidence makes it difficult for the reference librarian to handle difficult question from supposedly highly knowledgeable client, 49.4% of the respondent **Agree** and 32.9% **Disagree**. Lin (1997) described it as an abnormal or pathological state which due to the tendency of the complex to draw unrelated ideas into itself, leads the individual to deprecate him- or herself to become unduly sensitive, to be too eager for praise and flattery, and to adopt a derogatory attitude towards others. This can affect communication between the reference librarian and the client.

Research question 5: also revealed that in terms of service satisfactory, respond clearly shows that clientele are fully satisfied with the service rendered to them by the reference librarian according to the research question, 86% of the respondent answer this question with the option **Yes** as their answer and only 14% are not satisfied, which shows that reference rendered to user with great effort, according to Bunge and Bopp (2001) noted that such personal assistance is the essence of reference services and is the fundamental role of the reference librarian. The goal of the reference librarian is to meet the information needs of the users.

Research question 6:

From the research question, it shows that among the impact of interpersonal communication, 39.6% of the respondent strongly agree that the ability to communication effectively on an interpersonal level which will go a long way in ensuring that the Reference librarian gain and meet the demand of it clientele confidently, while 52.4% of the respondent agree with the question, 6.7% of the respondent disagree with 1.3% of the respondent strongly disagree. In

other to communicate effectively, reference librarian must possess conversational skills which according to Katz (2002), is the ability to talk to all types of people to find out what they need.

Research question7:

Research question seven (7) revealed that semantic barrier as barrier to effective interpersonal communication which comes from differences in language, education, and culture in interpersonal communication, 25% of the respondent strongly agree, 56.1% of the respondent agree with research question and 15.9% of the respondent disagree while 3.0% of the respondent strongly disagree

Conclusion

The importance of interpersonal communication in rendering effective reference services cannot be overemphasized. It is the bedrock of successful reference service and an avenue for understanding users' queries and meeting their information needs.

Some barriers to effective interpersonal communication in reference service as identified by this study include: inferiority complex, stereotype, frustration due to poor working condition, low level of education, boundaries in relationship, etiquette and decorum. Effective interpersonal communication is a two-way process that requires effort and skill by both sender and receiver in improving communication effectiveness, include senders' and receivers' responsibilities, and listening.

Recommendations

To win the confidence of library reference patrons and ensure their continuous use of the reference library, also base on the findings for this study and the conclusion reached, the recommendations made are:

The study recommends that the reference librarians should build strong capacity in the area of communication in order to be to meet their clientele information needs. By so doing, they will be able to help users articulate their information needs, provide answers to their queries, and sustain their patronage.

The study also recommends that reference librarian must have the ability to communicate effectively on an interpersonal level in order to go long way in ensuring that they meet the demands of their clientele and also gain confidence

Also the study recommends that reference librarians must demonstrate a high level of dexterity in interpersonal communication

The study recommends that more reference staff should be employed in the two academic institution in the state (federal university of technology minna and Ibrahim badamasibabangida university library lapai.)

The study recommends that regular training and field trip should be given to the staff

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The researchers feels that similar studies should be undertaken in other countries in West Africa.

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