Information Resource Sharing Among Selected Academic Libraries in South-West, Nigeria

OGUNREWO J. O
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria
Email: Jogunrewo@yahoo.com

AISHATU N. ZUBAIRU
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria

OLAGOKE DOLAPO PETER
Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract
Information resource sharing in the library setting means making available to other libraries what they could not provide in terms of human and material resources. Therefore, this paper reviews work on awareness creation in the minds of these selected University libraries (FUTA, UNAD and JABU), all in the South-West, Nigeria. Considering the dwindling government’s budget as well as the cost of foreign exchange in buying library materials, also, that, most libraries have transit from print age to paperless and with internet services all over, recommendations in making the networking easier to access with different solutions have been suggested to tackle the problems that might have arisen such as creating the Union catalogue, the inter library lending services, the preparation of bibliography as well as establishing the bandwidth consortia to cut down the prices of materials through economies of scale.

Key Words: Information, Resource Sharing, Academic, Libraries, Nigeria.

Introduction
Information resource sharing is a phrase used to describe an arrangement where two or more libraries come together to pull their information resources together and make it available to their respective users mainly to supplement their collections. Resources sharing has been given a diverse meaning in this digital era, According to Blakes (2006) resource sharing has been described as comprising of transactions which a library makes its material available to the clientele of another library upon request. Also, Speir (2006) opined that resource sharing means opening the libraries doors to patrons who are given the privilege of reading and borrowing the items for a period of time. Aina (2002) sees resource sharing as a cooperation which generally evolves a group of libraries forming a consortium in order to cooperate among themselves. Walden (1999) viewed resource sharing as term used to describe, organize attempt by library to share material and service cooperatively so as to provide one another with resources that might otherwise not be available to an individual institution. On the other hand, Abubakar (2007) assert that, it is a wide phrase embracing library cooperation, library systems and networking. He further opined that resource sharing is a compilation of term which covers cooperation, coordination, interlibrary loans, cooperative acquisition, cooperative storage and processing. The American library association (ALA) glossary of library and
information science (1983) defines resource sharing as a term covering various organizations and activities by a group of libraries jointly engaged for the purposes of improving services, and cutting cost.

However, from the above views one can then state that, resources sharing can be described as the information resources typically collected by the libraries and made available under certain conditions to the users in order to disseminate information properly. Libraries therefore are mainly created to educate, entertain patrons through the dissemination of information resources. At this point, it is no exaggeration to mention that no single library can satisfy all its readers’ need with its physical collections, services, and facilities; hence much emphasis is placed on cooperation of information resources sharing among libraries.

In addition, more and more information are been produced and distributed not only in prints form but in electronic format as well with multiple paths of access to this information. The increasing creation, storage and transmission of information in electronic format will enlarge and transform the library services.

Historically, libraries have had a long tradition of resources sharing and networking which had been greatly expanded by the rapid development of computer, telecommunication, networking and digital technologies. Many libraries are part of several consortia at the same time for various types of cooperative work and resources sharing. The best example of this is the Online Computer Library Catalogue (OCLC). Wang (1996) considered Online Computer Library catalogue, (OCLC) as a model in the evolution of resources sharing in the digital age, he stated furthered that, it grew from a regional cooperative network in the State of Ohio in America to a national network in the USA and laters grew to what is now an international network of over 23000 libraries and information centers in 63 countries and territories.

The (OCLC) On-line Computer Library Catalogue maintains not only the largest computer and telecommunication centre in the world, but also the world’s largest database of bibliographic records and location of information. The OCLC database known as the OCLC Online Union Catalogue currently consists of over 35 million bibliographic records covering all the subject areas in 370 languages and in the following 9 format e.g. books, serials, sound recording, visual materials, maps, archives, music scores manuscripts and computer files, all these are put in place for the benefit of libraries clientele. In spite of this, most libraries in Nigeria are often not aware ands not much attention have been accorded to resources sharing.

