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CONSORTIUM BUILDING AS DETERMINANTS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY BY PERSONNEL IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The university library is the educational nerve of the university that ensures that information resources are made available and that quality information services are delivered. Providing information services that are of quality in university libraries can however be influenced by a number of factors including consortium building. Thus, the study investigates consortium building as determinants of perceived quality service delivery by personnel in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, population comprised all 262 library personnel in four university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Total enumeration method was used. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistic, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the most prevailing quality services delivered include: informing users about the service time ($\bar{x}$=3.43; std dev. = .690); library opens to readers at the appropriate time ($\bar{x}$=3.39; std dev. = .772); users' records are appropriately kept and maintained ($\bar{x}$=3.36; std dev. = .850) among others. On consortium building practices, the libraries shared digital and offsite repositories ($\bar{x}$=3.40; STD dev. = .612); shared integrated library systems ($\bar{x}$=3.37; std dev. = .640); engaged in cooperative collection development ($\bar{x}$=3.34; std dev. =.768). Consortium building (r = .215 p < 0.05) has significant positive relationship with the perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Consortium building determined quality service delivered in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Management of libraries and universities should allocate funds for the development of robust technological infrastructure to facilitate seamless resource sharing and access. Library management should invest in continuous training and professional development for library staff to enhance their skills and expertise in managing consortium initiatives effectively.

Keywords: Consortium building, quality service delivery, university library personnel.

Introduction

University libraries are essential for supporting scholarship and intellectual development within their parent institutions. They serve as the main education nerve center, providing access to a wealth of information and resources that foster awareness and the creation of new knowledge. According to Jubb and Green (2018), university libraries have been critical in supporting research across various subjects, fields, and disciplines. Opara (2016) noted that the university library serves as the information memory of the university, making information accessible for teaching, independent study, and personal enrichment. Aina (2014); Ikegune, Awujoola and Iyanda (2015) highlighted the main purpose of a university library as supporting the objectives of the university, particularly in teaching, learning, research, and service to humanity. Oyesiku and Oduwole (2014) emphasized the indispensability of libraries in university communities, underscoring their essential role in promoting scholarship and intellectual growth.

The effectiveness of any library, including university libraries, is heavily dependent on the quality of services extended to its users. Quality service, in this context, is characterized by meeting the expectations and needs of the library's users comprehensively. Maintaining a standard of quality is evidenced when a library successfully delivers pertinent information to the appropriate user at the right time and in the desired format. This underscores the significance of aligning library services with user expectations and ensuring that information is delivered in a timely, accurate, and tailored manner, thereby enhancing the overall user experience. It is crucial to note that the quality of information service delivery by university libraries is influenced by various factors, among which include consortium building.

A consortium connotes the coming together of groups/organisations to achieve a combined objective that usefully requires cooperation, understanding and the sharing of resources (Abioye and Awujoola, 2023; Abioye and Awujoola, 2019). These organisations need to have a clear mutual goal in order to benefit from the consortium. Consortium in the library is used to connote association and an understanding of coming together among libraries to form an alliance with the purpose of producing high level service delivery. According to Awujoola and Philip (2020) library consortium as defined by is an association or group of libraries who come together to achieve the common goal of optimum users' satisfaction through participation in common activity and sharing resources in order to achieve quality service delivery.

According to Mohammed (2020), consortium building can help university libraries deliver quality services to their user community and increase the visibility and value of their services. By cooperatively acquiring and utilizing e-resources, consortia can provide cost-effective access to electronic information resources. Additionally, consortia may engage in capacity building through training on the usage of electronic resources and marketing. Some consortia also offer a range of activities such as site licensing, monitoring and evaluation, marketing and promotion of electronic information resources, training, advice, general assistance and support, communication, liaison and lobbying. Furthermore, joint training programs through workshops, seminars, and annual conferences can be provided, which can benefit university libraries and their users.

