

Quality Assurance Variables and Information Service Delivery in Federal University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of four selected variables of quality assurance (library collections, human resources, library environment and funding) on information service delivery in federal university libraries in south-south zone of Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design. The population and sample size of the study was 178 comprising 64 professional librarians and 114 para-professional librarians using the census sampling technique. A researcher-developed questionnaire–Quality Assurance Variables and Information Service Delivery Questionnaire (QAVISDQ) validated by three independent assessors and with reliability coefficient of .82 determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability package in SPSS 20 - were used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research question and dependent t-test to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings from data analysis showed that the investigated quality assurance variables had significant influence on information service delivery in federal university libraries in south-south, Nigeria. It was concluded based on the findings of the study that information service delivery in university libraries is determined and influenced by the quality of the collections, human resources, library environment and the adequacy of funding. Consequently, it is recommended among others that government should ensure proper allocation of funds for academic libraries as all the quality assurance variables cannot be put in place without the availability of funds and that university libraries and librarians should take up the initiative to proactively improve the quality of their resources and services by sourcing for funds through partnership and collaboration with corporate bodies, philanthropic individuals and so on.

Keywords: Quality Assurance Variables, Library Collections, Human Resources, Information Service Delivery

Introduction

The university library can aptly be described as the heart of the university, supporting the intellectual development of the university community through the provision of not only information resources but also facilities and services to students, lecturers, scholars

and professionals. According to Aina (2004), the library to the undergraduate students, is a learning center because it provides materials that are needed for learning for all the courses that may be offered by the institution; to the postgraduate students, information resources

are provided for effective learning and research activities and to the faculty, resources to support teaching and research. The author further stated that the mandate of the university library is said to have been achieved when its users are satisfied with the information resources and services, hence the yardstick for measuring users' satisfaction is premised on the quality of the library's resources and services.

According to Ogbuiyi and Okpe (2013), good quality education is impossible without a good quality library hence, the quality of the university library is an important component in the reputation of the university. This is so because the quality and effectiveness of academic programme of a university are measured in part by the quality of the library. Quality assurance on the other hand requires a meeting point between the standards for the academic libraries and what is available; setting up standards and ensuring that the standards established are kept to and reviewed periodically; identification of crucial elements that require evaluation; establishment of the procedure for assessing quality parameters; quality standards; regular quality assessment and periodic review of set standards (Osinulu and Amusa, 2010). There are minimum standards for

academic libraries as prescribed by the American Library Association (ALA), Nigeria Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian University (CULNU), Nigeria Library Association (NLA), National University Commission (NUC), and others for quality provision of information resources and services. The quality assurance factors considered in this study are collections, human resources, library environment and funding

Collections constitute the main aim of library services. It represents the strength of services. University libraries can only implement quality assurance when their collections are large, comprehensive, current and relevant in supporting the curricula of the parent institutions and meet the needs of their clientele. The collections must conform to the standards set out by regulating bodies locally and internationally (Osinulu and Amusa, 2010). The quality of an academic library's collection is judged by American Library Association (ALA, 2006), on usability, comprehensiveness, diversity and size, stipulating that, the library should provide varied, authoritative, and up-to-date resources that support its mission and the needs of undergraduates, post graduates and faculty staff.

Also, the human resources that are engaged to deliver information services to the library clientele is equally an indispensable quality assurance variable. A description by Amusa and Odunewu (2006) indicated that staff expertise are expedient in evaluating and anticipating users' needs through selection and acquisition of relevant information sources; delivering information to the users through document delivery services, current awareness services; and provision of reading facilities and collaboration with faculties to develop new services. Quality services need quality, knowledgeable, competent staff to provide for information needs of all categories of users of academic libraries.

Library environment constitute another quality assurance variable that could influence information service delivery. Environmental factors such as noise, ventilation and lighting are variables that are likely to influence quality information service delivery to the clientele. Without adequate lighting, a library cannot perform its functions, particularly when it is expected to open to users at night, as in the case of university libraries. (Idachaba, 1998). In a similar vein, the funds available to a university library determine the extent and quality of its functions and services. Amusa

and Odunewu (2006) assert that the success of the library is premised on adequate funding for the provision of better facilities and services to users.

