

## Towards achieving effective information service delivery (ISD) in libraries by attitudinal approach

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### Abstract

Information is a vital tool and is central to human activities. It is very essential to human survival and a life-wire of any organization because of its significance in rational decision-making and a data of value in planning and the execution of programme in any given society. The foregoing implies that the information as a strategic resource for virtually any person, organizations or establishments must be adequately made accessible at all times to all people, no matter their social, economic and political deprivations. In order to realize this, a more cultured information service delivery approach must be employed. The paper advocates the application of attitudinal approach for an effective information service delivery and discusses some positive attitudes that can enhance effective information service delivery.

**Keywords:** Information, Attitude.

### Introduction

In today's complex society, access to information has become very imperative in making decision about the daily conduct of private and public lives. Oguntuase and Akinbode (2007) observed that this vital tool (information) is central to human activities, very essential to human survival and life-wire of any organization because it is crucial in rational decision making and a data of value in planning and the execution of programme in any given society. Hence, Kemp (1976) measured information as the fifth of the human needs in ranking with air, water, food and shelter. Virtually every facet of social endeavor that thrives is sustained by a good flow of information service delivery. Consequently, Popoola (2002) observed that information has become very essential and has become an effective tool for development in any society. In the same vein, Uche (1999) noted that information is the key resource for development and progress of a nation which, touches on the socio-economic, cultural and political development of its citizenry; and no nation can develop above her information infrastructural capacity and effective information service delivery. A society becomes moribund and motionless when information system stagnates or when an effective information service delivery is lacking. Information is a vital commodity that is indispensable in any developmental process and it is anchored by an effective information service delivery

The foregoing implies that the information as a strategic resource for virtually any person, organization or establishments must be adequately made accessible at all times to all people no matter their social, economic and political deprivations. As a result, contemporary library entails not only the conventional functions of preserving and providing access to vast amount of printed and non-printed materials, but the

creation of more cultured information service delivery approach in libraries and information centers through attitudinal approach.

Attitude can mar or make effective information service delivery depending on the approach. Positive attitude will certainly enhance the information service delivery, while negative attitude will mar the effort towards effective information service delivery. Be it as it may, positive attitude is critical in information service delivery and should be cultivated by all library staff if the success of library operational services must not be a mirage. You can't build anything without a solid foundation. Attitude, in fact positive attitude is the foundation sustaining all successful people and is the "advance man" of our true selves. Attitude is both our best friend and our worst enemy. It becomes a friend when it manifests itself positively and an enemy when it manifests its negativity. It is more honest and more consistent than our words. It is a manner which draws people to us, or repels them. It is never pleased unless it is expressed. It is the librarian of our past, the speaker of our present, and the prophet of our future (Rabin 1984). Against this backdrop, the paper recommends in a very frantic term the cultivation of positive attitude by library staffs in order to achieve an information service delivery.

**Conceptual Framework:** Information as a concept remains tangled in a loosely defined terminology, yet everyone has to deal with it many ways throughout their life. The simple meaning of information in a restricted science is a sensible statement, opinion, fact, concept of ideas or an association of statements of opinions or ideas. Rouse (2005) viewed information as data that has been verified to be accurate, timely, and specific and organized for a purpose. According to Oyedum (2007), information is that which is transmitted in the process of communication. That is a process of conveying a message from one source

through a medium to a receiver which usually results in decision making, behavioral change or add to one's knowledge. Information is anything that adds to our existing knowledge, ideas and experiences positively or negatively that assists us in making a decision.

Attitude according to the illustrated encyclopedic Dictionary Manual (Sopetia 2009) would be: posture, gesture, disposition of the body or of the mind. Attitude means how a person behaves or acts before a certain fact or situation. It is the disposition of a spirit that manifests itself in some way. The attitude is the voluntary disposition of a person given the existence in general or to a particular aspect of this. According to Jeffers (1988) we can say that attitude is a mental and emotional response to the variety of circumstances that occur in life. They are not specifically behaviors but modes or forms of conduct or performance. It is expressed outwardly, through gestures, movements, words, cries, laughs, tears, or sometimes stillness and apathy, but it responds to internal, cognitive and affective stimuli. According to this concept, there are positive and negative attitudes. Positive attitude are those provisions that help us to cope against the demands of the environment. The positive attitude of a person originates in making use of those resources that it has to solve its problems and difficulties. Indeed, the emphasis of a person with a positive attitude focuses on that which possesses rather than deals with what lacks. Between positive attitudes, which will surely come and strengthen our links with others either in family, friends, work, school, associations in which we participate, are: solidarity, friendship, understanding, be proactive, creativity, humor, among others.

