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ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT THAT STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN THE NORTH WEST ZONE OF NIGERIA HAS IMPLEMENTED CULNU STANDARDS ON LIBRARY PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the adoption of CULNU standards for library staff in state university libraries in Nigeria's North-West Zone. After conducting a survey of pertinent literature, it became clear that there were both parallels and discrepancies among the sources. The investigation's state university libraries were the primary focus of the research, which used a descriptive survey research design to gather the necessary data. A questionnaire served as the main research tool. The gathered data was analysed statistically to establish the mean scores of the respondents using a four-point rating scale. The study's conclusions show that state university libraries in Nigeria's North West Zone have significantly advanced the implementation of CULNU criteria for library personnel, with more than half of the items on the list being taken into account. The researcher commends the libraries for their efforts thus far. However, the study identified areas where all libraries were falling short, particularly in the professional-to-non-professional staff ratio, staff-to-enrollment ratio, and professional staff-to-enrollment ratio. As a recommendation, the study suggests that libraries strive to balance the staff-to-student ratio as proposed by CULNU to enhance service delivery. Additionally, it proposes that academic library staff should actively participate in academic bodies within the institution.

Keywords: LIS, ACRL, CULNU, Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian University Libraries.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of human resources in achieving organisational goals is widely acknowledged. Flippo (as cited in Warriach and Ameen, 2011) emphasised the effective utilisation of human resources as a key factor in the success of any organisation. Personnel, as described by Wilmot (as cited in Olusegun, 2013), play a crucial role in organizing, controlling, and coordinating

other resources to achieve organizational objectives. Lamptey and Boateng (2013) highlighted that both public and private institutions are established to fulfil set-out goals and objectives, such as providing goods and services. They emphasised the need for organisations to have diverse skilled and unskilled personnel who can contribute their energies towards achieving these goals, considering people as the most valuable asset available to an organisation. Furthermore, Ugwuanyi and Igbokwe (2014) stated that libraries cannot deliver effective services without sufficient and competent personnel. They emphasised the importance of highly competent and trustworthy personnel in libraries, as libraries serve as unbiased information centres for people.

According to Ifidon (as cited in Ugwuanyi and Igbokwe, 2014), "library personnel" refers to the human resources involved in the various subsystems of a library, such as acquisitions, processing, and making materials available to library users. These personnel or staff are responsible for performing these activities within the library system.

Similarly, Malhan and Roa (2006) emphasised that librarianship is a people-centric profession, with its core values centred around managing and serving people. Warriach and Ameen (2011) also supported this perspective by stating that the primary objective of all types of libraries is to meet the needs and expectations of their customers. They emphasised that competent staff are crucial for achieving service excellence, especially in research organisations like university libraries.

Furthermore, Ola and Adeyemi (2012) conducted a related study and found that effective library functioning requires different categories of staff with appropriate qualifications and backgrounds. They emphasised the need for an adequate number of professionals, paraprofessionals, and auxiliary staff to ensure the smooth operation of the library system.

Bankole (1981) expressed the opinion that achieving organisational objectives, including those of a library, requires the establishment of appropriate standards for library staff. Wallace (as cited in Cullen, 2015) suggested that personnel standards should be considered in various aspects, such as the recruitment process, working conditions, salaries, and other factors, to ensure an effective workforce. He emphasised that standards are essential, even for a minimal library service.

The Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries (CULNU) (2000–2001) has recommended specific standards for personnel in Nigerian university libraries. These standards cover areas such as status, minimum qualifications for academic librarians, training, career progression, designations, membership in academic bodies, and staffing. Similarly, ACRL (2004) emphasised the importance of adhering to library staff standards, regardless of the circumstances. These standards ensure that libraries have a sufficient number of staff, both in terms of quantity and quality, to meet the programmatic and service needs of their primary users.

Training is widely recognised as an important tool for enhancing the performance of personnel in an organisation. Slee (as cited in Abba and Dawha, 2009) described training as a methodical

strategy for continual education and employee development. To guarantee that workers gain and adapt their skills and knowledge to a changing environment, it requires offering learning opportunities. Khan, Idrees, and Khan (2013) supported this notion by emphasising that training and staff development activities allow employees to relax, rejuvenate their minds, and approach their work with renewed enthusiasm.

Mathis and Jackson (as cited in Asante, 2015) described training as the process through which employees acquire the capabilities necessary to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals. They emphasised the value of training and development initiatives in academic libraries as a means of achieving the objective of meeting client needs. According to Bratton and Gold (quoted in Agbo, 2015), staff training and development in an organisation place a strong emphasis on knowledge acquisition and development. skills, techniques, attitudes, and experience that enable employees to make their most effective contributions as members of a team.

