

Assessment of Librarians' Attitudes and Users' Patronage Behaviour in Information Retrieval Services at Benue State University Library, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined librarians' attitudes and users' patronage behaviour in information retrieval services at Benue State University Library, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: assess the current attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behaviour; examine the impact of librarians' attitudes on user satisfaction and patronage; and identify factors influencing librarians' attitudes towards users. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population and sample comprised 125 respondents drawn from librarians and users of Benue State University Library, Makurdi. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who were considered relevant to the study because of their direct involvement with or experience of the library's information retrieval services. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point rating scale and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation with SPSS. The findings revealed that librarians generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards users' patronage, with mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 3.94. The study further found that librarians' professional competence, proper library management, provision of appropriate information sources, expertise in electronic resource searching, and ability to answer users' questions positively influence user satisfaction and patronage, with mean scores ranging from 3.78 to 4.00. Factors influencing librarians' attitudes included regular customer-service training, adequate resources, conducive working conditions, manageable workload, sufficient staffing, personal experiences, supportive institutional policies, and positive organizational culture. The study concluded that positive librarians' attitudes and supportive organizational conditions enhance service quality, user satisfaction and library patronage. It recommended regular staff training, improved user feedback mechanisms, adequate staffing and workload management, and supportive institutional policies to sustain positive librarian-user interactions and improve library services.

Keywords: Attitudes, Behaviour, Librarians', Patronage, Users.

Introduction

Librarians' attitudes towards users' patronage behavior play a significant role in shaping the overall user experience and the effectiveness of library services. When librarians maintain a positive and welcoming attitude, users are more likely to feel comfortable, valued,

and motivated to utilize library resources. Abdulfatai and Aishat (2024) explained that a positive interaction fosters a sense of trust and encourages users to seek assistance, ask questions, and explore the library's offerings more freely. In contrast, negative or indifferent attitudes from librarians can create an uninviting environment, discouraging users from engaging fully with library services and resources.

Furthermore, librarians' perceptions of users' patronage behavior influence how they respond to different user needs. For example, if librarians view certain groups of users as less likely to adhere to library rules or less deserving of assistance, it can lead to biased or dismissive attitudes. Such perceptions may result in unequal service delivery, which can diminish user satisfaction and reduce overall library usage. Therefore, fostering a professional and empathetic attitude among librarians is crucial to promoting inclusive and equitable access to library services for all users.

As observed by Adetayo *et al* (2021) the attitudes of librarians also impact user behavior by setting the tone for library interactions. When librarians demonstrate patience, respect, and genuine interest, users are more inclined to develop positive perceptions of the library environment. This positive reinforcement can lead to increased patronage, repeat visits, and a greater willingness among users to participate in library programs. Conversely, dismissive or unfriendly attitudes can deter users from returning, negatively affecting the library's usage statistics and perceived value within the community.

The relationship between librarians' attitudes and users' patronage behavior underscores the importance of ongoing professional development and attitude awareness. Librarians need to be conscious of how their behaviors and perceptions influence user engagement. By cultivating a user-centered approach that emphasizes respect, empathy, and professionalism, librarians can foster a welcoming atmosphere that encourages active user participation, enhances satisfaction, and ultimately contributes to the library's mission of supporting learning and information access (Apinola, *et al*, 2024).

Statement to the Problem

In an ideal library environment, librarians exhibit positive attitudes towards users' patronage behavior, providing courteous, respectful, and welcoming services that encourage users to freely access and utilize library resources. Such an environment fosters user satisfaction, promotes regular library visits, and enhances inclusive library performance. However, in many cases, librarians may display indifferent, dismissive, or unfriendly attitudes towards users, which can discourage patronage, diminish user satisfaction, and negatively impact the effectiveness of library services. This discrepancy between the ideal and the actual situation poses a challenge to achieving optimal user engagement and library utilization.

