AN ASSESSMENT OF REFERENCE SOURCES IN TWO SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess reference sources in two selected university libraries in kwara state. Specifically, four research questions were developed and answered, and hypotheses was not fomulated due to the fact that this paper is an observation work between two university libraries and empirical data was not gathered. The study adopted survey design. Two reference librarians constituted the sample for the study which was selected based on proximity from two selected university libraies in kwara state. A structued interview questions was used to collect data. The data collected for the study through interview was transcribed which was presented inform of tables as a method of data analysis. The finding showed encyclopeadia, bibliography, dictionary, directories and gazetteer as the available reference resources in University of Ilorin library while encyclopeadia, bibliography, dictionary, directories and almanacs as the available reference resources in Al-hikmah University library. Also, the study found that both university libraries used the general criteria identifed to evaluate their resources. In addition, the study found that both university libraries adopted reference criteria to evaluate their resources. Similarly, the study found that there is a significant relationship between criteria used by both university libraries to evaluate their reference resources. Based on the findings of the study, university management should allocate some certain amount of fund to the reference department so as to purchase the information materials that are not available in this section and both libraries should try as much as possible to keep their resources up-to-date for the effective delivery of reference services.

Background to the Study

Academic libraries are seen as those libraries established in institutions of higher learning be it universities, polytechnics, college of education or other similar or related institutions (Edom, 2013). This is to say that any library attached to a post-secondary or tertiary institution can be described as academic library. Such institutions include universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. The collection of this library is tailored towards achievement of the institutional goals of teaching, learning and research. Furthermore, the purpose of this library is to serve the students, lecturers, administrative members of the academic communities as well as potential users. According to Chimah and Nwokocha (2015), describe academic libraries as libraries

attached to higher institutions of learning like colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics and universities. Therefore, they are information hubs that play vital role of providing required information for the purpose of research, knowledge advancement, cultural preservation, recreational provisions and every other human development activity. In looking at this one can conclude that academic library is unique among other libraries because of its emphasis on research more than teaching and learning as in the case of polytechnic and colleges of education libraries (Agu, 2010).

There are different departments that make up the academic library that enable it to achieve her goals. These departments include Readers' service department; Serial department; Acquisition department; Cataloguing and Classification department; and Reference department. Emphatically, out of these departments, reference section is very important in every academic library. For any library to have free flow of information, the reference section must be very functional. The responsibility of every library is not just to select, acquire and organize information materials, but to go as far as disseminating such information to its users. The reference section is that area in the library where users get in contact with the library properly. Achebe (2012) opined that reference and information service (RIS) is an aspect of library services in which contact between the reader and library materials is established through staff assistance, matching the user with the library materials which could be printed or electronic. In the same vein, this section contains materials that can not be read from cover to cover and in addition to this, this department rendered reference services which are one of the essential services provided in the library. It is one of the visible expressions of the library's purpose and mission.

More importantly, reference sources are information materials that are consulted for specific purpose based on the information needs of the user. In corroboration to this, Reitz (2004)

postulated that references sources are any publication from which authoritative information may be obtained, including but not limited to reference books, catalog records, printed indexes and abstracting services and bibliographic. Therefore, for this department to carry out their activities effectively; they acquire various reference resources at their disposal (both human and physical format) and services in order to achieve these objectives. Reference sources are materials/books that are consulted in the library alone i.e. they cannot be borrowed from the library. Thus academic libraries require rich collection of reference resources which include encyclopedia, dictionaries, concordance, directories, gazetteers, atlases, hand book/manuals, indexes, periodicals, computer data base resources, internet resources, African Today, Who is Who in Africa, Europa world of learning, Europa world year book, facts on file, year book, Information please Almanac, National directories, Readers' guide, Thesaurus, Biographies etc. in both print and non-print format in order to meet up the information needs of her users. Enough or adequate facilities like computers, air condition, tables, chairs, carrels, fans, photocopying services, lightings, telephone and funds are also needed. The resources and facilities are used by reference staff or institution librarians to achieve the objectives of the parent body.