Statement of Problems

Information resources sharing have been viewed as an act of cooperative sharing among members with the sole purpose of providing adequate information resources materials to meet the needs of their various teeming clientele who demand nothing but the best.

The importance of information resources sharing at this knowledge age cannot be over emphasized, due to the cost of acquisition of bibliographic information resources both in print and online as well as astonishing growth of information produced 24/7 which has led to information explosion and the dwindling library budget of higher institution. It has been considered that cooperation among libraries will go a long way in combating these problems, thus this study.

Objective

1. To ascertain the types of resources used in information resource sharing among cooperative members.
2. To determine the importance of information resource sharing to cooperative members.
3. To identify the possible challenges faced by cooperative members with information resource sharing.
Research Questions

1. What are the types of resources used in information resource sharing among cooperative members?
2. What is the importance of information resources sharing to cooperative members?
3. What are the possible challenges faced by cooperative members with information resource sharing?

Methodology

This study used survey research design, using 150 questionnaires on randomly selected users of Joseph Ayo Babalola University library (JABU), Federal University of Technology Akure library (FUTA) and University of Ado Ekiti library (UNAD) as a means of data collection in order to elicit straight forward information from the respondent.

Population

The population for this study is made up of the library staff of JABU, UNAD and FUTA making a total of 150 questionnaires. 50 questionnaires were given each to Universities above to be filled by the library users.

Literature Review

Resource sharing means library cooperation which involves itself in sharing of facilities as commitments in extending and improving things without proportionate increase in cost of processing facilities, including books, journals, equipment etc. Song (2000) was of the view that no library can effectively satisfy its users from the resources within its walls’ He also went further to say that the present living depends on the level of utilization of information resources as a yardstick to determine a country’s economic advancement and strength.

Rahman and Kumar, (2000) stressed the way technological development in the field of information technology and telecommunication enhanced both the digital as well as the library resource in paving way for forming themselves from local to international networking.

Since funding is a great factor that has affected most library services of developing world, Mohammed (1999) posits that academic and research participating libraries have engaged in some cooperative ventures by pulling their resources together in and outside the country for effective use of resource materials which may not be easy for one or group to provide.

It is not an exaggeration to say that many institutions both at the National, State and Local level are poorly funded or not funded at all in the developing world. Chisenga, (2000) affirmed that “unfortunately, there is a general absence of viable National Information Infrastructures (NII) in most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Realizing the government fiscal policy e.g. the inclusion of library material in reshipment inspection and the Form ‘M’ process, formation of taxes and customs duties on books and educational materials and according to Dada (2007) the notorious “due process” formality is perhaps the most important problem which is cumbersome and should not be a part of library book procurement. The operation of microcomputer is slow and in Ghana as well as in Sierra Leone and in Algeria. Adeyemi (1988), Edem (1993), Abifaran (1993) and Odi (1994).

Faniran, Eguavoen and Adeyemi, (2002) gave assurance of improvement on the application of IT in Nigerian academic libraries. The digital/electronic information with the use of telecommunication has given
way for local global resources sharing through the information networks. Akintunde (2002) confirmed this in his work as the only way available resources in the format of the digital age.

Resource sharing differs from place to place or country to country, for example in China Chinese CATSS was implemented in 1990, joined by several National University Libraries including Taiwan, Chenchi Chungsion and Chenkung, and later with private universities.

In most African countries, the need to share and transfer information has created a great challenge for university administrators. The Cameroon inter university net is an example of the determination of the Cameroonian authorities of higher education to provide universities with modern infrastructure. In Kenya, the Kenya Educational Network (KENET) is an initiative to establish a high speed, reliable and sustainable IP network for interconnectivity among educational institutions. The Malawi Academic and Research Network (MAREN) have been established to provide band width to major academic sites. Senegal has the UCAD information technology network which connects schools and faculties of the university.

