Emotional Intelligence and Service Quality by Library Personnel in Colleges of Agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The need to increase library use through effective service quality may be achieved through examining the interplay of emotional intelligence and service quality in libraries. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the influence of emotional intelligence on service quality, especially in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria. The survey design of the correlational type was adopted. The population of this study was library personnel (27) and Higher National Diploma students (1,846) in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State. Total enumeration was used for the library personnel while 10% proportional sample size was used for the student (185). Questionnaire was the instrument used. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance. The study found highly positive perspectives of levels of service quality ($\underline{x}$=2.4) among the indicators. There is high level of emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria and the prominent was Self-awareness ($\underline{x}$=3.4). The study however found that emotional intelligence (r=.028) demonstrated no significant impact on library service quality. It was concluded that library services in education requires some level of emotional intelligence even when this is not obvious to those concerned. Thus, the institution and library management should develop interventions to empower library personnel toward mastering self-awareness to enhance library service quality.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Personality Traits, Service Quality, Library Personnel, College of Agriculture.

Introductions

Evaluation of emotional intelligence of library personnel is crucial in the assessment of the service quality provision in the colleges of agriculture libraries. This fact is even more crucial in the competitive atmosphere in information service provision as a result of advancement in information and communication technology like search engines and electronic databases that resulted in low usage of academic library. Several attempts have been made over the years to identify factors that could significantly influence service quality provision in service orientation industries like banks, telecommunication companies among other using SERVQUAL model (Gupta, Mezbah-ul-Islam, & Chandel, 2003). However, due to peculiar nature of library and information services, LibQUAL model was developed and some of these measures are affect of service, library as a place, information control. The LibQUAL model alone with other variables has been use in studies to examine low use of library. Some of the variables include: student trust, user loyalty, user satisfaction and big data among others. But beyond these, psychological factors such as emotional intelligence of library personnel could also be an impediment to service quality provision.

Emotional intelligence is the ability of library personnel to identifying and understanding their emotions and that of their patrons. Library personnel with high emotional intelligence is expected to provide quality service to patrons, meet their information needs, and be satisfied their jobs always. Such library personnel would encourage, motivate and entice more patrons to the library thus, there will be optimal use of the resources. However, extant literature report indicates low library uses and part of the reason maybe low emotional intelligence of the library personnel, therefore there is a need to investigate library personnel emotional intelligence measured through self-awareness, social-awareness and relationship management and its contributions to low library patronage by the academic communities.

However, literature search indicates that there is death of research into the aspect of emotional intelligence and service quality, especially in colleges of agriculture in Nigeria. This study, therefore, intends to fill this identified knowledge gap. Thus, it is against this backdrop that this study set out to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on service quality, especially in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria with the intent of enhancing library service quality and attract more patrons into the library.

The aim of the study is to examine influence of emotional intelligence on service quality by library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria and the objectives are to:

i. identify the level of service quality by library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria;
ii. ascertain the level of emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria;
iii. examine the combined influence of emotional intelligence on service quality of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria;

The following research questions for the study were derived from the objectives of the study:

1. what are the levels of service quality by library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. what are the levels of emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria?

The following hypothesis for the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

$H_0$1: There will be no significant influence of emotional intelligence on service quality of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria;

Literature Review

Good service is one of the requirements for organizational success. Service quality is seen as one component that needs to be realized because it has the influence to bring in new customers and can reduce the possibility of old customers to move to other companies. Service quality is defined as the customer's assessment of the overall superiority or privilege of a product or service. Quality is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes and the environment that meets or exceeds expectations, it is an effort to meet the needs and desires of consumers and the accuracy of their delivery in balancing consumer expectations. This means that a good quality image is not based on the perspective or perception of the service provider but the perspective of assessing one's perception (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Libraries, regardless of their type (e.g., academic, public, special), provide many services to their users to meet their learning and research needs. These services usually refer to the local consultation to books and periodicals, to home loan of information materials, to consultation

book loan, to the loan of information material between libraries of the same system, to online reservation of information materials, online renovation of information materials held by the user, online access to the library's catalogue, online access to databases and periodicals signed by the libraries, and to the service of lockers.

