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Future and challenges of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria: A survey

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Abstract

In the world today, information remains the most sought for factor of production and the key to effective decision making in any organisation or institution. It is that which clears one from any state of uncertainty. This study therefore, is a survey into the future and prospect of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria as custodians and disseminators of specialized information for the realization of the objectives of establishing these institutions. Eight public institutions were studied using purposive sampling technique. While structured and validated questionnaire, interviews and observation were the instrument used for collecting data for the study. The data obtained for this study were analyzed using simple mean scores. The findings revealed that special libraries and public institutions in Nigeria are bedeviled with hydra-headed challenges including: inadequate qualified personnel; lack of ICT equipment and infrastructure, poor funding, lack of maintenance culture, negligence on the part of management and moribund public power supply. It was further discovered that the special libraries were far performing below by every standard their functions as transformation agents. It is against this backdrop, that recommendations were made which include, tackling all identified challenges by both the government and management.

Keywords: Special library, Public institutions, Transformation agents, Challenges, Future, Information

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Public libraries by operation and design are libraries meant to provide information for circumscribed clients with a view to satisfying their information needs geared towards the realization of the broad objectives of the institutions, bodies, organisations or agencies they work for. To this end, special libraries in public institutions are expected to be their major sources of

information thus should acquire organize, maintain, utilize and disseminate information material germane to the organizations' activities which is in of the objectives of these public institutions. As Adebayo and Alex-Nmacha (2018) posit, a major significance of information is its capability to reduce uncertainty, sustain planning and an instrument for decision making.

On the other hand, public institutions which are established and funded with the tax-payers money main objective is to provide essential services to the teeming public with a view to propelling social and economic development. Imperatively, the essence of government getting involved in the running of public institutions is to save the people from the exploitative tendency that is associated with capitalist private enterprises and to have these essential social amenities provided at very affordable rate as well as promote the general well being of the citizenry. As posited by Nwachokwu (2007), reasons why government despite the prevailing economic woes still get involved in the running of public institutions are as a result of shortage of local fund for expansion; technological improvement, control of commanding height of the economy as to preventing few elites from enriching themselves at the expense of the majority poor, correction of market failure as a result of monopoly, misallocation of public resources; facilitation of regional development through the allocation of public institutions and their branches and creation of jobs. However noted Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo (2016) evidences are bound that indicate the unimpressive performance of these institutions in Nigeria over the years.

The obvious is that the dream of every Nigerian is to see these public institutions working optimally and providing to the masses the desired services. This no doubt is a transformation call that will usher in a new dawn that will bring about a positive change that will herald development in all sectors of the economy spearheaded by public institutions. The realization of this transformation in fact requires the provision of specialized relevant and latest information to these institutions for optimal performance; move in line with the global trend and operate within the global best practice in an era of ICT and geometrical growth in information. To this end, the public institutions need to equip themselves with relevant information in tandem with their objectives and to achieve this, the special library has a prominent role to play given the certainty of information to all forms of human development. In short, every organization needs routine information in order to attain certain objectives. It is only with the best information that the state of uncertainty can be cleared and appropriate decisions taken as to enhancing the day-to-day operation and overall productivity of the organization. As stated by Opara (2004), in every

institution whether public or private, information is the first among other corporate resources in that decisions relating to others depend on it. So to speak, information is the hub on which every organizational long term survives revolve on. To affirm to the above assertion, Uwaifo (2004) opines that an organization cannot function smoothly and efficiently in the absence of documented information as it is an indispensable tool for planning, decision-making and implementation.

In this context, the special library by its nature and design is at the very centre of providing the desired information to this public institutions if they are to realize the broad objectives for which they are established more so in this information age where information roles the world and by mere key stroke, the world is at your disposal. Furtherance, special libraries are designed and structured to provide specialized information for specialized needs and here public institutions are well suit as knowing their information needs and providing same is just making knowledge and expertise available which is a drive to achieving the objectives and goals of these institutions. This is in conformity with the believe of Ajayi, Aboyede and Madu (2017), who state that the 21st century gives prominence to specialized and knowledge-intensive services as key contribution to development. In other words, with full appreciation and utilization of special libraries services, the nation's economic growth can tremendously improve. Suffice it to say, that the need for the services of special librarians who can manage technologically driven information system and printed information resources as to deepen the horizon of information acquisition, provision and dissemination for every sector of the economy and for economic revival of our society moreover after the effect of COVID-19 on the nation's economy cannot be underplayed. It is against this backdrop that this study is deemed necessary as to investigating the future and challenges of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria.

1.2. Statement of problem

Public institutions are basically institutions which are formed by the government to provide services to the public with a view to enhancing the standard of living at affordable cost. In the Nigerian context, reverse seems to be the case as public institutions have been associated with poor service provision, a dumping ground for ruling party's loyalists cumulated to inefficiency in service provision, staff truancy, redundancy and homes of financial misappropriation and

embezzlement at the expense of the majority citizenry who by fact, they are suppose to be serving. This ugly situation has resulted to public outcry and criticism. It is in reaction to this ugly situation that Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo (2016) declare that the poor standard of life being experienced by most Nigerians can be attributed on the disappointing performance of our public institutions that have failed in their primary objectives of vital service delivery. The assumption is that most of these public institutions work in ignorance as they do not understand the purpose for which they are established therefore the need for specialized information for informed decision-making by staff and other stakeholders knowing full well that it is their cumulative business activities that foster the growth of the economy of the nation. Come to think of it, information and knowledge is the bane of development and no individual or government can develop and excel beyond the level of available right information and knowledge at his/her disposal.