Information service delivery on the other hand is the generation, collection, organization and dissemination of up –to-date, accurate, unbiased and relevant information available in a variety of formats either when demanded by the user or in anticipation of a demand (Kumar, 1982 cited in Dogara, 2011). Quality assurance is very important in information service delivery because it is a determinant of service effectiveness which according to Harvey (2004) is the extent to which an activity fulfills its intended purpose or function. This study is an attempt to assess the influence of quality assurance variables on information service delivery in University libraries in south-south, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to direct the study:-

1. What is the influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of human resources on information service

delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

3. What is the influence of library environment on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
4. What is the influence of funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of human resources on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria
3. There is no significant influence of funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Quality assurance, as defined by Borahan and Ziarat (2002), is all planned and systemic actions deemed as necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will fulfill specified requirements

for quality. Adebajo (2006) opines that quality assurance is a way of measuring, improving, and maintaining the quality of any human activity that has value. Furthermore, it as a means of ensuring that the best practices are encouraged in a social system be it academic, sports, business, etc. Quality assurance process involves setting up standards and ensuring that the standards established are upheld and reviewed periodically. Quality assurance in the library according to Agunbiade (2006) embodies all plans and procedures geared towards ensuring that the right types of books, journals, equipment furniture etc relevant to the types of programmes being run in each of the given institutions are procured and made available to the users of that institution. On the other hand, Nwamarah (2002) observes that effective information service delivery in Nigerian universities depend, to a large extent, on how university managers have used the available human and material resources to make the library functional in effectively providing information sources and services that support the programmes of their institutions.

The quality and quantity of a university library's collections' according to Ogundipe (2005), is a major indicator of effective service delivery. Kulkarni and

Deshpande (2012) assert that the effectiveness of the library is adjudged by the delivery of excellence service to library patrons through the provision of adequate, comprehensive and unique collections. The comprehensiveness of library collections denote availability and adequacy of current journals, exhaustive subject coverage as well as access to print and non-print media. The library collection is said to be qualitative when the collection of the library resources are current, relevant in meeting the various needs of library patrons. According to Isa, Sali and Abubakar (2012) in their study of the application of quality assurance mechanisms for effective library services in academic libraries in Nigeria discovered that academic libraries were effective in their service delivery because of the relevance of their information resources to supporting the teaching and learning of their parent institutions. Similarly, Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu, and Ugwuanyi (2014) in their evaluation of service quality of academic libraries in developing countries found out that library users in academic libraries in developing countries are grossly dissatisfied with the information service delivery due to the lack of information resources amongst others. Also, Ogunrombi (2003) found out that many universities

were denied accreditation by Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) due to the poor ratio between the quality (volumes), students' population (users) and the currency of their holdings.

The quality and quantity of the library staff is a quality assurance factor in determining the quality of information service delivery. According to Tiemensma (2009), the quality of the staff to effective information service delivery is hinged on the following:

- a. Staff attitude - knowledgeable, enthusiastic, approachable, helpful staff - is a key ingredient of performance excellence
- b. Staff skills, qualifications, training and development, further education, workshops and conferences
- c. Performance management and reward systems to provide feedback on performance
- d. Staff involvement in planning and decision making. Teamwork encourages shared responsibility.

According to Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012), the staff is an important dimension of service delivery and their

quality depends on factors such as timeliness, helpfulness, courtesy, positive attitude, customer orientation, interpersonal relations and reliability which are related to behavioral aspect of staff. Furthermore, welcoming, polite, positive and helping staff is prerequisite for quality service delivery. In the assessment of quality service, Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012) revealed that the services rendered to users by the library staff is the most important determinant of quality service delivery as expressed by most of the faculty members of Government Administrative Training Institute (ATI) libraries. Similarly, Adeniran (2010) in a study to assess user satisfaction with academic libraries services discovered that the users' satisfaction with library information service delivery is a function of the quality of staff. The effectiveness of information service delivery is determined by well-stocked and properly arranged information resources manned by well-qualified, experienced, polite and empathetic staff.