On the other hand, evaluation of the reference source is very paramount due to the enormous amount of reference resources that are available in this present day and libraries cannot afford all of them. Therefore, evaluation as used in this study, refers to the assessment of the quality of the reference materials. In other words, it is refers to as the total judgment about the reference materials before they were acquired into the library. However, in order to evaluate reference materials, the reference librarian use the yard sticks applicable to any reference materials to consider the suitability or otherwise of a reference works. Despite the fact that there large amount of reference materials that are widely available in this present age which library need

to acquire into their library so as to meet the information need of the library users, library needs to critically evaluate each of these reference resources that they want to acquire into the library by using certain criteria which will justify the quality of that resources. It was against this background that this study was therefore design to use common criteria to evaluate the reference resources in University of Ilorin library and Al-hikmah University library Kwara state.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of reference resource to the reference department cannot be over emphasized. This is because the provision of reference and information services based on the available resources which are the vital services libraries offer to users. However, inappropriate reference resource will pose problem to the performance of effective reference services whereby the users who want information from reference collection will get discouraged due to the inappropriate resources to address their information needs. This is the reason why it is pertinent to investigate some criteria used by the reference librarian to evaluate reference resources that they want to acquire into the library so as to curb this problem. The motivation for this study is to create an awareness on the availability and uses of reference resouces as well as outlining criteria to examine the reference resources to provide solutions to the challenges of the reference services. Therefore, it is in light of this that this study was designed to analyze the criteria used by University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library to evaluate their reference resources.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the reference resource in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the available reference sources in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library.

2. examine the criteria use by the reference librarian to evaluate reference resource in University of Ilorin library and Al-hikmah University library

3. examine the criteria adopted to evaluate their resources by the researchers .

4. Ccompare the criteria used by University of Ilorin library and Al-hikmah University library to evaluate their reference resources.

Research Questions

The following research question will be answered in order to achieve the stated objectives

1. What are the available reference resources in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah Library?

2. What are the criteria use by the reference librarian to evaluate reference resource in University of Ilorin library and Al-hikmah University library?

3. Which of the criteria was adopted to evaluate their resourses by the researcher?

4. What are the relationship/differences that exist in the criteria used by University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University library when evaluating reference resources.

Scope of the study

This study concentrates on evaluation of reference resources in two selected higher institutions of learning in Kwara state. The study will be limited to University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University library. Reference librarian in the two selected library will constitute the population for the study. Structured interview and observation checklist will be used to collect data from the respondent. Furthermore, data collected for the study will analyzed through transcription and presented in form of table.

Review of the Related Literature

The review of related literature for the research work is organized under the following sub headings:

Concept of Academic Library

Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) pointed out that academic library is everlasting stone house of knowledge where you can visit without restriction to access the whole fields of knowledge for academic success. In the same vein, Academic library is purposely attached to an academic institution above the secondary level, serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff (Sivathaasan 2013). In other words, academic library is a type of library found in institutions of higher learning universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Similarly, Oyegunle (2013), posted that academic libraries are information centers established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to geneate knowledge, equip poeple knowledge in order to serve the society and advance the well being of mankind. An academic library is therefore a library that is attached to tertiary institutions, serving the teaching and research needs of her users. These libraries serve two complementary purposes: to support the schools curriculum, and to support the research of the university, faculty and students. In short, college and university libraries come under the umbrella of academic libraries. They are libraries that maintain large collection of detailed research materials for advanced students and scholars.

Concept of Reference Service

The word reference service has been defined in various ways by different scholars in the field of Library and Information Science. Ifidon and Ifidon (2008) defined reference services as direct personal assistance given by librarians to library patrons who are in pursuit of information for whatever purpose. They further assert that reference service does not only involve directing the user to the location of the material where the information can be found or the identification and selection of materials related to a particular information need and the

provision of a piece of brief factual information, but also locating what information is relevant from a mass of relevant and irrelevant information.