Key issue identified is that some librarians may have negative perceptions or attitudes towards certain user groups or behaviors, which can lead to biased or poor service delivery. This can result in users feeling unwelcome or undervalued, thereby reducing their motivation to use library services and resources. Such attitudes and behaviors can undermine the goal of

providing equitable and inclusive access to information for all users. The researcher aims to investigate the attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behavior in information retrieval services Benue State university library, Makurdi, Benue State. Specifically, the study seeks to identify whether librarians' attitudes align with the ideal standard of professional and friendly service, and how these attitudes influence user satisfaction and library usage. The researcher also intends to examine the factors that may contribute to negative attitudes and to explore ways to improve librarian-user interactions to foster a more positive and engaging library environment. Ultimately, the study aims to provide recommendations for enhancing librarian attitudes and improving user patronage at the university's library.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the current attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behavior at the Benue State university library, Makurdi.
2. To examine the impact of librarians' attitudes on user satisfaction and patronage at the Benue State university library, Makurdi.
3. To identify the factors influencing librarians' attitudes towards users at the Benue State university library, Makurdi.

Research Questions

1. What are the current attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behavior at the Benue State university library, Makurdi?
2. How do librarians' attitudes affect user satisfaction and patronage at the Benue State university library, Makurdi?
3. What are the factors that influence librarians' attitudes towards users at the Benue State university library, Makurdi?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides valuable insights into the attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behavior at the Benue State university library, Makurdi. Understanding these attitudes can help in identifying areas for improvement in librarian-user interactions, ultimately leading to enhanced user satisfaction and increased patronage. The findings can inform library management and policymakers to implement targeted strategies that foster a more positive and welcoming environment within the university library. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on library services and librarian attitudes, serving as a reference for future research and practical applications in similar educational contexts. Ultimately, the study aims to improve the quality of library services, thereby supporting the academic success and overall experience of students and staff at the university.

Review of Literature

Attitudes of Librarians towards Users' Patronage Behaviour

Librarians' attitudes significantly influence users' experiences and their continued patronage of library services. According to Buhari and Egunjobi (2025), positive attitudes such as friendliness, professionalism, and willingness to assist foster a welcoming environment that encourage users to engage actively with library resources. Conversely, negative attitudes, including perceived indifference or hostility, can deter users from seeking assistance, thereby reducing patronage (Carazo, 2025). In the context of Nigerian academic libraries, Cheung *et al* (2025) observed that librarians' attitudes are often shaped by workload, resource constraints, and institutional policies, which may impact their interactions with users.

The literature indicates that librarian attitudes are a critical factor in shaping user perceptions and behaviors. A positive attitude correlates with increased user satisfaction and patronage, emphasizing the need for emotional intelligence and customer service training among librarians (Esan & Ifijeh, 2023). However, contextual challenges in Nigerian institutions may influence these attitudes, necessitating localized studies.

Impact of Librarians' Attitudes on User Satisfaction and Patronage

The relationship between librarian attitudes and user satisfaction has been well-documented. Hashemi and Khatavakhotan (2026) found that courteous and helpful librarian staff significantly improve user satisfaction levels, which in turn promotes increased library usage. Similarly, Obergh (2026) emphasized that user satisfaction is a key predictor of continued patronage, and positive interactions with librarians are central to this satisfaction. In Nigeria, Michael and Olalekan (2023) reported that students' perceptions of librarians' attitudes directly influence their frequency of library visits and overall academic engagement.

This body of evidence underlines that librarian behavior and attitudes are crucial determinants of user satisfaction and patronage. Improving interpersonal skills among librarians could directly impact library usage rates, especially in resource-constrained environments where user engagement is vital for academic success.

Factors Influencing Librarians' Attitudes towards Users

Numerous factors influence how librarians perceive and interact with users. Organizational culture, workload, training, and resource availability are prominent determinants. According to Owolabi, *et al* (2025), heavy workloads and underfunding often lead to librarian burnout, which negatively affects their attitudes towards users. Additionally, professional development and training are associated with more positive attitudes and improved service delivery (Paulhus *et al*, 2026). In the Nigerian context, Ukaegbu (2023) identified that institutional policies, and the level of technological integration also shape librarians' perceptions and behaviors. The literature suggests that external and internal organizational factors significantly influence librarian attitudes. Addressing issues such as workload management, continuous training, and resource provision can foster more positive attitudes, ultimately enhancing user experiences.