Perceived quality service delivery is crucial in university libraries as it plays a significant role in attracting and retaining users. Meeting users' expectations is essential for the actualization of the aims and objectives of the university. When users' expectations are not met, they may lose interest in using the university library, which can negatively impact the library's ability to provide quality services. Hence, the aim of this study to investigate consortium building as a determinant of perceived quality service delivery by personnel in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

University libraries are integral part of universities, which support teaching, learning and research endeavors of both students and faculty. Their primary goal is to furnish users with high-quality information resources and services. Ensuring tangible, timely, reliable, and responsive information services is crucial for university libraries, positioning them as the educational information storehouses of their respective universities. While some university libraries globally have embraced information and communication technology to enhance service quality, others, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, face challenges in satisfying user needs. The perceived lack of quality services in Nigerian university libraries is attributed to a potential lack of synergy and joint developmental efforts among the university libraries. This study, therefore, focuses on investigating the impact of consortium building on perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate consortium building as a determinant of perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

 i. examine the perceived quality of service delivered in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria;

 ii. ascertain the level of consortium building among university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

 iii. determine the relationship between consortium building and perceived quality of service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions are to be answered in the study:

 1. What is the perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

 2. What is the level of consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The study will test the following null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance

 1. There is no significant relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Literature review

Consortium Building is an inevitable tool for university libraries that intend to provide adequate information resources and services to users. Consortium building is attributed to networking which refers to a formal agreement made by a group of libraries with shared interests in order to pool materials and people resources together to meet their users' needs and demands for more effective perceived quality service delivery than they could have done, if they had to rely solely on individual efforts (Nwalo, 2008). Ibrahim and Adamu (2018) observed that academic libraries in federal universities in Nigeria are partnering together to enhance resource sharing activities, which enables them to exchange and share resources and services for the benefit of their

users. Moreover, studies have shown that there is a relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries.

In Nigeria, Popoola (2016) asserted that efficient service provision has a functional relationship with resource accessibility in university libraries. As a result, it is crucial for university libraries to acknowledge the certainty of technological changes such as the internet, World Wide Web and search engines that have helped to facilitate consortium building for perceived quality service delivery in university libraries.

Tahleho and Ngulube (2022) investigated the role of knowledge sharing in enhancing service delivery in academic libraries, using the Thomas Mofolo Library in Lesotho as a case study. Their research design combined interviews and questionnaires, and found that while library staff acknowledged the significance of knowledge sharing, it was largely done on an ad hoc basis. The study also revealed a lack of technology-based and human-based mechanisms for sharing knowledge. However, the study suggests that by implementing effective knowledge-sharing practices, academic libraries can improve their ability to provide quality services to users.

Antwi, Ankrah, and Frimpong (2020) conducted a comparative study on electronic resource sharing in academic libraries in Ghana, focusing on Ghana Technology University College and Presbyterian University College libraries. The study had three objectives and used qualitative research methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants, and thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings showed that both libraries faced challenges in sharing electronic resources, including inadequate budgetary allocation, the influx of technology, and information overload. Additionally, both libraries lacked adequate ICT facilities, with PUCG library's automation being partial and GTUC library having limited computers. However, the study revealed that staff in both libraries were willing to adapt to new changes with proper training.

Ahmad and Yahaya (2018) conducted an exploratory study on the attitude and readiness of academic libraries in federal universities in Nigeria towards resource sharing. The descriptive survey design was used, and the population consisted of 3551 library staff from 40 federal universities in Nigeria. Cluster sampling technique was used to select 480 library staff from 18 universities, and random sampling was used to select respondents from each university. A 20-item five-point scale structured questionnaire was used for data collection, and the instrument was evaluated and tested for reliability. Face-to-face delivery method was used to administer and

collect the instruments, and the data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (v20). The results showed that the attitude and interest of federal universities in Nigeria towards partnership and resource sharing were positive. It was concluded that resource sharing among academic libraries through consortium or partnership activities has benefited library users by providing access to information and education needed for teaching, learning, and research.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The study population consisted of 262 library personnel from four university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. These were Joseph Sarwan Tarka University Makurdi (135), Benue State University (84), University of Mkar, Mkar (21) and Federal University of Health Sciences, Otukpo (23). All the 262 library personnel in the four university libraries were covered by total enumeration. A self-structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The data was analysed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics, correlation and regression analysis. The study used the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) version 20 software.