Academic libraries are service-oriented institutions which are established for the provision of appropriate resources and quality services to meet the academic needs of their user community. The effectiveness of a university library generally refers to the library's collections, staff performance, services and facilities (Gupta, Mezbah-ul-Islam, & Chandel, 2003). Currently, university libraries are becoming more user-focused due to information availability, rising costs, competitive pressures and increasing awareness of their users. Globally, academic libraries are moving from manual to automated systems due to the effect of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the changing needs of their users. Most of the university libraries are trying to enhance their tools and techniques to assist research, teaching and learning, as well as adjust the methods of sharing and providing information for their users through technology-driven services (Alam, & Mezbah-ul-Islam, 2019;Oladokun, Oyadeyi, & Iyoro, 2019).

To develop and maintain state-of-the-art library services, it is essential to assess the quality of the existing services, as well as evaluate what importance is given by users to the dimensions of service quality in the changing information environment. Many researchers have agreed that assessing service quality based on user responses is the easiest and most useful approach to determine the success of academic libraries (Gunasekera, 2010;Saunder (2007).

The most commonly used model to measure library service quality is the Libqual model (Kumar, & Mahajan, 2019). This model was developed to make up for the shortcoming observed in the SERVQUAL model which was adopted from the business world. The libqual identified three dimensions under which library service can be measured. These are affect of service, library as a place, and information control (Ip & Wagner, 2020).

Affect of Service focuses on the interaction responsiveness between library users and staff services, tangibles and empathy. The libqual metrics for affect of services focuses on how librarians instil confidence in users; readiness to respond to users' questions; willingness to help users; dependability in handling users' service problems; giving users individual attention; having the knowledge to answer user questions; being consistently courteous; dealing with users in a caring fashion; and understand the need of their users by employees.

The ‘‘Library as Place’’ focuses on the library building and facilities. The dimensions examine metrics such as whether the library has; a quiet space for individual activities; a comfortable and inviting location; library space that inspires study and learning; community space for group learning and group study; and a getaway for study, learning or research.

The ‘‘Information Control’’ refers to the extent to which the library has empowered users to be able to search, access and retrieve information on their own. It focuses on metrics such as the availability of print and/or electronic journal collections; easy-to-use access tools that allow patrons to find things on their own; a library Web site enabling patrons to locate information; modern equipment that lets patrons easily access needed information; making information easily accessible for independent use; and electronic resources accessible from home or office (Ip& Wagner, 2020; Kumar, & Mahajan, 2019).

Emotional Intelligence and Service Quality in Libraries

Using emotional intelligences skills in the library service industry has increasingly been considered as a strategy to satisfy and retain users. Although a borrowed concept from the service industry, scholars in library and information science have embraced the concept of emotional intelligence as a means of improving overall performance of libraries and library personnel (Khan, Masrek, & Nadzar, 2017; Villagran & Martin, 2022; Williams-Ilemobola, et al., 2021). This is no doubt due to the perceived contributions of emotional intelligence to the overall effectiveness of service providers.

Empirical studies have also been conducted in the field of librarianship on the role of emotional intelligence on library service quality. Maukar (2015) found that emotional intelligence, is one of the key factors that influence the service quality of high school libraries in Minahasa Regency, Indonesia. The research aim was to demonstrate the impact of emotional intelligence, creativity, and work ethic on the service quality of the high school library in the Minahasa Regency. The research sample consisted of 70 librarians who were selected using a technically straightforward random sampling method. The research findings and hypothesis testing indicate that there is a direct and positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the service quality of high school libraries in the Minahasa Regency. This finding is backed by Jafari (2018) who also reported that higher emotional intelligence among librarians is positively associated with increased user satisfaction in the libraries of the University of Guilan, Iran.

Furthermore, Singh, Gupta, and Bajaj (2015) found that emotional intelligence positively impacts team effectiveness in academic libraries, enhancing user satisfaction and overall efficiency. The researchers observed that information professionals possess a human services orientation that necessitates contact among employees, staff, and users. Users can only make efficient use of libraries if they are provided with both the required circumstances and facilities, as well as psychological tranquillity. Emotional intelligence is a highly reliable indicator of both teamwork and team performance.