Conversely, negative attitude is an inexhaustible source of troubles and defeatist feelings. In general, people adopt this type of stance towards life when they suffer from depression. Basically, a person with a negative attitude focuses his attention on something that lacks and needs such as health, money, love, etc. These types of attitudes (negative or positive) can be used to catalog our behavior to all other human beings that surround us. The negative attitudes that tend to create conflicts and tensions with others are: envy, greed, selfishness, jealousy, resentment, lie, arrogance, indifference, among others. Many times, both the positive and negative attitudes can be innate to human beings. By and large a correct positive attitude undoubtedly improves the chances of success.

**Positive Attitudes that can Enhance Effective Information Service Delivery:** The Positive attitudes that could enhance effective information service delivery are examined below:

**Cooperation:** Information service delivery requires cooperative and collaborative attitudes of the library staff. This is one of the positive attitudes that are expected of everyone who is a custodian of Information. There should be a good amount of cooperation from the staff of the library to allow the

information delivery service to flow. Lack of cooperation amongst staff will hinder effective delivery of information because where there is no cooperation the flow of information stagnates. Effective information delivery service can only be achieved when every staff cultivates cooperative attitude in sharing of ideas, opinions, work, reference questions and challenges confronting the library.

**Acceptance of Responsibilities:** It takes a good measure of discipline to accept responsibility either from your boss, equals and subordinates. However, this is a very essential positive attitude that is required of every library staff. An effective or efficient information service requires that informational responsibilities are accepted and dispatched by staff immediately in order to enhance the smooth processes of information dissemination in the library. Every informational responsibility demands urgent attention because information has to be delivered as when due, else it will stale or expires. Library staff should therefore, display satisfactory positive attitude to accept responsibilities in order to enhance smooth flow of information.

**Kindness:** Kindness is an innate attitude. Most people are not borne with kindness, but it can be cultivated by library staff to enhance effective information transformation to take place. Kindness is an attitude that requires a library staff to offer information service with all passion without looking back for appreciation or reward from anybody. This benevolence attitude should be cultivated and demonstrated by library staff in order to allow the flow of information. It is expected of every staff to have this vital attitude because effective information service delivery cannot be achieved in absence of kindness. Attending to a patron with a passion of kindness during information service, does not only enhance effective information service delivery, but goes a long way to promote the image of the library and its staff.

**Friendliness:** A library staff should not only be a friend to its information resource materials with inscription on them '**handle library materials with care or treat library materials like your love ones**'. This attitude of friendliness should be extended to the users of his/her information resources. Attitudes of friendliness when displayed in course of information service make the two parties comfortable and relax, and this goes a long way to enhance effective information service delivery. Experience has shown that most library staff show indignant attitude in course of relating with library clientele and paradoxically make the patrons to leave the library in desperation and frustrations thereby averting information service delivery. Attitude of friendliness should be a goal of every library which its staff should cultivate if an effective information service delivery should be achieved.

**Respect:** Respect is a golden rule in library operations. An attitude of respect therefore, is expected of all library staff. Information service flows better when the

library staff show considerable attitude of respect to the library users. Respect is contagious in nature and also reciprocal. Respect begets respect, if you would expect respect from people, you must respect others. In order to enhance effective information service delivery, library staff should cultivate an attitude of respect in attending to the patrons. Library patrons are by nature very curious and desperate to have their information needs met and may not observe the necessary social decorum at all times, but even at that the library staff should display considerable amount of respect to them in order to alleviate their desperations and frustrations. Such an attitude if exhibited will in great measure pave way for an effective information service delivery.

**Sharing of Ideas:** Library is a school of great ideas and store of knowledge which are meant to be shared amongst the staff and even the library users. It is the sharing of ideas and knowledge that culminates information dissemination in the library and ultimately lead to effective information service delivery. An attitude of sharing ideas is therefore, required of every library staff if information service delivery should be enhanced in the library. It is this attitude that gives an impetus to every library staff to offer best information service to the clients. Absence of this vital attitude of sharing of ideas and information will amount to hoarding of information and consequently hinder effective information service flow.

**Obedience:** Obedience is a requirement of law. As citizens, we are expected to obey the laws of the land, obey rules and regulations of the school and organization where we work. Obedience is therefore, a vital attitude that every library staff must cultivate in order to enjoy peace and happiness and the relationship of his/her superiors. Without obedience, it will difficult to achieve effective information service delivery. For example, without obedience, library staff may disregard the rules of the library against stealing and vital resource materials may be catered away from the library. This kind of attitude is not only criminal but will affect negatively the smooth information service delivery in the library. Obviously any item remove or stolen affects the library and effective dissemination of information negatively. Therefore, there is a great need for all library staff, no matter your position or rank to develop an attitude of obedience in order to enhance effective information delivery.