Abayomi (2009) emphasised that librarianship is increasingly recognised as a dynamic profession where members should continuously seek new and improved ways of acquiring, storing, and disseminating information through organised training programmes. They highlighted the importance of librarians participating in short- and long-term courses within the country. Okorie (as cited in Khan and Rafiq, 2013) suggested that both professional and supporting library staff should be given opportunities for appropriate continuing training. This aligns with the view expressed by Azino (2014), who stated that staff training is a valuable tool for motivating employees within a system. Azino emphasised that the library is no exception, as it is a place where knowledge is developed and provided. Therefore, library services require staff members who possess professional competence to effectively meet the needs of the library's community.

Lyle (as cited in Khan and Rafiq, 2013) highlighted the importance of well-qualified and sufficient library staff, particularly librarians, for the effective participation of the library in serving educational objectives, assisting teaching staff and students, and instructing library users. This underscores the significance of training in developing a competent library workforce.

Ajidahun (2007) emphasized the significance of library education, particularly in terms of training and developing library staff. They discussed the benefits of training programmes and staff development processes for libraries. Pugh stated that training encourages professionalism and enhances management techniques, while a lack of training might result in irritation and work unhappiness. Pugh (as mentioned in Abba and Dawha, 2009). Abba and Dawha (2009) Added that well trained people are aware of the duties and requirements of their employment, enabling them to develop their competence as their careers advance. Ullah (2014) revealed in their study that professionals in library and information science (LIS) require background knowledge and basic skills in organizing and retrieving information and information sources. They emphasized the need for training initiatives to reinforce these skills. Ullah also advised that training for library staff, especially professionals, should be an ongoing process to enable

them to adapt to innovative technologies and techniques necessary for library growth. Therefore, training is essential for library staff, just as it is in other occupations.

Considering the rapid developments in librarianship and information technology, the Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian University Libraries (CULNU) (2000–2001) made a recommendation regarding the need for a well-defined and purposeful staff training programme for library staff. This recommendation acknowledges the importance of keeping library staff updated with the latest skills and knowledge in order to adapt to the changing landscape of librarianship and effectively utilise emerging technologies. A staff training programme would ensure that library personnel are equipped with the necessary competencies to meet the evolving needs of library users and provide high-quality services.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study's goal is to evaluate how well state university libraries in Nigeria's Northwest Zone have complied with CULNU's standards for library staff.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

It is noted that there has been limited research conducted on the implementation of library standards in Nigeria, particularly regarding the CULNU guidelines on standards. However, Maduagwu and Omorodion (2020) conducted a study specifically focusing on how state university libraries in Nigeria's North-West are carrying out the CULNU guidelines' standards for collection development.

The research aimed to examine how these guidelines were being implemented in the state university libraries. To accomplish this, a descriptive survey research design was adopted to assess the level of implementation of CULNU standards in the libraries under study.

The findings of the study conducted by Maduagwu and Omorodion (2020) revealed that the implementation of CULNU standards on collection development in the areas studied showed some encouraging aspects. However, the study also highlighted challenges such as inadequate financing and neglect of the library by both the state government and university authorities. Consequently, the libraries examined were found to have insufficient resources, inadequate facilities, and a lack of staff to provide effective library services.

Based on these findings, the study recommended that adequate funding be provided to the libraries by both the state government and university authorities. It also suggested that the university authorities and university librarians adopt a positive attitude towards the library, recognising its importance and supporting its development.

Although this study focuses on the implementation of CULNU guidelines for library personnel, it is closely related to the study conducted by Maduagwu and Omorodion (2020), as they both examine the implementation of CULNU standards in state university libraries in the Northwest

region. However, they differ in terms of the specific standards studied, with the former focusing on collection development and the latter focusing on library personnel.

In the study conducted by Akpasubi (2010), the focus was on polytechnic libraries, specifically examining the standards and importance of the library at Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic. The research aimed to evaluate the standards of the library and their impact on the educational value of the polytechnic.

To gather data for the study, a survey research method was employed. Sixty questionnaires were distributed to library staff, academic staff, and students at the polytechnic. The questionnaires aimed to assess the respondents' perceptions of the Haruna Rasheed Library in terms of its role in their educational pursuits and the quality of its services.

Descriptive statistics, including percentages and tables, were used to analyse the collected data. The findings of the study indicated that the Haruna Rasheed Library had a valuable and significant role in supporting the school curriculum at all standards. However, it was also revealed that the library fell short of meeting the standards set by COPLIN (the Committee of Polytechnic Librarians in Nigeria) for polytechnic libraries. Factors contributing to this shortfall included a lack of financial resources, inadequate staffing, limited space, and insufficient collection.