Results

Question one: What is the perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1 presents the result of the prevailing quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 1: The perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std.Dev
Tangibility							
1.	The library has modern and functional equipment that allows easy access to information	50	105	65	33	2.68	.937
		19.80%	41.50%	25.70%	13.00%		
2.	Electronic resources in my library are accessible from my pc at home or office	51	137	40	25	2.85	.857
		20.20%	54.20%	15.80%	9.90%		
3.	The library has most e-resources I need for my studies	18	106	104	25	2.46	.769
		7.10%	41.90%	41.10%	9.90%		
4	The library has functional infrastructure to ease learning	21	121	92	19	2.57	.751

						Mean	Std. dev
			8.30%	47.80%	36.40%	7.50%		
5.	The library print resources that are current and useful	55	80	94	24	2.66	.924
		21.70%	31.60%	37.20%	9.50%		
Weighted mean=2.64; Std. dev =0.85							
Reliability							
6.	The library has access tools that allow users to find things on their own	70	101	40	42	2.79	1.028
		27.70%	39.90%	15.80%	16.60%		
7.	Users have confidence in librarians' ability in handling their problems	22	96	92	43	2.38	.868
		8.70%	37.90%	36.40%	17.00%		
8.	Users feel secure and relaxed when interacting with librarians	73	92	46	42	2.77	1.043
		28.90%	36.40%	18.20%	16.60%		
9.	The library opens to readers at the appropriate time	135	89	21	8	3.39	.772
		53.40%	35.20%	8.30%	3.20%		
10.	Users are well informed about the time of services	130	110	5	8	3.43	.690
		51.40%	43.50%	2.00%	3.20%		
Weighted mean=2.95; Std. dev =0.88							
Responsiveness							
11.	Users' records are appropriately kept and maintained	137	86	14	16	3.36	.850
		54.20%	34.00%	5.50%	6.30%		
12.	The library has functional facilities that inspires study and learning	5	66	74	108	1.87	.868
		2.00%	26.10%	29.20%	42.70%		
13.	Librarians are always available to respond to users' needs	38	48	68	99	2.10	1.085
		15.00%	19.00%	26.90%	39.10%		
14.	Librarians are competent in solving user's problems	56	81	72	44	2.59	1.018
		22.10%	32.00%	28.50%	17.40%		
15.	Librarians take responsibility for delays in service delivery and apologize promptly	87	149	0	17	3.21	.756
		34.40%	58.90%	0.00%	6.70%		
Weighted mean=2.63; Std. dev =0.92							
Assurance							
16.	Library personnel have respect for all class of users	111	106	17	19	3.22	.872
		43.90%	41.90%	6.70%	7.50%		
17.	Users have confidence in librarians 'ability to guide them	41	60	54	98	2.17	1.117
		16.20%	23.70%	21.30%	38.70%		
18.	Librarians are always willing to help users	55	64	45	89	2.34	1.169
		21.70%	25.30%	17.80%	35.20%		

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
19.	Services are provided at the pre-determined time	58	91	41	63	2.57	1.098
		22.90%	36.00%	16.20%	24.90%		
Weighted mean=2.58; Std. dev =1.06							
Empathy							
20.	Librarians pay attention to individual user's need	22	63	44	124	1.93	1.042
		8.70%	24.90%	17.40%	49.00%		
21.	Librarians are consistently courteous	77	158	18	0	3.23	.568
		30.40%	62.50%	7.10%	0.00%		
22.	Librarians are always compassionate and patient while meeting users	32	139	73	9	2.77	.711
		12.60%	54.90%	28.90%	3.60%		
S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
23.	Librarians attend to users promptly and with required attention	86	130	27	10	3.15	.764
		34.00%	51.40%	10.70%	4.00%		
24.	Librarians show true concern about users' needs	83	155	14	1	3.26	.575
		32.80%	61.30%	5.50%	0.40%		
Weighted mean=2.87; Std. dev =0.73							
Grand mean=2.74; Std. dev =0.88							

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree
Source: Field work, 2023

Table 1 examines the perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. This is categorised into five (5) sub-groups comprising tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The result showed that the respondents indicated that some of the most prevailing perceived quality services delivered include: users are well informed about the time of services ($\bar{x}$=3.43; std dev. = .690); library opens to readers at the appropriate time ($\bar{x}$=3.39; std dev. = .772); users' records are appropriately kept and maintained ($\bar{x}$=3.36; std dev. = .850);librarians show true concern about users' needs($\bar{x}$=3.26; std dev. =.575); librarians are consistently courteous ($\bar{x}$=3.23; std dev. = .568) while the least quality services rendered was libraries having functional facilities that inspires study and learning($\bar{x}$=1.87; std dev. = .868), followed by librarians paying attention to individual user's need ($\bar{x}$=1.93; std dev. = 1.042). On this basis, it can be concluded that some of the prevailing perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria includes: users are well informed about the time of services, library opens to readers at the appropriate time, users' records are appropriately kept and maintained, librarians show true concern about users' needs, librarians are consistently courteous among others.