In the Nigerian context, Williams-Ilemobola, et al. (2021) examined the impact of librarians' emotional intelligence on dispute resolution in private university libraries located in the South-West and South-South regions of Nigeria. The study which utilized a survey research design found that the conflict management abilities of librarians were influenced by their emotional intelligence. The study suggests that private University Libraries should address miscommunications among librarians while simultaneously prioritizing the development of their emotional intelligence. This is supported by Onwubiko (2020) whose study findings also indicate a strong positive correlation between librarians' emotional intelligence and the efficient administration of university libraries.

Furthermore, Oyeboade (2016) reported that emotional intelligence significantly enhances work productivity among librarians in selected academic libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria. The ANOVA showed that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management jointly and significantly predict library work productivity by 52.1%. From another perspective, Igbinovia and Popoola (2016) reported a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance of personnel in academic libraries in Edo State. The study concluded that, as emotional intelligence improves, job performance of library personnel also improves.

All these studies have established the importance of emotional intelligence in helping libraries and library personnel achieve individual and collective aims of meeting the needs of the users in a way satisfactory to all parties. However, what is missing in these study is how emotional intelligence directly contribute to service quality particularly in the dimensions outlined in the Libqual model of library service quality.

Methodology

The survey design of the correlational type was adopted. The population of this study was library personnel (27) and Higher National Diploma students (1,846) in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State. Total enumeration was used for the library personnel while 10% proportional sample size was used for the student (185). Questionnaire was the instrument used. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation and Multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What are perspectives of student's levels of service quality offer in colleges of agriculture library in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Perspectives of Students' Levels of Service Quality Offer in Colleges of Agriculture Library

Service Quality Dimensions	Mean
Affect of Service	3.00
Library as Place	2.90
Information Control	3.00
Aggregate Mean	**2.97**

Decision Rule: 1.00 – 1.49= very low, 1.50 – 2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.49 = high, 3.50-4.00= very high.

Table 1 reveals perspectives of students' levels of service quality in college of agriculture libraries in Oyo state. This data provides insights into students' perspectives on the level of service quality offered by the libraries in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria. The quality of service was measured under three dimensions namely, effect of service, library as a place, and information control. The mean scores indicates that the rated the library services high in all dimensions such as affect of services (Mean = 3.00), library as a place (Mean = 2.90), and information control (Mean = 3.00). Furthermore, the combination of these dimensions yielded an aggregate mean score of 2.97 which represents high level of service quality according to the decision rule.

Although positive response to service quality was reported in this study, this data underscores the importance of regularly seeking feedback from students. This can help in identifying areas

of strength and improvement, and guide efforts to enhance service quality. This is supported by Santoso (2020) who opined that ensuring service quality is the best way to ensure users satisfaction.

Nur and Fritantus (2021) also added that libraries have now means of knowing whether their services are satisfactory to the patrons unless they conduct library service quality surveys. In their survey, the found that library as a place is very important to patrons who seek conducive study atmosphere. This is supported by Hasugia and Lubis (2021) who found that quality library services is instrumental in winning the trust of students in Indonesia.

Research Question Two: What are the levels of emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo state, Nigeria?

Table 2 Emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria

Service Quality Dimensions	**Mean**
Self-awareness	3.40
Self-Management	3.30
Social awareness	3.10
Relationship management	3.10
Aggregate Mean	**3.20**

Decision Rule: 1.00 – 1.49= very low, 1.50 – 2.49= low, 2.50 – 3.49 = high, 3.50-4.00= very high.

Table 2 presented the levels of emotional intelligence of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria. Emotional intelligence is measured under four dimensions namely; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The summary of the responses shows that the ratings of emotional intelligence among the respondents include self-awareness (Mean = 3.40), self-management (Mean = 3.30, social awareness (Mean = 3.10) and relationship management (Mean = 3.10). The high mean scores in all aspects of emotional intelligence indicates that the library personnel surveyed have good understanding of their own strengths, limitations, emotions, and self-worth. It also suggests that they are flexible, proactive, and positive in their approach to tasks and opportunities. Social awareness also means that they are seen as attuned to group dynamics and patrons' needs. The high score in anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs is particularly significant.

It indicates that the library personnel prioritize understanding and serving the needs of their users. This is significant asset in providing effective library services and fostering a positive work environment. The grand mean of 3.2 affirms the high level of emotional intelligence observed in this group.