Furtherance, public institutions in Nigeria could be likened to the proverbial goat that is owned by the public but often starved as a result of negligence. In fact, the true position is that public institutions in Nigeria are associated with un-seriousness, lackadaisical attitude to work by staff. Apart from enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of public servants through provision of relevant and timely information, the evil of corruption and unwholesome practice in most public institutions could be curbed through strategic dissemination of the content of the public servant rules and staff manuals. Information on the rules, regulations and stipulated punishment for unserious and corrupt staff members regularly made available to all and sundry by the libraries using the new media (ICT) could be of great help, when all necessary machineries are put in place to foster quality service delivery by special libraries in public institutions, they would be better equipped and positioned to play vital role in fostering transformation of public institutions.

It is after due consideration of the above factors that the researcher felt the need for this study. This study therefore is the quest to unveil the future and challenges of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria whose activities have brought outburst and criticism from the same citizenry they are suppose to be serving, a situation that beacons for total transformation. Furthermore, available literature indicates a paucity of empirical study on the future and challenges of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in

Nigeria. In this study, eight public institutions which are microcosm of the macrocosm- 'Nigerian public institutions' will be sampled.

1.3. Scope of the study

Since it is practically impossible to study all the public institutions in Nigeria as a result of finance, location and time, the scope of the study was therefore limited to Enugu State; a microcosm of the macrocosm-Nigeria and the public institutions therein. The gain of it all is that all public institutions share almost same characteristics; which are, they are established and funded by the government with the aim of providing basic and essential amenities and services to the populace at affordable cost. These public institutions which are mostly federal government establishments include: Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Enugu; Federal Science Equipment Development Institute (SEDI), Akwuke; Project Development Agency (PRODA), Enugu; Radio Nigeria, Enugu; Federal Court of Appeal, State High Court, Central bank of Nigeria (CBN), Enugu branch and University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Ozalla, Enugu.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The specific objective of this study was to establish the future and challenges of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions vis-à-vis, how they could serve as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria. Other objectives include to:

1. Identify the problems militating against the optimal functioning of public institutions in Nigeria;
2. Examine the future of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria;
3. Establish the challenges facing special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria and
4. Proffer solutions to identified challenges facing special libraries in their efforts in serving as transformation agents.

1.5. Research questions

To realize the objectives of this study, it was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges facing public institutions in Nigeria?

2. What is the future of special libraries like as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria?
3. What challenges are facing special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria in their effort in serving as transformation agents?
4. What steps could be taken to remedy the identified challenges facing special libraries as transformation agents?

0.0. Literature review.

2.1. Conceptual overview

2.1.1. Special libraries

If you think of "special" having the meaning of "specialist", you will get closer to the mark. According to the International Group of Ex Libris Users (2010) definition special libraries cater for specific professional or academic groups whose information needs are defined by a particular subject or activity. While Ken et al (1978) defines it as a physical collection of information, knowledge and opinion limited to a single subject or group of related formats organized under the aegis of an institution which provides fund for its continuances, administered by a librarian or a specialist in the subject(s) covered and carrying the mission of acquiring, organizing and providing access to information and knowledge in furtherance of the goals of the parent institution. Harrod (1977), describes it as a collection of books and printed, graphic or recorded materials dealing with limited field of knowledge and provided by a learned society, research organization, industrial or commercial undertaking, government department of educational institution. In all, one has to take into cognizance that special libraries as the name denotes are special in every context of it ranging from collections to users and its objective is to satisfying the information needs of these special users with a view to realizing the broad goal and objectives of the parent institutions who are also sole financiers.

So to speak, special library is a library which collects updated and comprehensive information on the subject concerning the parent organization and disseminating this information promptly to the people associated with the organization on demand and in anticipation. Besides this, one other factor is that a special library develops its major collection on some special subject or field.

American Library Association (ALA) glossary of library and Information Science (2013) defines it as a library established, supported and administered by a business firm, private corporation, association, government agency, or other special interest group of agency to meet the information needs of its members or staff in pursuing the goals of the organization. Scope of collections and services is limited to the subject interest of the host or parent organization..