The physical conditions of the library are equally indices that influence the quality of service delivery. According to Oyedum and Nwalo (2011), environmental indices are the level of ventilation, noise and physical facilities of the library which are

likely variables that influence the use of the library by students. The authors opine that university libraries should carry out periodic environmental survey to ensure there is adequate circulation of good air, adequate lighting system and noise control mechanism in the library. Well illuminated libraries assist the libraries in the effective and efficient information service delivery especially at night. Isiaka and Olaide (2014) in assessment of the influence of library environments on library use and information service delivery in Nigeria discovered that library users are dissatisfied with the information service delivery in the library because the temperature, décor, signage and noise level were rated poor. Similarly, Oyedum and Nwalo (2011) in a study on undergraduate students' perception of the environmental condition in selected libraries in Nigeria reported that the environmental conditions in university libraries is nothing to write home about which hamper the efficiency of information service delivery.

Funding is an important quality assurance index needed for effective service in university library. It is the provision of money on a regular basis for functions, services, overhead, and is a critical factor in the management of academic libraries. Nnadozie (2005) recommends adequate

funding and prudent management of available funds. The author further emphasizes that increased funding would enable libraries' management to implement motivational schemes for staff, purchase current publications, acquire multimedia materials, procure other infrastructure, and working tools for qualitative library services. A specific but highly-criticized standard is suggested by the National Universities Commission. The Commission recommends that 10 percent of the annual budget of a university should be allocated to the library of that institution as a recurrent expenditure. This standard prescription has been criticized because 10 percent may not be enough, due to the intensity of resources an academic library is expected to stock, and the range of services to offer. According to Tiemensma (2009), information delivery effectiveness can be attributed to improved budgetary allocation to provide for library materials, electronic access, network infrastructure, buildings, personnel, other overhead costs. The author further states that adequate funding for the acquisition of both material and human resources for the library is a quality assurance determinant. In evaluating the service quality of academic libraries in developing countries, Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu, and Ugwuanyi (2014)

assert that the information service delivery in developing countries especially is defective owing to inadequate funding for academic libraries.

Research method

The survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Onwioduokit (2000), surveys are used when collecting first-hand information from people in their natural settings for the purpose of getting detailed descriptions. The design is considered appropriate for this study because the study sought to ascertain the effectiveness of information service delivery based on the responses of people about the quality of the library's resources and services. The study was delimited to three federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria- University of Calabar, University of Uyo and University of Port Harcourt. The population of the study was 178 comprising 64 professional librarians and 114 para-professional librarians. The sample size for the study was 178 using the census sampling technique. An instrument captioned "Quality Assurance Variable and Information Service Delivery Questionnaire" (QAVISDQ) with three sections of A, B and C. Section was used to collect data for the study. Section A elicited demographic information from the respondents, Section B elicited information

regarding quality assurance variables while Section C elicited information on information service delivery. The instrument was developed on four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The instrument was face validated by three independent assessors drawn from Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling (Measurement and Evaluation) and Department of Educational Technology and Library Science, all in the University of Uyo. The assessors examined the questionnaire items for clarity, appropriateness of language and

ability to elicit accurate information and suitability in line with the objectives of the study. The reliability of the instrument was further ascertained by subjecting the instrument to a trial test after which the data obtained were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha Statistical Analysis that yielded a reliability coefficient index of .82 showing that the instrument is reliable and capable of yielding the expected results. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while dependent t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analyses are presented in Tables 1 - 7.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1

What is the influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents on library collections

S/N	Library Collections	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	The library's collections are very comprehensive as it has an adequate coverage of the courses offered in the university.	24	79	54	6	2.74	0.75	Agreed
2.	The information resources in the library are current with up to date information	10	86	67	0	2.65	0.59	Agreed
3.	The information resources so acquired by the library are written by experts	7	99	57	0	2.69	0.55	Agreed