 In order words, it is for Adhoc consultation. It is not cover to cover reading but consulted for a specific piece of information. Idris, Oji and Abana (2011), reference service is the personal assistance given by librarians to users in pursuit of information; the assistance could be inform of inforrmation itself or could be any library activity delibrately designed to facilitate easy retrieval of information.

According to Olaleye (2015), reference service is a reactive service given to users of the library on demand. The term reference service accoding to Akor, P. And Alhassan (2015), is a direct personal assistance to readers seeking for information in the library. Consequently, reference services in Nigeria libraries is an age long tradition as reference librarians serve as a pilot toward directing information seekers on the latest information that are inherent in a particular field of human endeavour, the provision of qualitative reference service will no doubt promote research and development for national development.

Concept of Reference Resources

Reference sources had been conceptualized by different scholars. For example, reference resources according to Popoola and Haliso (2009), are those information bearing materials in print and electronic formats used in the library to answer specific and direct questions such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROMS, database, the internet/ E-mail, video tapes/ cassettes, diskettes, computers, and so on.

Onifade and Sowole (2011), also defined reference resources as books, collections, or materials that are consulted in the library alone and not meant to be borrowed out,they are not to be read from cover to cover but to answer specific questions. Furthermore, these sources are materials are meant to be consulted in the library alone i.e. they cannot be borrowed from the library. In

the same vein, Okiki (2013), defined reference resources as materials or books that are only meant for reference purpose. Reference materials are the publications either book or non-book materials consulted only within the library for specific facts or a subjects. According to Abdulahi and Mamza (2014), reference resources are gold-mines of the reference section, their value is inestimable to users who need them to obtain relevant information. In conclusion, reference resources according to Ogbuiyi (2015), incude dictionaries, atlasses and almanacs e.t.c which are research tools that are used in writing papers or project. In looking at all this definition from different scholars, it can be deduced that reference resources are unique and they are very paramount to the reference section of the library.

Basic Reference Sources

Before identifying the different types of reference resources, it is pertinent to explain the various sources of reference resources. Therefore, reference sources are the publications from which authoritative and authentic information can be obtained. Primarily these sources are divided into three basic categories namely; primary sources, secondary sources and tertiary sources.

a. **Primary sources:** These are the original records and include research papers, monographs, patients, standards, trade literature dissertations and unpublished sources of information.

b. **Secondary sources:** These sources are built upon the primary sources which include dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, indexing periodicals, abstracting periodicals, reviews and surveys.

c. **Tertiary sources:** These sources consist of information which is based on primary and secondary sources. These include guides to literature directories and bibliography of bibliographies.

Types of Reference Resources

According to Ozioko and Amucheazi (2008) defined reference resources as the information materials that are designed to be looked up for specific information. These information materials are categorized into five namely Dictionary, Encyclopedia, Fact sources, Geographical source and Biographical sources (Katz, 1997).

1. **Dictionary:** Madu (2008) defined dictionary as a list of unconnected items arranged in an alphabetical order. Only two features of a dictionary are the meaning and correct spelling of words that usually come to the mind of the user whereas there are other features. Examples of dictionaries are: The Oxford English dictionary, library and information science dictionary, Acronyms, initialization and abbreviations dictionary, Chamber's biographical dictionary, English-Italian dictionary, Dictionary of Antibiotics and related substance etc. in the same vein, Grates (2001) defines dictionary as a book dealing with words/terms and language are arranged in alphabetical order. Beside meanings Dictionaries provide words spelling, pronunciation, usage etc. there are different types of dictionaries, starting from general to specialized examples are Chambers dictionary of Education, Webster Third International Dictionary, Oxford dictionary, dictionary of quotation and Longman dictionary of scientific usage.

2. **Encyclopedias**: - According to Ezennia (2000) encyclopedias are reference sources that contain information in almost every field of knowledge or on a subject area. They provide background knowledge information on any topic as well as current information. This reference source seldom treats a topic in a minute detail but they are usually factual and current. They only provide readable introduction by an authority, they also list reference or further reading for the student who wishes to go beyond the mere introduction.