Special libraries, which are also referred to as information centers, are located in a multitude of settings, including international organizations, advocacy organizations, government agencies, professional associations, large corporations, medical and/or health institutions, law firms, not-for-profit organizations, research centers, and college campuses. Suffice it to say, that these are libraries that serve particular institutions that have specific roles to play and they therefore tend to be "one subject" libraries. For example, they could serve a hospital, or a law firm, a media house or a manufacturing company or even the military. They also vary in sizes, depending in part on the sizes of the institutions they serve, but many of these libraries are run by special librarians, that is, librarians in special subject areas. Special librarians have become adept at "reading the runes" of the environment in which their business operates, and scan information sources to find material that they know will be of interest to the people working in their company (etc). They also need to be on top of all the information technology that is available to them, and at ways of collecting and presenting information that will save the time of busy people. They may also organize the institution's own information resources in ways that best suit local needs, maybe through a company intranet. The title "librarian" has been questioned in some quarters, and many people in this sector prefer to be known as "information scientists". The threats to this sector of librarianship are obvious, especially where company bottom lines take priority over virtually everything else.

2.1.2. Public institutions

When we describe a public organization in terms of an institution, we mean to say that there is something special about that organization. It is special because it has developed a consistent and effective way of working, which is strongly valued by internal and external stakeholders. The uniqueness of a public institution thus lies in the combination of two distinctive properties. Institutions are special, first, because they have developed and incorporated an effective way of

dealing with complex and mutually contradictory goals. This way of working helps employees to do their job: It tells them what works and what does not; it also helps them to make sense of the world around them. As this “adaptive belief system” proves its worth, institutional members come to value it and voluntarily reproduce it (Wilson, 2002). The “shared basic assumptions” of the organization are taught to new employees as the “correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to [problems] of external adaptation and internal integration”(Schein, 1985, March & Olsen, 1984; Weeks & Galunic, 2003).

Public institution means any entity established or controlled by the federal government, a state government, or a local government or municipality, including but not limited to an institution of higher education or a public higher education research institution. Institutions funded by state or government bodies and controlled by public officials or their appointees. Public institutions are basically institutions which are formed by the government to provide services to the people.

2.1.3. Transformation agents

According to Business Dictionary (2019), transformation from an organisation context is a process of profound and radical change that orients an organisation in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. Transformation therefore implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with past configuration or structure. This implies that for librarians and special libraries in the context of this study to contribute meaningfully in the transformation of public institutions in Nigeria, there must be a paradigm shift on the way special libraries and librarians are seen in these institutions. Agents of Transformation therefore possess the personal skills and attributes needed to drive innovation, and they operate within organizations that have the right culture, leadership and tools in place to enable successful digital and business transformation. They find themselves at the forefront of transformation initiatives, but they never stand still. They recognize the need for constant personal development and learning in order to remain relevant and fulfill their ambitions (Lachhman, 2018)

2.2. Empirical and theoretical overview

As stated by Hann (1991), the on-going information expansion in industrial economics contrasts very sharply with the information poverty of developing countries. This poverty takes many forms which include: planning without facts, unreliable information support to decision makers,

poor performance of public institutions limited access to development information, scarce of information support to knowledge workers and poor access to timely information on national and international market. In this situation he added, that policy makers are faced with major problem in acquiring, retrieving and processing various types of information a situation that warrants the establishment of special libraries so as to cater for the information needs of the stakeholders. It is in the light of the above that Softlink (2018) posits that special Libraries offer unique and valuable services across many industries. They play an integral role in the success of the organizations' they represent and the delivery of important research outcomes.

Mostert (2012), observes that within the knowledge society that has recently emerged, special libraries as custodian and disseminators of subject and specific information have a vital role to play. He noted that the value of timely, accurate and relevant information has increasingly been acknowledged as providing a leading edge in modern competitive world in which case special libraries have been equipped to support their parent organizations through provision of information required in ensuring the survival and continual existence of the parent bodies. Furthermore, the birth of the internet which is information super-highway which has transformed the world to a global village with other emerging technologies brought about information explosion and by extension, information overload which makes it imperatively difficult for non-information managers from knowing the right and relevant information to acquire. Hence there is what may be called tsunami of data crashing into the breeches of global recorded knowledge which Ifijeh (2010), liken to a tidal war of unrelated, growing data formed in bits and bytes and coming in an unorganized , uncontrolled, incoherent cacophony of forms. Madu, Aboyade and Aboyade (2017) were of the opinion that the world has been flooded with literature so much that mankind would have been displaced by its own record if not for the perennial efforts of libraries. While Sangma (n.d) frowns at the situation in which organization is drowning in information even those that do not feel they have enough noting that this however does mean that it is useful to the organization because while they are drowning in information, they still lack knowledge. To this end argued Trevor (1990), for public institutions to succeed, they must be well managed through effective information management revealing that special libraries are able to control information explosion within the system and its effects on decision-making by improving the flow, the control, the analysis and synthesis for decision-making. It is therefore, the business of special librarians to bring order, clarify and provide solution to the confusion associated with

information explosion and its consequences thereby facilitating swift discharge of responsibilities by management and staff of public institutions he added.