4.	The library collections contains good illustration that aids better understanding of concepts	12	131	20	0	2.95	0.44	Agreed
5	The mode of presentation of information in the library collection is very good moving from a simple concepts to a more difficult concept	14	121	28	0	2.91	0.50	Agreed
6	The collections contain a more detailed information that ensures total understanding of concepts	16	101	46	0	2.82	0.59	Agreed
Cluster Mean						2.79	0.57	Agreed

Data in Table 1 present the Mean response of the library staff on library collections. The cluster Mean of 2.79 for the items indicate that majority of the respondents' agreed on almost all the items on library collections as a quality assurance variable which implied an influence of library collections on information service delivery.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Isa, Sali and Abubakar (2012) that the effectiveness of information service delivery is a function of the quality of the library collections. Also, this finding corroborates that of Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu, and Ugwuanyi (2014) that

information resources are important determinants of quality service and an important factor in effective information service delivery. It was further reported that university library users in developing countries are grossly dissatisfied with the information service delivery due to the lack of information resources amongst other. Also, the finding of this study is in line with that of Ogunrombi (2004) which reported that most university libraries' collections in Nigeria are poor in terms of currency, relevancy, scope, availability and adequacy implying a significant influence of quality of collections on information service delivery.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of human resources on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents on human resources

S/N	Human Resources	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD	Remarks
1.	The library an array of qualified staff to man the different sections of the library	17	77	44	25	2.53	0.88	Agreed
2.	The library staff are professionally trained	47	69	26	21	2.87	0.98	Agreed
3.	The library staff have the prerequisite experience to function well in effective information delivery	57	63	38	5	3.06	0.84	Agreed
4.	The library have adequate staff that are specialists in various units of the library	62	48	43	10	2.99	0.95	Agreed
5	The library have adequate number of staff to deliver information service	24	64	42	33	2.49	0.98	Disagreed
6	The library staff are always available when needed	19	49	67	28	2.36	0.90	Disagreed
Cluster Mean						2.72	0.92	Agreed

Data in Table 2 present the Mean response of the library staff on human resources. The cluster Mean of 2.72 for the items indicate that majority of the respondents agreed on almost all the items on human resources as a quality assurance variable which implied an influence of human resources on information service delivery.

The finding of this study supports that of Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012) which reported that the services rendered to users by the library staff is the most important determinant of quality service delivery as expressed by most of the faculty members of Government Administrative Training Institute (ATI) libraries. Also, the finding of this study corroborates that of Adeniran (2010) which discovered a

significant influence of library staff on information service delivery. It was stated that users' satisfaction with information

service delivery is a function of the quality of library staff that are well-qualified, experienced, polite and empathetic

Research Questions 3

What is the influence of library environment on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores of the respondents on library environment

S/N	Library Environment	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD	Remarks
1.	The library is located in a very serene environment conducive for independent study	21	110	27	5	2.90	0.64	Agreed
2.	The library is centrally located	18	77	63	5	2.66	0.71	Agreed
3.	The library is well positioned that it allows for adequate sunlight into it.	23	121	5	14	2.94	0.72	Agreed
4.	There is good ventilation in the library	13	54	64	32	2.71	0.87	Agreed
5	The library is located away from noise	12	123	28	0	2.90	0.49	Agreed
6	The reading rooms are quiet at all times to enhance effective study	15	94	47	7	2.72	0.69	Agreed
7	The reading areas are very spacious	31	75	45	12	2.77	0.84	Agreed
8	There is provision for study groups areas in the library	11	100	33	19	2.63	0.78	Agreed
Cluster Mean						2.79	0.72	Agreed

Data in Table 3 present the Mean response of the library staff on library environment.

The cluster Mean of 2.79 for the items

indicate that majority of the respondents agreed on almost all the items on library environment as a quality assurance variable

implying that library environment influence information service delivery.

This finding is in line with Isiaka and Olaide (2014) who reported that the library environment influences information service delivery in university libraries in Nigeria. It was reported that library users are dissatisfied with the information service delivery in the library because the temperature, décor, signage and noise level were rated poor. Also, the findings corroborates with Oyedum and Nwalo

(2011) who studied undergraduate students' perception of the environmental condition in selected libraries in Nigeria and reported that the environmental conditions in university libraries has a significant influence on information service delivery however the environmental situation of university libraries is nothing to write home as libraries are operating under harsh conditions that hamper the efficiency of information service delivery.