3. **Biographical Sources**: A biography is a well written account of a person's life. It gives an accurate history of somebody's life from his birth to his death in a manner that his character, personality and philosophy will be seen and understood. Biographies gives important information about eminent personalities such information as dates of birth and death, educational background, position held, hobbies, marital status, address and contributions made are given. Biographies are meant to inform and satisfy the curiosities of knowing about the great and near great men both living and dead. It is a good reference source for reference questions example, universal and current biographies, national and local biographies, professional and subject biographies. When an individual writes an account of his own life, it is known as autobiography.

4. **Fact Sources**: These reference sources are the most heavily used for providing reference services. They provide facts on a wide range of issues both background and current information. They consist of reference sources such as yearbooks, almanacs, handbooks, directories, etc. the facts stated in these reference sources are usually accurate as at the time of production (Aina, 2004). They are very useful in providing answers to ready-reference question.

5. **Geographical Sources**: these are reference materials which provide answers to various questions that are taken at the reference desk e.g. position of a tiny town, population figures, railway lines in a country, major roads etc. These sources include maps atlases, gazetteers and guides. Maps are travel guides. They are representation of surface of the earth on flat surface or paper showing countries, oceans and rivers. Atlases provide information on physical and climatic conditions of different places such as towns, countries and regions. Examples of atlases are the Times Atlas of the world and the shepherd historic Atlas. Gazetteers are geography dictionary or index that usually provides

information on towns, cities, countries and other geographical features. They also provide information on latitude, longitude, description and statistics about places e.g. Chambers World Gazetteers, Chambers Columbia Gazetteers of the world and Webster's New Geographical Dictionary. Travel Guides provide information to travelers about the places of interest and features of such places.

Specifically, the following are the types of the references sources;

i. **Directories**: - Directories are reference materials that list persons or organizations in alphabetical/classified arrangement. They include addresses and affiliations for individuals and officers and other data for organizations. They exist to direct readers in some way to information they require. The three main questions they set out to answer are: -Who lives at a stated address? What is the address of a particular person or place? What firms or persons are there in certain line of business?. Examples of Directories are local Directories; trade Directories, telephone directories training opportunities in Nigeria, Hotel Directory, and industrial Directory of Nigeria.

ii. **Year Book:** Yearbook is a publication which is issued annually for the purpose of giving current information in narrative, statistical or directory form. They provide a variety of information relating to events, progress and conditions within the immediate past year. Yearbooks usually have the advantage of being more up to date than encyclopedias in virtually all subjects. They can be categorized into General Year books, special Yearbooks and National Yearbooks.

iii. **Indexes:** According to Borko (1994) an index is a systematic guide to items contained in, or concepts derived from a collection. These items or derived concepts are presented by entries in a known or stated searchable order such as alphabetical, chronological or numerical, they also points out the page or pages where certain information can be found.

Such information could be located through another subject or geographical indexes. Indexes are also useful for seeing at a glance and giving comprehensive overview of subjects treated in a book or field. The types of indexes include – Author index, Name index, Subject index, Geographical index, Periodical index, Newspaper index and Citation index.

iv. **Bibliographies**: These are reference sources that provide list of articles in books, periodicals, conference proceedings, technical reports, Thesis and Dissertations on a particular subject or by a given author. The listed materials are arranged systematically by authors, titles and subjects. Kumar (2006), defined bibliography as defined as a list of books arranged according to some permanent principle. It is systematic listing of human communications essentially designed for the study of book and the science of transmission of literary documents. A bibliography is of several kinds viz: systematic or enumerative, descriptive; textual; historical, analytical or critical.

v. **Abstract:** Abstract is condensed form of an original literature. It could be regarded as a summary, précis or resume of the information contained in a document or periodical. An abstract normally starts with a lead sentence which serves as a premise. It comes after the bibliographic information of the document has been cited. The bibliographic information includes – the name of the author of the document, the title, the imprints, collation, and any other information necessary for identifying the document. An abstract enables the reader to judge the relevance of the original document. It may also concentrate on some of the information conveyed by the original document. The main aim of all abstracts is to save the time of the user. Abstracts are used or consulted to determine the need for reading the original document.