According to Egwuibe and Yisa (2010), effectively managed information will help the management to have insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the organization which will help to come up with workable plans for addressing the problem in order to realize the stated goals and objectives of the institution. As expressed by Pol (2007), the service delivery of librarians in special libraries is propelled by a subject-tailored collection of information resources; collections and services that are considered current needs, speed and accuracy of reference services, proactive delivery of relevant information to users; customized information services and cost efficiency of services. Through this customized services explained Ajayi. Aboyade and Madu (2017), librarians provide current, timely and relevant information to employees for maximum productivity and informed management decisions that will enhance the competitive advantage of their organizations and ultimately influence the realization of the set goals and objectives. The implication is that of all the functions of special libraries the first among equals is the provision of information in support of the objectives of the parent institutions more efficiently and economically than could be provided by alternative method with a view to saving the time and efforts of the busy staff who needs precise information for their work and other needs. The obvious is that when the information needs of public officers are promptly met, their time is saved and they are better equipped to offer quality services to the public. Okiy (2007) also postulates that investment in information will assist public institutions to improve the efficiency of the internal operations, improve the quality of existing public services, create new types of services and increase the accessibility of these services.

Writing on the challenges Odusanwo (2003) and Okiy (2007) noted with dismay that departmental libraries in public institutions in Nigeria have continued to suffer great neglect and needs much to be desired. In the view of Ogundana, Olowosejeje and Barkindo (2003), the development of government department libraries in Nigeria is still very pathetic with serious consequences on the social, economic and political development of the country. They further observed that most government departmental libraries are not provided for in the annual budget provisions and where they are provided for, such funds are not released and when released, the libraries are often bye-passed in determining what should be the libraries' priority needs

In addition states Faboyinde (2006), budgetary provision for government departmental libraries in Nigeria have largely been grossly inadequate and in many cases not provided at all. The situation he concludes has been responsible for poor services delivery by special libraries attached to public institutions, which has far reaching negative impact on Nigerian Public officers whose performances have been greeted with obvious disdain. The poor reading culture among Nigerians has further compounded the information problem of public officers he asserted.

In his contribution on the need for as well as envisaged challenges that are militating against functional special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria, Womboh and Haruna (2004) explain that most Nigerians especially those in government departments either do not read or do not like to read while the few who may be interested in reading, the information materials may not be readily available. On the other side of it is that newspaper circulation in Nigeria on the average is very poor coupled with the fact that the cost of having one is at the high side thus cannot be afforded by public servants whose salary are very meager and special libraries which are suppose to be in the know-how of disseminating information hardly exist in these public institutions making imperatively difficult for staff of public institution to be kept abreast of the latest happenings in the country not to talk of their areas of expertise.

Looking at the challenges of public institutions from the leadership point of view, a select group of scholars postulates that public institutions are the out-come of strong leadership and clever design (Doig & Hargrove, 1990 and Lewis, 1980). Building on the classic work of Selznick (1957), they argue that leaders play a much larger role in the development of public institutions than conventional wisdom in the field of public administration theory would allow for (Wilson, 1989). But how exactly leaders do this, remains unclear he concludes.

The mainstream theories emphasize a large set of intimidating constraints that operate on the administrative capacity of leaders: These constraints range from bounded rationality to inherent control deficiencies, from political irrationalities to bureaucratic pathologies, from media scrutiny to citizen worries, from budget shortages to the market's hidden hand. As a result, these theories suggest, large-scale bureaucracies are hard to manage; public administrators cannot be expected to do much more than "sacrifice" and "muddle through" (Lindblom, 1979)

As explained by Boin and Christensen (2008) Empirical accounts of public institutions consistently identify leadership as a crucial explanatory variable. Conventional wisdom in the field of public administration, while research, on the other hand, suggests that it is impossible for leaders to single-handedly create an organization that effectively serves multiple, complex, and mutually exclusive goals in a volatile environment that is characterized by impatient politicians, scrutinizing media, critical citizens, and scarce resources

As Adebayo and Alex-Nmacha (2018) posit, a major significance of information is its capability to reduce uncertainty, sustain planning and an instrument for decision making. The underlined fact is that librarians and libraries as information managers and disseminators are looked upon as society reformers and as agents of change as nothing changes ones mindset like information. It is believed that a society that is not well informed remains under-developed. To this end, a certified librarian no matter where he finds himself is expected to provide the desired information that can touch and change the community for good. In the Nigeria context, much is expected of the librarians in a community that is surrounded by uncertainty and requires tremendous transformation. The crux of the matter is that the public institutions are the most wanted areas for this change and transformation as the centre for social economic, national development and character building.

1.0. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

The research employed survey research design which according to Nworgu (2015) is a type of study which aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics features and facts about a given population. This design gave the researcher the room for proper description and analysis of data collected.

The Sampled Population

Actually the population of this study is all public institutions in Nigeria with special libraries but as explained under the scope, it was limited to public institutions in Enugu State from where the sampled population was chosen. With the assistance of some contacted staff from the

Departmental Libraries of the public institutions under study, a sampled population of 24 was through purposive random sampling method selected. According to Nworgu (2015), this method ensures that specific elements which satisfy some predetermined criteria are selected. (In this study, the determining criteria for selection are that the respondents are that they are librarians and employees of the public institutions) The sampled population shows that each of the eight public institutions provided 3 respondents. It is pertinent to state, that inasmuch as the 34 respondents returned the instruments with support of contacted staff, it took over four months to achieve the feat.