Based on the findings of Akpasubi's study (2010), several recommendations were made to improve the standards of the library at Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic. These recommendations include:

1. The parent institution should recognise the library as a vital component of its educational development and allocate more attention and resources to its improvement. The recommended 10% subvention by COPLIN should be allocated to the library for its development and to meet the established standards.
2. The library should employ more competent staff, including both professional and para-professional personnel, to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to the polytechnic community.
3. The polytechnic authority should take immediate action towards constructing a new and spacious library with adequate facilities to accommodate the needs of the polytechnic community.
4. The library should embrace automation and introduce modern technologies into its systems to enhance operations and services.
5. Bature's study (2007) analyzed the adoption of COPLIN standards at polytechnic libraries in Nigeria's North-West region. The study mostly examined nine polytechnic libraries in the region and assessed the implementation of COPLIN standards in various aspects, including library administration, services, collection, staffing, funding, building, and space.
6. The research employed the evaluative research method to assess the implementation of COPLIN standards. Questionnaires were the primary research instrument used,

supplemented by interviews and direct observations to gather information. The target population for the study comprised all nine polytechnic librarians in the North-West zone of Nigeria.

The findings of Bature's study (2007) revealed that the implementation of COPLIN standards in the areas of library services, collection, staffing, funding, and building and space in the polytechnic libraries investigated was highly unsatisfactory, considering the time when these standards were formulated. None of the libraries met the standards set by COPLIN. Inadequate funding was identified as a major factor contributing to these deficiencies. Consequently, the libraries were found to be severely understocked, lacked proper accommodations, and had insufficient and unqualified staff to provide effective library services.

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design and involved a population of 150 participants, including librarians and library users. Data was collected and analysed using descriptive statistical methods such as percentages and frequency counts.

The findings of the study revealed several shortcomings in the adherence to ACRL standards by academic libraries in Nigeria. These included a lack of strategic formulation and implementation to enhance overall competitiveness, the absence of mission statements and goals to guide library activities, limited user participation in the evaluation process, and inadequate performance measurement through outcomes assessment. Various factors, such as managerial issues, financial constraints, insufficient personnel, a lack of information resources, and weak evaluation policies, were identified as hindrances to achieving adequate standards for performance measurement in academic libraries.

Indeed, both studies are related as they focus on library standards, albeit from different perspectives. Salman's study (2011) examined the appraisal of academic library standards in Nigerian academic libraries, whereas the present study focuses on the implementation of CULNU standards for library personnel in state university libraries.

The recommendations from Salman's study are relevant to the present study as well. It was suggested that academic library authorities should allocate funds for the acquisition of materials, conduct comprehensive assessments of library materials and services with active participation from users, provide continuous training and re-training for library staff, enable electronic evaluation processes to facilitate user participation, and ensure qualitative services through the provision of competent and prompt assistance to users.

The study by Laspinas and Gako (2015) It is very relevant to the current analysis to focus on the functionality of an academic library using the model for Philippine academic libraries.. Their study was to evaluate the Cebu Technological University (CTU)-Turban Campus Library's performance in comparison to the requirements established for academic libraries in the Philippines.

The study examined the library's administration, human resources, collection development, and services as well as its objectives and goals and utilisation, as well as its physical facilities,

information technology facilities, and services, as well as its financial resources, links, and networking. The researchers attempted to determine the library's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the accepted norms by assessing these elements.

Based on the Standard for Philippine Academic Libraries (SPAL), Laspinas and Gako's (2015) study showed that the CTU-Tuburan Campus Library in the Philippines is extremely functioning. The library performed well in all nine SPAL components, according to faculty accreditors, showing high performance all around.

The library's management garnered great marks; a full-time professional librarian with a Master's degree is in charge of running things. This indicates a dedication to successful management and professional leadership. The library's accreditation by AACUP and ISO is also additional evidence of its operational state.

In terms of physical amenities, information technology facilities and services, and connections and networking, the campus librarian also gave the library a functioning rating. Although not considered highly functional, these components still performed satisfactorily.

The strengths of the CTU-Tuburan Campus Library, according to the SPAL assessment, encompassed all components, indicating a well-rounded and strong library. However, there were identified weaknesses in certain indicators of the collection development and physical facility components.

However, the study suggested that more professional librarians should be hired based on the number of students; there should be a functional collection development programme in relation to programme offerings; there should be a provision of an annual budget for non-print and e-resources through adequate facilities and equipment; the administration may consider an annual periodical subscription based on standards; and the provision of facilities and equipment may be considered.

Since both studies are based on current requirements for academic libraries, the research effort is relevant to the current work. Both studies focus on university libraries, which is another connection. The two studies are different in that the first focuses on academic library functionality in comparison to standards for academic libraries in the Philippines, whereas the latter focuses on the application of guidelines created and suggested by the Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian universities to library personnel. In addition, their respective foci are different; the former focused on a single university library in the Philippines, while the present examines all six state universities in Nigeria's North-West zone.