vi. **Thesaurus:** Thesaurus is a collection of words and phrases arranged according to ideas rather than alphabetically. It is invaluable for finding an apt, accurate, rendition and elegant expression of ones thought. Here, all words dealing with the same ideas are grouped together regardless of their spelling and grammatical function.

vii. **Almanac and Yearbooks**: - Information on current events including business and the economy, the courts, violence, disasters, education, energy entertainment, and culture, environment, health and medicine, international affairs, government and politics, people, places and things, religion, science etc are the major grounds covered.

viii. **Directories:** Kumar (2006) described directory as a list of persons or organizations systematically arranged, usually in alphabetical or classified order, giving addresses, affiliation etc. for individuals. It gives addresses, officers, functions and similar data for organization. Examples of the different types of directories are: Government directories (Nigerian National Telephone directory), Institutional directories (Directory of African Universities), Professional directories (Directory of membership). Directories usually contain telephone numbers and addresses of business and government organizations across the country of interest. For example, the National Telephone Directory of Nigeria and the Nigerian National Telephone Directory. These are exceptions as they bear the name directory in their title. Directories are arranged alphabetically by business name and place address.

ix. **Gazetteers:** A gazetteers are geographical reference materials used to find lists of places, mountains, rivers, population, specifics on where a place is located and spelling and pronunciation of place names: Examples of gazetteers are: Chambers world gazetteer, Webster's new geographical dictionary.

x.   **Atlases:** Atlases are guide reference books of cartographic information. They provide summary of topographical knowledge in a country or continent on small – scale maps. Their content is arranged in a logical manner for consultation, which is facilitated by all indexes. Examples are: - The Time Atlas of the World – This Atlas covers the economic and political aspects of states and territories of the world. The atlas has the Dutch, French and German editions. Another type is The Shepherd Historical Atlas.

xi.   **Handbooks / manuals***:* Theses are ready reference sources which give quick information about established knowledge. They are also instruction books used by teachers and students. They provide instruction on how to do things. Handbooks and manuals in the science give basic information in science and technology. They contain data, procedure, tables, graphs, symbols, diagrams and illustrations. Scientists and technologist, teachers and students use handbooks for teaching and to establish knowledge, learning and research. These books come in different titles which are related to a specific subject area or specialty.

Non print reference resources (Machine readable reference resources).

These resources according to Madu (2008) are available on CDROM (Computer Disc Read Only memory) as follows:

i.   **CD-ROM sources: -** These are popular electronic format for reference services which are stored for two reasons. First they can store a large amount of information in a small amount of space. Second, they offer Boolean searching, thus assisting the user in finding additional material that might not be so easily located in a print format. CD-ROMs are good choice for references with a limited audience. They take up less space and yet provide the needed access.

ii.   **Commercial database sources:** Online commercial databases comprise author's format. They include such commercial networks as Dialog locally mounted databases, and access

to databases from remote locations. The advantage of online commercial data source includes: to make the databases available to outside users. It can handle large bibliographic and full text databases. It allows the user to search several databases at one time, as is possible on Dialog and OCLCs First Search.

iii. **Internet source:** The internet is a vital medium for information dissemination. Much of the data available may not be seen as useful in terms of the needs of the traditional library user. Nevertheless, there is an interesting amount of information available electronically which is considered to be of value which library users are exploring. It is a source of the most current information and can be updated quickly. It is easy to use and does not require any additional equipment beyond the PC and modem. It can add graphics, photographs, sound, video and animation to a web site. Libraries can use the Internet for offering the following library and information services.

Criteria for Evaluating Reference Materials

According to Madu (2008) he postulated that in order to properly evaluate reference resources in the library or information centers, there are certain criteria which are used in the selection of high-quality reference resources. These criteria are:

1. **Policy statement of the organization: -** Some libraries have written policy statements; others do not have. This policy statement is also referred to as management by objectives (MBO). A critical look at these will determine if the resources acquired are of high quality and meet the objectives of the library or not.