**Delegation of Responsibilities:** One of the administrative principles requires that leaders should be mindful of their responsibility to share authority and divide responsibilities among the staff. The librarians and the unit heads in the libraries should therefore, imbibe the attitude of delegation of responsibilities. By sharing authority and giving out responsibilities, it creates a sense of belonging among the staff and makes them to develop positive attitude towards their duties thereby enhancing an effective information service delivery. Remember that information service requires a

collaborative effort of everyone, else information delivery will stagnate. Experience has shown that most administrators hate delegating responsibilities for fear that they will lose their respect and control over their staff. They should however; be reminded that there are so many works in the library that one person cannot supervise effectively.

**Gratitude:** An attitude of gratitude is crucial in any working place especially now that the meager salaries can no longer meet our individual needs. When you find yourself focusing on what's wrong in your life, what you don't have, or what you're missing out, adjust your attitude by feeling gratitude. Do not allow the worries of life weigh down your good attitude towards your job. Studies show that having an attitude of gratitude is beneficial for every aspect of your life: being grateful improves your health, your mood, your relationships, your career satisfaction, and so on. If you need an attitude lift simply think of all the things that you have to be grateful for. An effective information service can best be delivered when library staffs are always in attitude of gratitude when discharging their duties to the library patrons. This is very crucial else you will unknowingly transfer ingratitude attitude to your patrons and thereby hindering smooth and effective information service delivery.

**Develop an Attitude of Curiosity:** The best way to approach any situation is to be open to what you can learn from it. That is, develop curious attitude towards new ideas and information and seek to find their sources and generate new information that will be helpful for service delivery. An attitude of curiosity gives you a present-moment orientation which is similar to mindfulness to handle any information challenge in the library. Being curious about a situation allows you to become abreast and experience it more fully. In addition, curiosity will help you to approach uncertainty in your daily life with a positive attitude. It is imperative to develop an attitude of curiosity in order to be able to meet diverse information needs of different categories of the library users. As custodians of information resources, this attitude is expected of all library staff if information service delivery will thrive.

**Openness:** In order to achieve an effective information service delivery an attitude of openness is required of every library staff. Openness means that every staff should be as transparent as possible in the discharge of his/her duties. Openness also entails one should not hoard any information from the library users. Your openness will stimulate your information service delivery to the users of the library. Experience has shown that some library staff lacks this vital attitude in their information services to the patrons and invariably it has hindered proper dissemination of information.

**Pro-activeness:** Library staff should develop a proactive attitude rather than being reactive in information service delivery. A reactive person allows others and external events or factors to determine how

they will feel and behave, but proactive persons decide how they will feel regardless of what may be going on around them. Be proactive by choosing a positive attitude and maintaining it regardless of what other of your colleagues are saying or doing. A reactive individual cannot be useful in information delivery system but will rather constitute a nuisance to the process.

**Fairness:** This is one of the vital attitudes that all library staff, especially those in leadership positions should endeavor to cultivate and imbibe because lack of it will not only be suicidal to information service delivery in the library but most likely to create serious acrimony among the staff. Be free and fair to all irrespective of their ranks, positions and relationship to you. Treat every staff equally; do not show any kind of favoritism or biasness in dealing with your staff. This will make your staff develop positive attitude towards their jobs. This is very crucial because the moment your staff discovers you have favorites among the staff they will be forced to develop negative attitude towards their jobs; and this will not augur well for smooth informational service. In addition, lack of fairness will invoke the spirit of neglect amongst the staff and they are likely to develop very negative attitude towards their jobs, leadership and colleagues who are favored and consequently information service delivery will be hampered. We should remember that our staffs are always very critical and are keenly watching our actions in silence and would likely demonstrate their dislike in attitudes which may be positive or negative.

It is not within the purview of the paper to discuss negative attitudes which are likely to mar effective information service delivery, but any attitude in contrast to the few positive attitudes discussed above should be considered negative attitudes.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that positive attitude is very essential in information service delivery; therefore, cultivating positive attitude is imperative of every library staff. One of the important steps to take towards achieving an effective information service delivery is to learn to monitor your attitude and how it impacts on your work performance. The positive attitudes discussed above if cultivated by all library staff could be a vital recipe for achieving an effective information service delivery. Remember, it is your attitude, not your aptitude that determines your altitude.

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