In Nigerian institutes of education, Adebayo (2007) performed a study on the adoption of library service standards. The application of library service standards set by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigerian colleges of education is the subject of the study. The study's research methodology was a descriptive survey. With the help of a standardised questionnaire, information was gathered from 197 respondents at 58 colleges of education. Frequency, percentage, and chi square were used for data analysis. The study's

conclusions showed that the colleges provided fundamental library services such as book lending, reference assistance, photocopying, current awareness, and bindery, as advised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). However, it was discovered that Nigerian schools of education do not offer indexing and abstracting services. The study advised that indexing and abstracting services be adopted and treated more seriously in order for teacher education to be provided at colleges of education.

Since both studies focus on the adoption of library standards in Nigerian higher education, they are quite related to one another. Although the current study only examines standards set by the Committee of University Librarians in Nigerian Universities (CULNU) for state university libraries in the country's North West, the previous study focused on National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) standards for library services in Nigerian colleges of education. The study only looked at one part of the NCCE library standards for colleges of education, much like this study only looked at one aspect of the CULNU criteria for library staffing.

3. RESEARCH PLAN

This study used a descriptive survey research approach. The design was employed by the researcher because it was helpful in gathering the research's data requirements and best matched the study's objectives. Nworgu (2015) claims that the purpose of a descriptive survey design is to gather information and describe in a systematic way the traits, traits, or facts about a certain population or phenomenon. The design's goal is to gather information about relationships, differences, and individual beliefs in order to address these issues. The design reflects the current state of affairs.

Techniques for Data Analysis

Addition of the scale's value yielded the responses. ($4+3+2+1=10$) and dividing by 4 to produce a mean of 2.50. The data from the questionnaire was analysed and presented using a four-point rating scale to calculate the mean score of respondents to the items of the questionnaire. Any item with a 2.50 or above rating was considered positive (agree), while anything below 2.50 was considered negative (disagree).

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrated that the CULNU standards for library personnel in state libraries have been largely implemented in the areas of academic librarian career structures and the conversion of librarian USS structures to lecturer structures; the basic entry requirement for academic librarians is a good bachelor's degree in library science or with professional qualification; professional librarians should have academic status and training.

The type and calibre of staff services are crucial factors in any library's efforts to meet its aims and objectives. At this moment, Flippo (as described in Warriach & Ameen, 2011) said that any organisation's success was dependent on the efficient use of its human resources. In his research on human resources, Wilmot (as mentioned in Olusegun, 2013) argued that employees

are the most crucial of all organisational resources because they direct or indirectly organise, manage, and coordinate other resources towards the accomplishment of organisational goals. In a similar vein, Lamptey & Boateng (2013) hold the view that both private and public organisations are created to fulfil their own purposes, such as the provision of products and services. Giving this justification, they captured organisations centred around people as the sole resource available to them, needing people from varied backgrounds, both skilled and unskilled, to apply their energies towards the achievement of their aims.

It is not surprising that this study found that state university libraries understood the significance of measures that contribute to employee capacity growth, such as training and other aspects of staff welfare, as outlined in CULNU standards guidelines. Ugwuanyi and Igbokwe (2014) emphasised this further by stating that no library can provide efficient service without sufficient and knowledgeable staff.

They fell short of the requirements for the staff ratios of professional to non-professional, total library staff to enrolment, and professional staff to enrolment (1:50 and 1:200, respectively). According to Ola (2012), who made the same findings, libraries require a variety of staff types with the necessary training and experience in order to operate efficiently. Furthermore, sufficient professionals, paraprofessionals, and support employees are required to run the library system.

5. FINAL RESUME AND RECOMMENDATION

Without the necessary, essential, and sufficient manpower or library professionals, no library can claim to provide adequate and effective services to its consumers. In any organisation, the people who work there are its foundation. In actuality, "no staff, no organisation."

This research demonstrates that libraries in the State Universities (North West Zone) of Nigeria have made significant efforts to adopt the recommendations of CULNU standards in terms of library personnel for the efficient operation of their institutions.

Four of the six recommendations CULNU made regarding library staff have been mostly adopted. Given that the implementation rate is above 50%, this is in fact a passing grade. This demonstrates that the libraries are aware of the value of employees in achieving organisational goals and objectives. The professional staff to enrollment ratio is 1:200, the overall library staff to enrollment ratio is 1:50, and there are some other areas that still require some effort. The researcher expects that this study will inspire and encourage the appropriate authorities to take the necessary action to improve and update this element. Since no organisation can survive without personnel and personnel management, it is necessary to thank the libraries under study for their efforts to date in putting these recommendations into practice and to encourage them to continue working for the benefit of the universities.

Recommendation

1. State university libraries in the North West should hire more employees and provide them with more training in order to manage the operations of these libraries effectively, maintain a balanced budget, and enable them to meet the criteria for staff-to-student ratios proposed by CULNU for Nigerian institutions.
2. More professional library workers should take an active role in becoming statutory members of all academic bodies at state universities.

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