2. **Ability of the reference resources to meet demand: -** This is a very important aspect of evaluation. The resources acquired are expected to meet the demands of the users. An evaluator will look at the demands of the users as well as the objectives and see how the users' demands are met.

3. **Recency of the Reference Resources: -** One other important point in resources evaluation is how recent the resources are. Every library is expected to acquire materials that are up-to-date. Evaluators or any reference resource user will be disappointed if they see material of first edition when the third edition of that same material has been published.

4. **Quality of the Reference Resources: -** The forth parameter for evaluation is the quality of the materials. In considering the quality here, three things are considered by the evaluators. These include.

   i. *Reputation of the author:* Here the qualification of the author of the reference resources is examined. It is examined to find out if the writer is an authority in the area in which he has written. His experience in terms of work and institution affiliation also counts.

   ii. *Reputation of the publisher:* Some publishers have financial capacity to ensure regular publication of their work. For instance, the Encyclopedia Americana enjoys regular revision because the publishing body, the Encyclopedia Americana. In Corp. of New York is a credible one which can stay in business in term of finance for very long.

   iii. *Physical features:* Another criterion that determines the quality of reference sources is the physical features of the material. It is advisable here to go for reference resources with hard cover. This ensures durability, hence such materials in the reference section are usually subjected to frequent use. For the quality of paper, seventy (70) grams and above are preferable.

In line with the above statement, Utor (2004) identify some criteria to evaluate the reference collections such as:

i. **Purpose:** The preliminary means of investigation must be explored. The table of contents will usually considerably more: what the materials contain and how it is built. The introduction or preface may give complete details as to what the author expects his work to accomplish. It is also useful to examine the title's index. The index may reveal: (a) how useful the material is for ready or long range reference (b) whether the author has achieved his purpose or not.

ii. **Authority:** Related to the question of purpose is that of authority. The following basic questions need to be answered: What are the author's qualifications, experience, and sources of his knowledge? Also related to this is the reputation of the publishers and at times distributors. Some publishers have excellent reputations for issuing good reference works, others are noteworthy for fair to bad titles.

iii. **Scope:** The scope of a reference source can be properly understood by finding answers to the following questions:

    a. What has the author contributed that cannot be found in other reference sources?

    b. How up to date is the source?

    c. Is it a new work? Is it a reprint? Is it a new edition?

    d. Does the work follow a definite plan consistently?

    e. Can the reference work be used alone or must it be supplemented by others?

    f. How does coverage look like?

    g. And finally, has its purpose (scope) been fulfilled in the main text?

iv. **Audience:** The majority of reference works are prepared for adults' usage. The question of audience is as important as those examined. The librarian must ask one major questions: Is this work for the scholar, or student of the subject, or is it for the layman with little or no knowledge of the subject? It is also useful for the reference librarian to ascertain the

reading level of a given reference book. This will enable him to know whether the work is worth buying, bearing in mind the type of readers he has in his library.

v. **Format:** Format comprise of the following: arrangement, binding, quality of paper, typefaces, page makeup, illustrations, plates, diagrams, maps etc. Good arrangement adds to the value of a reference book. It must be in such a way that information could be located easily and quickly too. The arrangement in the main text can be classified or arranged chronologically, geographically, or alphabetically, etc. binding is also a major consideration, particularly for much used works. The margins must be wide enough to allow rebinding when needed. The paper choosing should be of good quality. Poor quality paper does not last. For instance, the colour wears away with time. The following questions may also be asked: Do typeface and layout satisfy the minimum specifications? Are the illustrations, plates, diagrams, maps, etc. of good quality and well produced?, are they directly related to the main text?, Are they self explanatory?.