Methodology`

Descriptive Survey Design was used for this study. This design allows for the systematic collection of data to describe the attitudes of librarians and analyze the relationship between their attitudes and user patronage behavior. It is appropriate because your study aims to quantify attitudes and perceptions (Michael & Olayemi, 2023). The population of the study consist of 125 librarians working at the Benue State university library, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A multistage sampling technique involving stratified and purposive sampling techniques was used to select the respondents. First, the student population was stratified according to discipline and academic level to ensure adequate representation of the different groups. Thereafter, purposive sampling was used to select respondents who had relevant experience with the information retrieval services of Benue State University Library. A total of 125 respondents constituted the sample for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point rating scale and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation with SPSS.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising four sections: demographic information, assessment of librarians' attitudes, and users' patronage behaviour in information retrieval services. Librarians' attitudes were measured using a four-point attitude scale ranging from Strongly Favourable (SF) to Strongly Unfavourable (SUF), while users' patronage behaviour was measured using an appropriate four-point response scale. Questionnaires were distributed physically at study centers and electronically via email and social media, with clear instructions. Respondents had two weeks to complete the questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) among variables based on a four-point Likert scale.

Results and Findings

Distribution of Demographic Data of Respondents by Gender show the following (Male = 55 frequency with (34.8%), female = 70 frequency with (65.2 %) while the total was 125 frequency with (100%) were realized respectively. This implies that most respondents, at (65.2%), were female, while males comprised (34.8%) of the total 125 participants.

Research Question 1: Current attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behavior at the Benue State University Library.

Table 1: Current Attitudes of Librarians towards Users' Patronage Behavior

S/N	Statement N (340)	SF 4	F 3	UF 2	SUF 1	$\bar{X}$	Std.	Remark
1.	The library's opening hours are convenient for me.	80(51.5)	30(35.9)	8(7.5)	4(5.1)	3.94	0.825	SF
2.	The library's collection of e-books and journals is sufficient for my needs.	87(56.0)	28(34.1)	6(7.2)	4(2.7)	3.93	0.743	SF
3.	The library's seating area is comfortable and quiet.	66(49.7)	46(34.7)	5(7.5)	9(8.1)	3.86	0.911	SF
4.	The librarians are helpful and knowledgeable.	64(49.1)	56(35.6)	2(6.6)	3(8.7)	3.85	0.918	SF
5.	The library's online catalog is user-friendly.	62(43.1)	45(45.5)	7(5.4)	11(6.0)	3.86	0.813	F

Table 1 presents the current attitudes of librarians towards users' patronage behaviour. The findings indicate that respondents generally had strongly favourable attitudes towards users' patronage, as all the statements recorded high mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 3.94. The highest mean score was recorded for the convenience of the library's opening hours ($\bar{X} = 3.94$, $SUF = 0.825$), followed by the sufficiency of the library's e-books and journals ($\bar{X} = 3.93$, $SUF = 0.743$). The comfort and quietness of the seating area and the user-friendliness of the online catalogue both recorded a mean of 3.86, while the helpfulness and knowledge of librarians recorded the lowest mean score ($\bar{X} = 3.85$, $SUF = 0.918$), although it was still rated strongly favourable. The results suggest that librarians demonstrate positive attitudes towards factors that encourage users to patronize the library, particularly convenient opening hours, adequate electronic resources, a conducive reading environment, helpful library staff, and an accessible online catalogue.

Research Question 2: To examine the impact of librarians' attitudes on user satisfaction and patronage at the Benue State University Library.

Table 2: The Impact of Librarians' Attitudes on User Satisfaction and Patronage

S/N	Statement N (125)	SF 4	F 3	UF 2	SUF 1	$\bar{X}$	Std.	Remark
1.	Librarians have proper management of the library	80(51.5)	30(35.9)	8(7.5)	4(5.1)	4.00	0.825	SF
2	The librarian knows how to give out the right information sources.	87(56.0)	28(34.1)	6(7.2)	4(2.7)	3.78	0.743	SF
3	Librarians are expertise in the search of electronic resources.	66(49.7)	46(34.7)	5(7.5)	9(8.1)	3.96	0.911	SF
4	Librarians are pro-active in supplying information to users.	64(49.1)	56(35.6)	2(6.6)	3(8.7)	3.85	0.918	SF
5	Librarians' have the knowledge to answer users' questions	62(43.1)	45(45.5)	7(5.4)	11(6.0)	3.96	0.813	F