3.3. Instrument for Data Collection

The principle instrument used for data collection is a structured and validated questionnaire formulated in line with the research objectives in conjunction with interview and observation. The instrument was developed using Likert four-point scale responses of Strongly Agree-SA; Agree-A, Disagree-D and Strongly Disagree-SD. Twenty-four copies of the questionnaires were administered and returned 100%

3.4 Method for Data Analysis

The data generated for this study were analyzed using simple mean scores. In drawing conclusion, decision rule was applied. In line with the modified Likert four-point scale rating with response set given as SA=3.5-4.0; A=2.50-3.49, D=2.0-2.49 and SD=1.0-1.99. On this scale, the average mean is 2.50 thus an item is accepted if it is 2.50 and above but where it is below, it is rejected

4.0. Presentation of data

Research question 1:

What are the challenges facing public institutions in Nigeria?

Table 1: Summary of respondents' Mean score on the challenges facing public institutions

S/N	Items	N	Mean (x)	Decision
1.	Inadequate funding	24	3,44	Accepted
2.	Political instability	24	3.35	Accepted

3.	Political interference	24	3.31	Accepted
4.	Poor management	24	3,01	Accepted
5	Government interference	24	2.95	Accepted
6	Financial mismanagement	24	2.57	Accepted
7	Negative attitude to work	24	2.53	Accepted
	Grand Mean		3.15	

Table 1 above provides data in respect of research question 1 in which case, it represents respondents' mean scores of challenges facing public institutions in Nigeria. The result shows that all the items have a mean score above the benchmark of 2.50 with a grand mean of 3.15. This shows that the respondents accepted all the factors as challenges facing public institutions in Nigeria.

Research question 2:

What is the future of special libraries like as transformation agents in public institutions in Nigeria?

Table 2: Summary of respondents mean scores on the future of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions

S/N	Items	N	Mean (X)	Decision
1.	Provision of effective information service	24	3.62	Accepted
2.	Virtual reference services	24	2.88	Accepted
3.	Effective online retrieval system	24	2.71	Accepted
4.	Proactive collection development policy	24	3.10	Accepted
5.	Updating of information profiles of users at regular interval	24	3.13	Accepted
6	Effective content management of resources	24	3.18	Accepted
7.	Proactive information dissemination service	24	3.08	Accepted
8.	Provision of current awareness services	24	3.41	Accepted
9.	Organization and content management of all in-house reports and special documents	24	3.35	Accepted
10	Effective content management of resources	24	3.44	Accepted
11	Keeping abreast with the organization's needs interests for	24	3.31	Accepted

	both print and e-resources			
12.	Selecting and procuring new publications, information resources and data	24	3.09	Accepted
13.	Establishing system for evaluating resources and weeding materials not required.	24	2.97	Accepted
14	Periodically research on users' needs	24	2.92	Accepted
15.	Contact dealers on rare materials	24	2.75	Accepted
16	Create simple filling system for ephemeral materials like press clippings	24	2.79	Accepted
17	Classifying all printed materials using standardized classification scheme	24	2.66	Accepted
18.	Provide selective dissemination of information to users	24	3.14	Accepted
19.	Involve in cooperative library network	24	2.66	Accepted
20.	Undertake comprehensive literature search on request	24	3.01	Accepted
	Grand Mean		3.06	

The data as expressed in table 3 showed all expected roles of special libraries from the respondents as transformation agents in public institutions. The result indicates that all the twenty items in the list have mean scores above 2.50 with a grand score of 3.06, an indication that the libraries under study are expected to provide these strategic and specialized information services to the public institutions which they are part of.

Research question 3:

What challenges are facing special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria in their effort in serving as transformation agents?

Figure 1: Summary of respondents' mean scores on challenges facing special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria in their effort in serving as transformation agents