Methodology

Survey method was adopted in conjunction with site visits to the selected libraries. Reference librarians constitute the population of the study. Furthermore, the study selected two head of reference department i.e. one from University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique. The reason for using this sampling technique is that the study is dealing with reference resource and the head of the reference section is in the best position to answer questions that are related to the reference section. The criterion used for the selection of the libraries was proximity, i.e., accessibility to the researchers. A structured interview question was used to collect data from the respondents and the researchers assessed the collections personally with the use of observation checklist. The reason for using interview is that researchers need in-depth information about the reference resources housed in the reference section. This is the reason why it is consider appropriate for

the study. Data collected for the study through interview was transcribed which was presented inform of table as a method of data analysis for easy understanding.

RESULTS

The results of the analyses obtained from the interview and observation checklist are presented as follows:

Table 1: Bio-data of the Respondent

Variable	University of Ilorin Library	Al-hikmah University Library
Gender	Male	Male
Frequency	1	1

The table above shows that majority of the respondents are male. This simply means that the reference librarians in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University library are male.

Research Question 1: What are the available reference resources in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah Library?

Table 2: Available reference resources in the library

S/N	Reference Resources	University of Ilorin Library	Al-hikmah University Library
1	Encyclopedia	✓	✓
2	Bibliography	✓	✓
3	Dictionary	✓	✓
4	Directories	✓	✓

5	Almanacs	✓	✓
6	Handbooks	✓	✓
7	Gazetteer	✓	X
8	Gazette	✓	✓
9	Year Book	✓	✓
10	Manual	✓	X
11	Atlas	✓	✓
12	Guide Book	✓	✓
13	Indexes	✓	✓
14	Abstract	✓	✓
15	Biographical sources	✓	✓
16	Commercial Databases	X	X
17	CD-Rom sources	✓	X
18	Thesaurus	✓	✓
19	Periodicals	✓	✓
20	Decree	X	X
21	Edicts	X	X

22	prospectuses of Nigerian University	✓	X

Source: Univesity of Ilorin and Al-hikmah Library (2019)

Note: √ = Available; x = Not Available

The table above, reveal the available reference resources in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library. The checklist was extracted from the interview and from the observation checklist issued by the researchers. The reference librarians from each library were interviewed on each of the reference resources that they have in their library. The result shows that out of the possible twenty-two reference resources that the researchers asked the librarian only nineteen (19) reference resources which was indicated with (√) sign were available in University of Ilorin while only three (3) reference resources which was indicated with (x) sign were not available in the library. On the other hand, result also shows that out of the twenty-two (22) reference resources listed only fifteen (15) reference resources which was indicated with (√) sign were available in Al-hikmah University Library while seven (7) reference resources which were indicated with (x) were not available in the library. Therefore, from the result and personal observation of the researchers, University of Ilorin Library possesses more reference resources than Al-hikmah University Library and both of them have over 90% of the reference resources in the library.

Research Question 2: What are the criteria use by the reference librarian to evaluate reference resource in University of Ilorin library and Al-hikmah University library?

Table 3: Criteria used to evaluate reference resources

S/N	Criteria	University of Ilorin Library	Al-hikmahh University of Library
1	Policy Statement of the organization	✓	✓
2	Reputation of the author	✓	✓

3	Reputation of the publisher	✓	✓
4	Recency	✓	✓
5	Physical features	✓	✓
6	Purpose	✓	✓
7	Format	✓	✓
8	Cost	✓	✓

Source: Univesity of Ilorin and Al-hikmah Library (2019)

Note: √ = Yes; x = No

The table above was also extracted from the interview response of the references librarian in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library which shows the criteria used by the reference librarian to evaluate the reference resources. Result shows that the reference librarian of both universities used the general criteria as identified in the above table to evaluate their resources i.e. all of them stated that they use policy statement of the organization, reputation of the author, reputation of the publisher, recency, physical features, purpose, format and cost as the criteria they use to evaluate the resources. Furthermore, from the observation checklist of the researchers which contain the list of the certain criteria shows that their reference resources correspond with the listed criterial in the observation checklist

Research Question 3: Which of the criteria was used to evaluate their resourses by the researcher?