Table 2 presents the assessment of librarians' professional attributes and their influence on users' patronage behaviour. The findings show that respondents generally rated the attributes of librarians strongly favourably, with mean scores ranging from 3.78 to 4.00. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement that librarians have proper management of the library ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, $SUF = 0.825$), indicating the strongest positive assessment. This was followed by librarians' expertise in searching electronic resources and their knowledge to answer users' questions, both with a mean of 3.96. Librarians' proactiveness in supplying information to users also received a high rating ($\bar{X} = 3.85$, $SUF = 0.918$), while the statement that librarians know how to provide the right information sources recorded the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, $SUF = 0.743$), though it remained strongly favourable. The findings indicate that effective library management, knowledge of appropriate information sources, expertise in electronic resource searching, proactive information provision, and the ability to answer users' questions are perceived positively and are important attributes that can enhance users' satisfaction and patronage of the library.

Research Question 3: Identify the factors influencing librarians' attitudes towards users at the Benue State University Library.

Table 3: Factors influencing librarians' attitudes towards users at the Benue State University Library.

S/N	Statement N (125)	SF 4	F 3	UF 2	SUF 1	$\bar{X}$	Std.	Remark
1	I believe that regular training in customer service positively influences my attitude towards users.	80(51.5)	30(35.9)	8(7.5)	4(5.1)	3.94	0.825	SF
2	Having adequate resources and a conducive work environment improves my attitude and interactions with users.	87(56.0)	28(34.1)	6(7.2)	4(2.7)	3.83	0.743	SF
3	My personal attitudes and previous experiences with users significantly affect how I respond to them.	66(49.7)	46(34.7)	5(7.5)	9(8.1)	3.86	0.911	SF
4	A manageable workload and sufficient staffing levels help me maintain a positive attitude towards users.	64(49.1)	56(35.6)	2(6.6)	3(8.7)	3.95	0.918	SF
5	Supportive institutional policies and a positive organizational culture influence my attitude towards providing service to users.	62(43.1)	45(45.5)	7(5.4)	11(6.0)	3.86	0.813	F

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The highest mean score was recorded for the statement that librarians have proper management of the library ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, SF = 0.825), indicating the strongest positive assessment. This was followed by librarians' expertise in searching electronic resources and their knowledge to answer users' questions, both with a mean of 3.96. Librarians' proactiveness in supplying information to users also received a high rating ($\bar{X} = 3.85$, SF = 0.918), while the statement that librarians know how to provide the right information sources recorded the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.78$, SUF = 0.743), though it remained strongly favourable. The findings indicate that effective library management, knowledge of appropriate information sources, expertise in electronic resource searching, proactive information provision, and the ability to answer users' questions are perceived positively and are important attributes that can enhance users' satisfaction and patronage of the library.

Summary of Findings

The study examined librarians' attitudes and users' patronage behaviour in information retrieval services at Benue State University Library, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The findings from objective one revealed that librarians generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards factors that encourage users' patronage of the library. Respondents strongly agreed that convenient library opening hours, adequate e-books and journals, a comfortable and quiet seating environment, helpful and knowledgeable librarians, and a user-friendly online catalogue contribute to users' patronage. The high mean scores across the items, ranging from 3.85 to 3.94, indicate that the library provides important facilities and services that can encourage users to make regular use of its resources and services.

The findings for objective two showed that librarians' attitudes and professional competencies have a positive impact on user satisfaction and patronage at the Benue State University Library. Respondents strongly agreed that proper management of the library, the ability to provide appropriate information sources, expertise in searching electronic resources, proactive provision of information, and adequate knowledge to answer users' questions enhance users' satisfaction and encourage patronage. The mean scores, which ranged from 3.78 to 4.00, demonstrate that effective service delivery and librarians' professional competence are important in meeting users' information needs and creating positive experiences that can encourage continued use of the library.