By extending the analysis along the various categorisation (components) of the perceived quality services delivered by these libraries, the result in Table 1 further shows that reliability ($\bar{x}$=3.09; std dev. = .88) is the most prevailing perceived quality service rendered, followed by empathy ($\bar{x}$=2.87; std dev. = .73), tangibility ($\bar{x}$=2.64; std dev. = .85), responsiveness ($\bar{x}$=2.63; std dev. = .92) and assurance ($\bar{x}$=2.58; std dev. =1.06).

Question two: What is the level of consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria?

In Table 2, the result of the consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria is presented and well analysed.

Table 2: Consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
1.	The library pulls resources together with various institutions in order to enhance library quality service delivery	70	140	19	24	3.01	.857
		27.70%	55.30%	7.50%	9.50%		
2.	The library shares valuable library resources to the users in its collection	74	153	26	0	3.19	.601
		29.20%	60.50%	10.30%	0.00%		
3.	The library grants other libraries access to its integrated library system in its disposal	52	75	42	84	3.21	.656
		20.60%	29.60%	16.60%	33.20%		
4	The library gives reciprocal access to its database and other resources in its library	34	91	40	88	2.38	1.147
		13.40%	36.00%	15.80%	34.80%		
5.	The library shares its professional expertise with other libraries for professional development	26	99	48	80	2.28	1.082
		10.30%	39.10%	19.00%	31.60%		
6.	The library signs up to regulatory body which would support consortium development	23	105	65	60	2.28	1.022
		9.10%	41.50%	25.70%	23.70%		
7.	The library collaborates with other libraries in an effort to enhance training and development among staff	42	100	49	62	2.36	.943
		16.60%	39.50%	19.40%	24.50%		
8.	The library advances its services delivery through strategic sharing and exchange of information, experience and best practices	81	86	29	57	2.48	1.037
		32.00%	34.00%	11.50%	22.50%		
9.	The library management cooperates in processing of information resources,	49	104	47	53	2.75	1.132

	access and downloads remotely by users of the participating libraries						
		19.40%	41.10%	18.60%	20.90%		
10.	The library management supports the establishment of an electronic journal centre to serve as permanent archive for electronic journals	116	115	22	0	2.59	1.026
		45.80%	45.50%	8.70%	0.00%		
11.	The library shares integrated library systems	115	125	11	2	3.37	.640
		45.50%	49.40%	4.30%	0.80%		
12.	The library shares digital and offsite repositories	116	92	29	16	3.40	.612
		45.80%	36.40%	11.50%	6.30%		
13.	The library exchanges database subscription access	122	103	19	9	3.22	.884
		48.20%	40.70%	7.50%	3.60%		
14.	The library engages in cooperative collection development	70	140	19	24	3.34	.768
		27.70%	55.30%	7.50%	9.50%		
Weighted mean=2.85; Std. dev =0.89							

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree
Source: Field work, 2023

Table 2 examines the consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The result showed that the respondents indicated that some of the most dominant consortium building practices engaged in include: sharing digital and offsite repositories ($\bar{x}$=3.40; std dev. = .612);sharing integrated library systems ($\bar{x}$=3.37; std dev. = .640);engages in cooperative collection development($\bar{x}$=3.34; std dev. =.768); exchanges database subscription access ($\bar{x}$=3.22; std dev. = .884); grant other libraries access to its integrated library system in its disposal ($\bar{x}$=3.21; std dev. = .656); while the least consortium building was libraries share their professional expertise with other libraries for professional development ($\bar{x}$=2.28; std dev. = 1.082), followed by signing up to regulatory body which would support consortium development ($\bar{x}$=2.28; std dev. = 1.022).