Table 4: Criteria used to evaluate reference resources in University of Ilorin and Al-hikmah University Library

S/N	Criteria	University of Ilorin Library	Al-hikmahh University of Library
1	Policy Statement of the organization	✓	✓
2	Reputation of the author	✓	✓
3	Reputation of the publisher	✓	✓
4	Recency	✓	✓
5	Physical features	✓	✓
6	Purpose	✓	✓
7	Format	✓	✓
8	Cost	✓	✓

Source: Univesity of Ilorin and Al-hikmah Library (2019)

Note: √ = Yes; x = No

The table above was also extracted from the interview response of the references librarian in University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University Library which shows the criteria adopted by the reference librarian to evaluate the reference resources. Result shows that the reference librarian of both universities adopted the general criteria as identified in the above table to evaluate their resources i.e. all of them stated that they use policy statement of the organization, reputation of the author, reputation of the publisher, recency, physical features, purpose, format and cost as the criteria they use to evaluate the resources. Furthermore, from

the observation checklist of the researchers which contain the list of the certain criteria shows that their reference resources correspond with the listed criterial in the observation checklist

Research Question 4: What are the relationship/differences that exist in the criteria used by University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University library to evaluate their reference resources?

The expunge Table 3 above provides answer to this question. The result as revealed from the table shows that reference librarian in University of Ilorin Library and that of Al-hikmah University Library use the same criteria to evaluate their reference resources. This simply means that there is commonality in the way they evaluate their reference resources and no difference exist in the way of evaluating their reference resources.

Discussion of Findings

Reference resources are very vital in the service delivery of the library. Therefore, it is very pertinent to evaluate these resources in order to make the service delivery effective. The result obtained from the study shows that University of Ilorin Library has majority of the reference resources such as dictionary, encyclopedia, almanac, year book, gazetteer, gazette, map, atlas, etc. except commercial database, edict and decree that are not available in the library. On the other hand, result also confirms that Al-hikmah University Library has the same resources in their collection except decree, edict, CD-ROM resources, commercial database, manual and gazetteer. This shows that University of Ilorin Library has more reference resources in their collection than Al-hikmah University Library.

1. More importantly, result also reveals that reference librarian from the two university library use the same criteria to evaluate their reference resources such as policy statement of the organization, reputation of the publisher, reputation of the author,

recency, purpose, physical features of the information material, format and cost all these criteria are in accordance with the criteria stated by Utor (2004) and Madu (2008). Result also revealed that both libraries, University of Ilorin and Al-hikmah library adopted same criteria to evaluate their reference resources such as policy statement of the organization, reputation of the publisher, reputation of the author, recency, purpose, physical features of the information material, format and cost. Furthermore, result also shows that there is commonality in the way both university library evaluate their resources. In the same vein, from the personal observation of the researchers with the use of observation checklist which contain some criteria used to evaluate reference resouces reveals that all the reference resources are in good condition and are okay in order to meet the information needs of the users but some of their reference resources are out-dated. The hypothesis result showed that there is significant relationship between the criteria used by University of Ilorin Library and Al-hikmah University library when evaluating reference resources.

Conclusion

This study focused on the evaluation of reference resources using some certain criteria. Specifically, study reveals the available reference resources in both university library and some criteria that they use to evaluate their resources, the criteria adopted to evaluate their resources and also the relationship that exist in the criteria that they use to evaluate the reference resources. Therefore, base on the information gathered for this paper demonstrates certain uniformity in collections and criteria used to evaluate their reference resources. However, from the personal observation of the researchers, the reference resources in both university libraries are not up-to-date.

Recommendations

According to the result obtained for the study and the personal observation of the researchers, the study therefore recommends that;

1. University management should allocate some certain amount of fund to the reference department so as to purchase the information materials that are not available in this section.

2. Both libraries should try as much as possible to keep their resource up to date for the effective delivery of the reference services.

3. University management should maintain the criteria used to evaluate their reference resources to provide a credible reference information services.

4. Both libraries can engage in resource sharing since there is commonality in the way both university libray evaluate their resources.

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