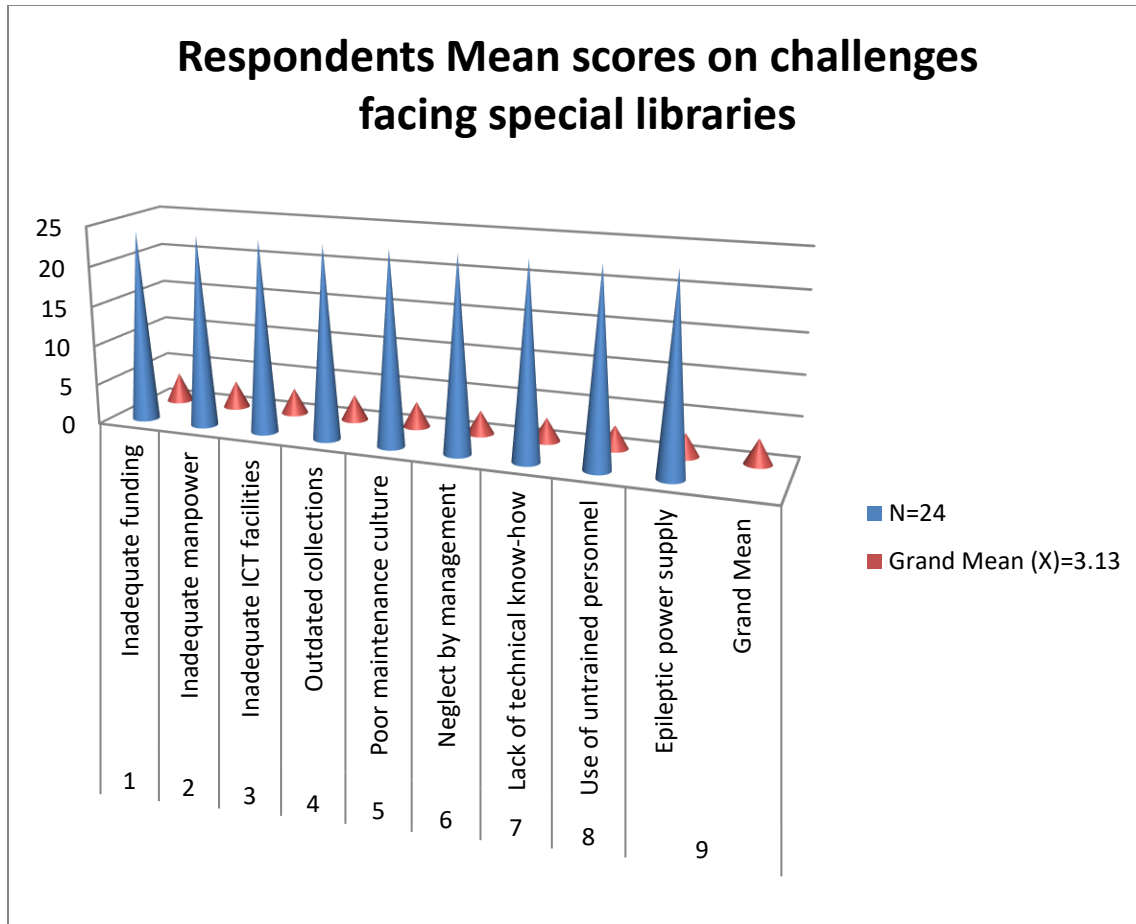


Figure 1 above represents the mean scores of respondents in respect of research question 3. The data collected reveal identified challenges facing special libraries in public institutions with each item crossing the benchmark of 2.50 and a grand mean of 3.13 an indication that all the respondents agreed that these items are major challenges militating against special libraries in their efforts at serving as transformation agents in public institutions.

Research question 4:

What steps could be taken to remedy identified challenges facing special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions?

Figure 2: Summary of respondents’ mean scores on ways of tackling identified challenges of special libraries