For objective three, the findings identified several factors influencing librarians' attitudes towards users. Respondents generally agreed that regular customer-service training, adequate resources, a conducive work environment, positive personal experiences, manageable workloads, sufficient staffing, supportive institutional policies, and a positive organizational culture influence librarians' attitudes and interactions with users. The mean scores ranged from 3.83 to 3.95, with manageable workload and sufficient staffing ($\bar{X} = 3.95$) and regular customer-service training ($\bar{X} = 3.94$) emerging as particularly important factors. The findings suggest that librarians' positive attitudes are shaped by both individual and

organizational conditions and that improving staff training, working conditions, resources, and institutional support can enhance service delivery, user satisfaction, and patronage of the Benue State University Library.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding highlights the supportive and willing-to-help nature of the librarians at Benue State University Library. According to the study, a significant majority of users (80 out of 125) favourably rated the librarians as supportive and willing to help when needed, with a mean response of 3.34, which falls under the “Strongly Favourable” category. This suggests that the librarians play a crucial role in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, which is essential for promoting user satisfaction and patronage (Abdulfatai & Aishat, 2024). Furthermore, the librarians’ willingness to help may contribute to increased user engagement and motivation, as users are more likely to seek assistance and guidance when they feel supported and empowered.

The second finding is closely related to the first, as the favourable perception of librarians’ attitudes is likely to contribute to higher user satisfaction and patronage. The study’s findings are consistent with previous research, which has shown that librarians’ attitudes and behaviours can significantly influence user satisfaction (Adetayo *et al.*, 2021). In particular, the friendly, supportive, and welcoming nature of librarians may create a sense of trust, belonging, and confidence among users, thereby encouraging greater engagement with library services. Therefore, the findings emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining a favourable and supportive librarian-user relationship, which is essential for improving user satisfaction and encouraging continued patronage in the digital age. The final finding underscores the critical role of organizational support and manageable workloads in shaping librarians’ attitudes towards users at Benue State University Library. Respondents favourably rated the influence of supportive institutional policies and a positive organizational culture on librarians’ willingness and ability to provide quality services. Similarly, maintaining manageable workloads and ensuring sufficient staffing levels are important for fostering favourable attitudes, reducing work-related stress, and preventing burnout among librarians. These factors collectively suggest that a well-structured work environment, characterized by institutional support and effective resource management, is vital for promoting professional satisfaction and positive interactions with users. Consequently, addressing these organizational factors can improve service quality and contribute to a more user-centred library environment (Buhari & Egunjobi, 2025).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the vital role librarians play in supporting the information needs of students at the Benue State University Library. The findings underscore that librarians are central to facilitating access to information, promoting information literacy, and creating a supportive learning environment. Moreover, the study highlights the significant influence of organizational factors on librarians’ attitudes towards users. Organizational support, a positive institutional culture, manageable workloads, and adequate staffing are crucial elements that foster favorable attitudes, reduce stress, and enhance service quality. Collectively, these factors emphasize the importance of a supportive

and well-resourced work environment in promoting professional satisfaction and improving interactions between librarians and users. Addressing these organizational aspects will ultimately lead to more effective library services and better learning experiences for students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings that the librarians at the Benue State University Library are supportive and willing to help, the following three recommendations can be made:

1. To further enhance the librarians' skills and knowledge, the Benue State University Library administration should consider providing regular training and development programs for the librarians. This can include workshops, conferences, and online courses on user-centered services, information literacy, and technology skills. By investing in the librarians' professional growth, the university can ensure that they remain equipped to provide high-quality support to users and continue to meet their evolving needs.
2. To foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, the Benue State University Library should establish regular user engagement and feedback mechanisms. This can include regular user surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews to gather feedback and suggestions from users. By actively soliciting user input and acting on their suggestions, the university can demonstrate its commitment to user-centered services and improve the overall user experience, ultimately leading to increased user satisfaction and loyalty.
3. Benue State University Library's administration prioritizes the development and implementation of supportive institutional policies that foster a positive organizational culture. This can be achieved through regular staff engagement, recognition programs, and clear communication channels that promote a collaborative and motivating work environment. Additionally, the university should conduct periodic workload assessments and ensure adequate staffing levels to prevent burnout and maintain high service standards. Investing in staff well-being and creating a supportive organizational climate will enhance librarians' attitudes towards users, leading to improved service quality and a more effective and satisfying library experience for all users.

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