This finding is supported by Khan, Masrek, &Nadzar, (2017); Villagran & Martin, (2022); Williams-Ilemobola, et al., (2021) all of whom have examined emotional intelligence among different group of librarians across the world and found that majority of librarians possess high level of emotional intelligence. This is not to say that there are gaps to be filled through training and continuous development as each of these studies, like the current study found some aspect of emotional intelligence in which the librarians have to improve.

The high mean scores in all aspects of social awareness (above the criterion mean) indicate an overall positive perception of social awareness among library personnel. This suggests that they are seen as attuned to group dynamics and customer needs. The high score in anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs is particularly significant. It indicates that the library personnel prioritize understanding and serving the needs of their users. The high score in reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships suggests that library personnel are skilled in understanding the dynamics of group interactions.

However, in the study, social awareness and relationship management skills are high among the respondents but not as high as self-awareness or self-management. According to the reports of Mills and Lodge (2006), this should be improved. The scholars maintained that, to establish a stronger connection with their user communities, information professionals should contemplate the following: adopt the fundamental principles of emotional intelligence as effective strategies to assist users in their interactions with librarians. Recognize the significance of personal interaction for many users and acknowledge that it can provide valuable insights into their understanding of the library's role. Acknowledge that a library encompasses more than just access to resources. Recognize that not all users have the same perceptions as librarians regarding the informational value of tools like catalogues and databases. It is acknowledged that users see many functions for a library, and these perceptions are shaped by their previous encounters and current requirements. Expanding the library's reach into user communities is crucial for the library's growth and recognizing the significance of commercial retailers' marketing strategy to attract and retain customers is applicable in library settings.

Hypothesis: There will be no significant influence of emotional intelligence on service quality of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria;

.Table 3: **Influence of Emotional intelligence on of library personnel service quality**

Variable	**Mean**	Std. Dev	**N**	**R**	p value	**Remark**
Emotional intelligence	57.7200	7.15029	25	.028	.895	Not significant
Service Quality	58.6816	11.06641	179			

According to the result of the finding presented in table 3, emotional intelligence (r=.028, p>0.05) has no significant influence on service of library personnel. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there will be no significant influence of emotional intelligence on service quality of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo state, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

The mean emotional intelligence score is 57.72 with a standard deviation of 7.15, indicating that the emotional intelligence scores have some degree of variability in the sample. The mean service quality score is 58.68 with a higher standard deviation of 11.07, suggesting even greater variability in service quality scores. The correlation coefficient (r) between emotional intelligence and service quality is 0.028. This is very close to zero, indicating a very weak positive relationship between emotional intelligence and service quality. The p-value associated with this correlation is 0.895, which is much higher than the typical significance threshold of 0.05. This means that the correlation is not statistically significant.

In practical terms, this suggests that in the context of these agricultural colleges in Oyo state, other factors may have a stronger influence on the service quality provided by library personnel, and emotional intelligence may not be a critical factor to consider.

Conclusion

The study found no significant influence of emotional intelligence on the service quality of library personnel in colleges of agriculture in Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that emotional intelligence may not be a critical factor in determining the service quality provided by library personnel in these specific institutions. However, this speaks more to a deficiency of emotional intelligence among the respondents. When employees who are deficient in emotional intelligence perform as expected, the cost is emotional labour as they are likely to be hiding

feelings of anger frustration, and resentment which may later boil over. The consequence is job burnout, absenteeism and employee turnover especially when the personnel are not enlightened on the importance of emotional intelligence.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Given the high perspective of students regarding service quality, there is a need for library management to prioritize and enhance information control services in the agriculture college libraries. This could involve investing in resources, technologies, and strategies that facilitate easy access and management of information.
2. Since the levels of emotional intelligence among library personnel are already high, it's beneficial for the institution management to continue fostering and developing these skills. This can be achieved through targeted training programs that focus on aspects such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.
3. Acknowledging that library personnel exhibit a range of personality traits, it's important to recognize the prominence of extraversion and the lesser prominence of conscientiousness. Understanding and utilizing these traits can help tailor training, assignments, and team dynamics to maximize the strengths of individuals.
4. While the null hypotheses were accepted in this study, it's crucial to acknowledge that factors influencing service quality and delivery can be complex and multifaceted. Continuously monitoring and assessing the impact of emotional intelligence and personality traits on library service delivery can provide valuable insights for future improvements.

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