Thus, it can be concluded that some of the predominantly available consortium building practices in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria includes: sharing digital and offsite repositories, sharing integrated library systems, engaging in cooperative collection development, exchanging database subscription access, granting other libraries access to its integrated library system in its disposal among others.

To be able to determine the level of consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria, a test of norm was conducted and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 3: Test of norm showing the level of consortium building in university libraries

Interval	Level of consortium building	Mean
0-1.33	Low	
1.34-2.66	Moderate	2.85
2.67-4.00	High	

Result in Table 3 showed that scale between 0-1.33 is low, 1.34-2.66 is moderate, while 2.67-4.00 is high. The overall mean for the consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria, is "2.85" which falls between the scales "2.67-4.00". It can, therefore, be concluded that the level of consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria, is high.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

The result of the relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	r	P	Sig
Quality service delivery	253	2.74	0.50	252	.215	.038	Sig
Consortium building	253	2.85	0.39				

Note: hypothesis is tested at 0.05 significant level
Source: Field work, 2023

Table 4 described the relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The result showed that consortium building (r =.215 p < 0.05) has significant positive relationship with the perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria.

This implies that there is positive linear association between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion of findings

Perceived quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

The study found that university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria deliver quality services that meet the needs and expectations of library users. The services include well-informed users, appropriately kept records, and courteous librarians. The libraries also have adequate facilities, such as air conditioning, licensed software, and mobile-enabled technologies. This finding supports the notion that perceived quality service delivery is crucial for meeting the needs of library users, as stated by Nwachukwu (2018). Additionally, the study's findings align with Ilesanmi's (2021); Abegunde, Awujoola and Bamidele (2023) view that quality library service delivery encompasses activities that create, store, and disseminate knowledge, skills, and artefacts that define new technologies.

Level of consortium building in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

The study found that university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria have a high level of consortium building, which aligns with the views of Adetoro and Fagbohun (2018) that consortium building in academic libraries has become more common due to the growth of electronic resources and the need for cost-effective approaches to managing them. The finding also supports Okerson's (2021) submission that a successful consortium requires time to grow, trust among members, and a willingness to contribute.

Relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria

The study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between consortium building and perceived quality service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. The findings of this study is consistent with that of Awujoola and Fadeyi (2018); Popoola and Zaid (2017), who asserted that efficient service provision has a functional relationship with resource accessibility in university libraries. Similarly, the finding of this study is further supported by that of Ahmad and Yahaya (2018), who conducted an exploratory study on the attitude and readiness of academic libraries in federal universities in Nigeria towards resource sharing. The results showed that the attitude and interest of federal universities in Nigeria towards partnership and resource sharing were positive. It was concluded that resource sharing among academic libraries

through consortium or partnership activities has benefited library users by providing access to information and education needed for teaching, learning, and research.

Conclusion

Consortium building enhances the perceived quality of service delivery in university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria. Through collaborative efforts, university libraries can offer a more extensive and diverse collection of materials, ultimately benefiting library users by enhancing their research and study capabilities. The prevailing quality of services delivered by university libraries in Benue State, Nigeria is high, with users being well informed about the time of services, library opening at appropriate times, and librarians showing true concern about users' needs. The high level of consortium building in the university libraries emphasises the importance of a collaborative culture within both individual libraries and the broader academic community. Lastly, the significant correlation between consortium building and the quality of service delivery in the university libraries suggests that when libraries work together and share resources, they are better able to provide high-quality services to their users. This is an important insight, as it highlights the value of collaboration and resource sharing in maintaining excellent service delivery in university libraries.

Recommendations

The study offered the following recommendations based on its findings:

1. The university libraries should actively participate in or initiate consortium-building efforts. Collaboration should be explored with neighbouring institutions, state-level library consortia, and national library networks.
2. The university managements should proactively support consortium-building activities within university libraries by recognizing the benefits of collaboration, allocating resources, and ensuring that library leadership is proactive. They should also explore opportunities to expand consortium networks beyond library resources, including collaborative research projects, joint faculty initiatives, and interdisciplinary partnerships, aiming to enhance the overall academic environment.
3. The university libraries' management should prioritise ongoing training and professional development for staff, aiming to enhance their skills and expertise in effectively managing

consortium initiatives; ensuring staff proficiency in areas such as resource sharing, digital services, and cooperative cataloging is very essential.

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