Research Questions 4

What is the influence of library funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the Respondents on Library Funding

S/N	Library funding	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD	Remarks	
1.	Baseline services (circulation service, reference service, current awareness service, reprographic services, etc.)	17	63	83	0	2.60	0.67	Agreed	
2.	The collection policy to provide materials in all formats	35	35	93	0	2.64	0.81	Agreed	
3.	New programmes and innovations	26	50	87	0	2.63	0.75	Agreed	
4.	Adequate facilities	70	29	64	0	3.04	0.91	Agreed	
5	Electronic access	84	79	0	0	2.52	0.50	Agreed	
6	Maintenance of facilities and equipment	58	105	0	0	2.36	0.48	Disagreed	
7	The libraries are not adequately funded based on what is on ground	58	79	26	0	3.20	0.69	Agreed	
Cluster Mean							2.71	0.69	Agreed

Data in Table 4 present the Mean response of the library staff on library funding. The cluster mean of 2.71 for the items indicate that majority of the respondents agreed on almost all the items on library funding as a quality assurance variable implying an influence of funding on information service delivery. The finding of the study agrees with Asogwa, Asadu, Ezema, Ugwu, and Ugwuanyi (2014) in their evaluation of the service quality of academic libraries in developing countries and revealed that there is a significant influence of funding on information service delivery as funding is

determinant of information service quality as it is the activator of resources and services in the library as funding is needed in the acquisition of information resources, engagement and training of staff and also the acquisition of facilities needed in the effective discharge of information service. However, the information service delivery in developing countries particularly in Nigeria is highly defective owing to the low level of funding for academic libraries in Nigerian university libraries. Especially is defective owing to inadequate funding for academic libraries.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Table 5: Dependent t-test analysis of the influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria (N163)

Variables	Mean	SD	t _{-cal}	t _{-crit}	Decision at p < .05
Library Collections	16.77	2.20	47.31*	1.98	S
Information service delivery	34.26	4.57			

*Significant at .05 level, df = 162

The result in Table 5 revealed that the calculated t-value of 43.71 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at .05 level of significance and at 162 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected implying a significant influence of

library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of library collections on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Table 6: Dependent t-test analysis of the influence of human resources on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria (N163)

Variables	Mean	SD	t _{cal}	t _{crit}	Decision at p < .05
Human resources	16.30	3.20	64.44*	1.98*	S
Information service delivery	34.26	4.57			

*Significant at .05 level, df = 162

The result in Table 6 revealed that the calculated t-value of 66.44 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at .05 level of significance and at 162 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected implying a significant influence of human resources on information service

delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Table 7: Dependent t-test analysis of the influence of funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria (N163)

Variables	Mean	SD	t _{cal}	t _{crit}	Decision at p < .05
Funding	18.97	1.96	39.87*	1.98*	S
Information service delivery	34.26	4.57			

*Significant at .05 level, df = 162

The result in Table 7 revealed that the calculated t-value of 39.87 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 at .05 level of significance and at 162 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected implying a significant influence of library funding on information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-south, Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that quality assurance variables of library collections, human resources, library environment and funding influence information service delivery in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Consequent upon the findings of the study, the following Recommendation are made:

1. The library management should develop a collection development policy and religiously stick to it as

this would ensure that current information resources are acquired for the library as at when needed rather than waiting for accreditation exercise to stock up the library. Also, regular in-house training should be organized for staff to serve as a reminder to them to be courteous, polite and always wear a friendly disposition towards the library user at all times.

2. The management of academic libraries should ensure that at all times, the library environment is well illuminated, ventilated and noiseless in order to allow for students concentration without undue

distraction. Also, adequate funds should be allocated for the acquisition of information resources, library facilities and training of staff for effective service

- 3 Library management should develop strategies to raise funds instead of solely depending on their parent institutions. This can be done through collaboration and partnership with the host communities, corporate bodies, multinational companies, etc.

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