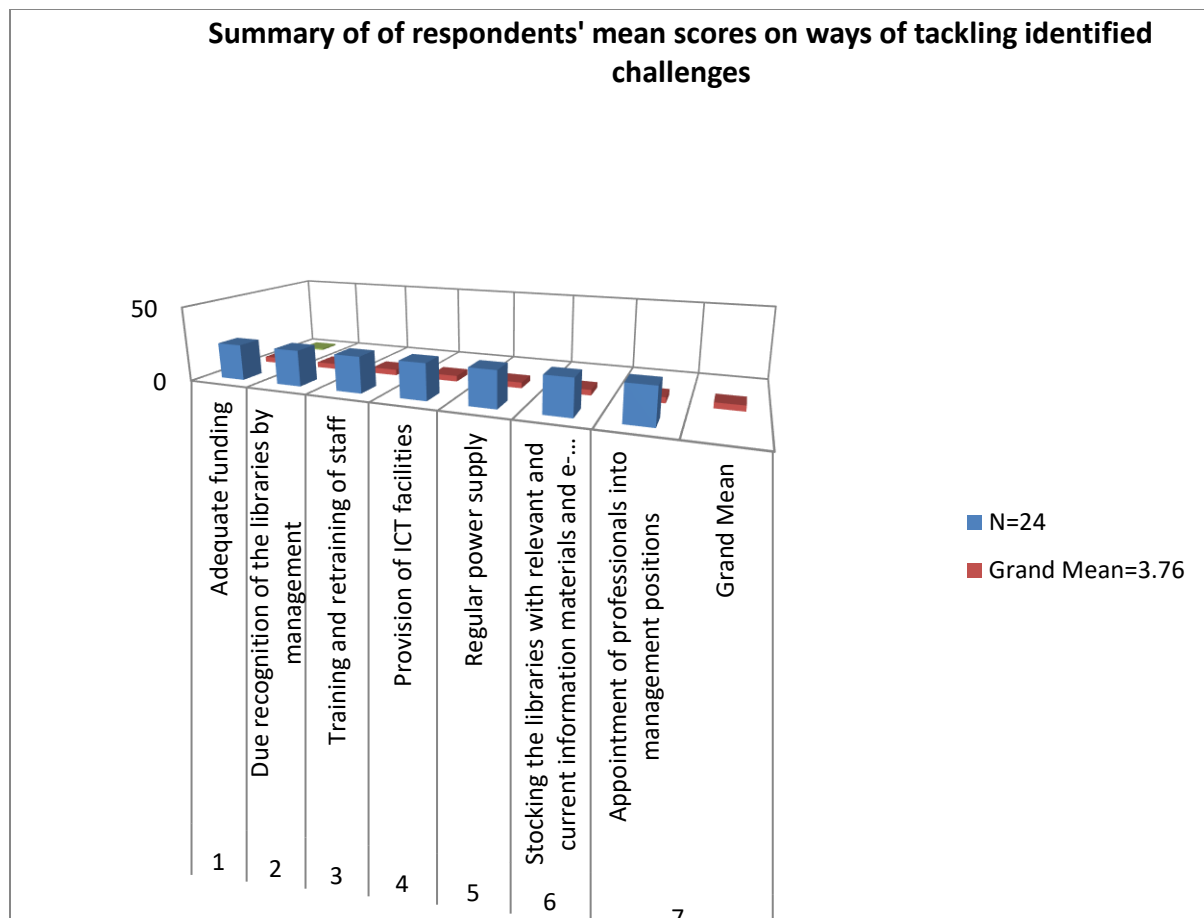


Figure 2 represents proffer solution to identified challenges facing special libraries attached to public institutions in Nigeria. The data show that all the items mean scores were above the mean score-2.50 with a grand mean of 3.76. The inference is that all the outlined factors were accepted putting the bench mark of 2.5 into consideration as the best steps to be taken towards tackling the challenges facing special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions.

5.0. Discussion of results

The data collected and analyzed as shown in tables 1 reveal that public institutions in Nigeria are faced with many hydra-headed challenges that are militating against their optimal performances. As indicated these problems which were collectively agreed by all the respondents with a grand mean of 3.15 include: Inadequate funding; Political instability; Political interference; Poor management; Government interference, Financial mismanagement and Negative attitude to work. The issue of funding remains a major cankerworm in the administration of public institutions in Nigeria as it is translated to inefficiency and poor performance that has left the

Nigerian populace at the receiving end as they are only provided with poor services and in most cases, these basic services are not been provided by these institutions under the excuse of there is no money. This situation has also resulted to the nation's developmental potentials being untapped and poor standard of living being experienced by majority of the Nigerian populace. The above analysis therefore answers research question 1. The outcome of this study conforms with that of Okeke, Onuorah and Okonkwo (2016) who in their study identified poor funding; political instability; political interference, poor management etc as the major challenges hindering the optimal performance of public institutions in Nigeria.

The data in table 2 which is in response to research question 2 highlighted all the expected functions of special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions (see items in table 2). The responses reveal that if all these functions could be performed to the latter by special libraries, they will obviously stand out as the desired transformation agents in these public institutions. To establish whether these roles are actually being performed by these libraries attached to the institutions, the observation and oral interview conducted proved otherwise as the finding revealed that the performances of these libraries leaves much to be desired. The outcome of this study actually corroborate that of Okiy (2007) who posits that investment in information will assist public institutions to improve the efficiency of their internal operations; improve the quality of existing public services, create new type of services and increase the accessibility of those services. It also correlates with the view of Ajayi, Aboyade and Madu (2017) who asserted that the customized services rendered by special librarians provide current, timely and relevant information to employees for maximum productivity and informed management decision that will enhance the competitive advantage of their organizations and ultimately influence the realization of the set goals and objectives.

On the challenges militating against special libraries as transformation agents in public institutions, the finding as shown in figure 1 reveals that inadequate financial support by establishing authorities; Inadequate manpower; Inadequate ICT facilities; Outdated collections; Poor maintenance culture, Neglect by management, Lack of technical know-how and Epileptic power supply are major factors hindering special libraries in public institutions from excelling as transformation agents. In fact, the grand mean of 3.13 which is above the benchmark-2.50 is a clear indicator of the negative effect of these factors on service delivery of these libraries to public institutions, The above data therefore provide the answer to research question 3. This

finding therefore is in line with that of Ogundana, Olowosejeje and Barkindo (2003), who discovered that most government departmental libraries are not provided for in the annual budget; where they are provided for, such funds are not released and when they are released, the library is often by-passed in determining what will be the priority need of the library. The outcome of this study is also in tandem with the finding of Odusanwo (2003) who infers that departmental libraries in public institutions have continued to suffer great neglect and leaves much to be desired. In addition states Faboyinde (2006), budgetary provision for government departmental libraries in Nigeria have largely been grossly inadequate and in many cases not provided at all. The situation he concludes has been responsible for poor services delivery by special libraries attached to public institutions, which has far reaching negative impact on Nigerian Public officers whose performances have been greeted with obvious disdain.

It was also observed and from the interview conducted that most employees of these public institutions do not utilize the services of special libraries which they attributed to ignorance of services rendered and their usefulness to them. The above no doubt affirms Womboh and Haruna (2004) claim that most Nigerians especially those in government departments either do not read or do not like to read while the few who may be interested in reading, the information materials may not be readily available.

Finding in figure 2, shows that the respondents collectively agreed that Adequate funding; Due recognition of the libraries by management; Training and retraining of staff; Provision of ICT facilities, Regular power supply, Stocking the libraries with relevant and current information materials and e-resources and Appointment of professionals into management positions are the way out of the morass of poor service delivery of special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria. It was confirmed in an interview that with the provision of the aforementioned, special libraries in public institutions will definitely deliver as transformation agents which will positively affect the service delivery of these institutions and by extension improve the standard of living of teeming Nigerians and enhance national development. As the result answers research question 4, the outcome is also in conformity with that of Madu, Aboyande and Aboyande (2016), who suggested that government and other stakeholders see adequate funding of the libraries in the light of active investment rather than a passive obligation. Stating the

obvious, with proper funding of these special libraries by government and management, other challenges will definitely be surmounted and delivering of quality services guaranteed both on the side of the libraries and that of the institutions.

5.1. Conclusion and recommendations

The outcome of this study establishes the fact that public institutions in Nigeria are faced with hydra-headed challenges which have worked against optimal delivery of basic services to the Nigerian populace and that libraries and librarians attached to public institutions are aware of their strategic roles and responsibilities as custodians and disseminators of information as required of transformations agents but are hindered by myriad of challenges embedded under inadequate funding and negligence by management and other stakeholders. Furthermore, despite the all importance of information management and provision in public institutions it is disheartening to state that it was observed that most of the expected roles of special libraries were not being carried out as a result of identified challenges and these libraries are only seen as units of the institutions and not as information centres that can mastermind the transformation of these institutions for effective and optimal service delivery to the populace. It is after due consideration of the analyzed data and observations made that the following commendations become necessary as steps to be taken towards making special libraries contribute meaningfully as transformation agent as to ensuring quality service delivery and optimal performance of public institutions in Nigeria.

- In the first instance, the appointment of heads of public institutions in Nigeria should not be based on political party affiliation rather it should be based on merit in which case, only professionals and technocrats who worth their onus should be appointed to head such institutions. The implication is that such individuals will not be partisan in management and will only have the mindset of delivery the best of services to the public while politicians will only see such appointments as avenues of enriching themselves at the expense of the teeming public.

- It is true that the era is one of information explosion yet right and relevant information remains scarce in the corridor of strategic management and effective decision-making thereby making this type of information the most sought for and most valued of factors of

production in a world that is ruled by information and information has become power. In this situation, it is only librarians and libraries attached to public institutions are most suitable drivers of access to information that can bring the desired positive change in both the administration and performance of the institution. The bottom-line is that public institutions management should accord due recognition to special libraries attached to them so as to being in position of acquiring and disseminating the needed relevant information for strategic decision making that could bring about improved service delivery to the populace by the public institutions. This has become imperative given that the non-acknowledgement of the importance of library services has been responsible for the negligence and gross under funding of this all important unit of every institution.

- Apart from employing professional librarians to work in these libraries, effort should be made by management to train and retrain on regular basis the special libraries workforce by sponsoring them to attend workshops; conferences, seminars and further studies as it was observed that many of them working in these libraries were not computer literate thus know little or nothing about the application of ICT and other related technologies in library operations and services. A state they attributed to redundancy as management do not see them in the light of information custodians and disseminators rather sees and treats them as ‘any of the institutions’ staff’.
- Special libraries in public institutions in Nigeria should be equipped with ICT facilities and equipment as no organization can excel in this present dispensation in isolation of reality and trends of the time. The suggestion is that management of public institution should as a matter of necessity make the library resources accessible electronically by providing internet services for the libraries so that they can have access to latest information concerning the field of specialization of their institutions which will in-turn be made available to management and other stakeholders and through it, the goals and objectives of these institutions will be realized in line with the global best practices.
- The issue of epileptic public power supply is no longer news in Nigeria and since we have come to live with it, it behooves public institutions management to make available

for effective running of the libraries generating sets that could power the libraries for effective service delivery more so, in the area of current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) to the staff of the institutions.

- No matter how good a leader is, if there are no funds to run the institution, it is as good as dead. It is against this backdrop that the need for government and management to adequately provide fund to run special libraries in public institutions cannot be overemphasized. It is with adequate funding that relevant collections would be acquired, ICT facilities and equipment procured and best hands retained in the libraries. To this end, these libraries should be included in budgetary proposals and librarians carried along in the course of the formulating the proposals and planning as to pinpointing the libraries' areas of priority and fund released for the libraries from the ministries, departments and agencies during budget allocation should with all sincerity be used for the libraries and not the common practice of bye-passing the libraries and misappropriating such funds by heads of public institutions.
- On the issue of public institutions employees not utilizing the services of the special libraries, librarians and libraries should as a matter of responsibility embark on awareness campaigns with a view to acquainting these employees of the needs of utilizing the libraries and the impact on their personal development and job performance.

In a nutshell, public institutions cannot in this information age if they want to achieve their set goals and objectives, work in isolation of the special libraries. They must agree to the fact that information rules the world and it is only with the right information that any organization or institution can compete and where possible go ahead of her competitors. In public institutions in Nigeria, it is only these special libraries and librarian that have what it takes to make the positive change through the acquisition and dissemination of relevant information material in any format. Government and management therefore should provide these special libraries all the necessary tools as recommended above and see them at their best as transformation agents.

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