In Nigeria, the growth of the resources sharing in electronic environment or digital age can be traced to (1990) when the World Bank intervened with a loan to improve the institutional capacities of the Nigerian universities. By 1987 in a conference jointly organized by the NUC and the British council, it was recommended that the Management Information System (MIS) be introduced into Nigerian university system. Abdulkadiri (1995) noted that the Management Information System (MIS) project commenced with a workshop in 1989 for the academic planners and bursars of the Nigerian Universities, followed in 1990 by the setting up of a technical committee to design the hardware and software prototypes for the project. These initiatives along with the World Bank intervention, eventually led to the introduction and development of the university database through the Nigerian Universities Management Information System (NUMIS) and the electronic connectivity through the Nigerian universities network (NUnet). With the significant change in the resources sharing approach that came through the advancement of the internet using the popular World Wide Web (WWW), research has shown that in the current digital and networked age, the size of information resources on the web is growing exponentially. No one really knows exactly the number of web pages that are added every second. The latest statistics of the internet hosts number is close to 2 billion and growing fast at the speed of 25% (available at www. Sc.org/index. P/? /ops/ds/host count – history PhD).

Types of Resource Sharing

Academic networking is a veritable tool which plays a vital role in resource sharing activities of libraries and information centers. All groups, individual as well as institutions can share to others their resources including problem solving techniques. 

Generally, resources sharing are many and can be divided into three types for convenience:

1) Traditional library materials, 2) Human resources and 3) Computerized information resources.

Traditional Library Materials

The traditional materials consisting of monographs and periodicals still constitute the majority of the inter-library loan workloads, processed through manual operated and traditional information networks. In short, academic network presently have already been one of the best channels for acquiring library material as well as for human resources sharing. For much more involvement, the electronic forums providing group discussion about the transactions for inter library loan such as ILL-L in BITNET and LIS-ILL in JANET join Academic network in UK, have been cited as good examples.
Human Resource Sharing

From the list of library oriented discussion groups on BITNET JANET and internet, the discussion on human resource sharing has gone beyond the cataloguing area to include other operational personnel as well. Some of them are NOTISACO on acquisition, AUTOCAT on cataloguing, LIBREFL on reference services, ILL-L on interlibrary loan; BI-L on Bibliographic instruction; CIRCPLUS on Circulation; GOVDUC-L on Government publications; CDROM-L on CD-ROM and PACS-L on public access computer systems. There are other library related topics such as ARLIS- on art libraries; BUSLIB-L on business libraries; MLA-L on music libraries and LAW-L on law libraries. Other topics discussed in automated systems are ATLAS-L, INNOPAC, NOTIS-L, GEAC-L, BRS, etc.

Computerized Information Resources

Among other computerized information resources that are probably the richest resources that the academic networks can provide are: online catalogue, information retrieval system, bulletin board system, electronic text, computer software and others, which are provided mostly by the research libraries and institutions. To enhance the sharing of resources, mailing is still known as the primary method of document delivery sometimes aided by fax. Another resource sharing channels include interactive message, electronic mail, file transfer and remote login. E-mail is widely used in transferring and processing large amount of message fast, once the mailing list is set up. E-mail is also currently used for transmitting not only messages but also electronic documents.

Need for Library Connecting to Academic Networks

Generally, in an academic network environment, users tend to access variety of resources independently and directly through terminals located at home, in the office, in a laboratory or other location just as libraries provide access to physical books and periodicals to their users. Grosch (1995), identifies the following reasons as characteristics of library resource sharing in the digital environment.

a. Broadening access to materials.
b. Lowering per unit cost of cataloguing.
c. Document delivery.
d. Bibliographic utilities and their roles.
e. Cooperative acquisitions.
f. Copyright.
g. Governance and other developmental based ventures.

Silva (2002), opined that problems like cost of acquisition of bibliography processing and storage of documents and astonishing growth of information produced, resource sharing can provide a solution to daily problems and still serve library as a service provider to users. Sayoa (2002), in his own view gave assurance that with the information overload, the quantity of information produced and made available brings much crescent difficulties to search for and to access. He is with the opinion that the alternative to libraries is cooperation.

Graves (1990), States that increasing costs of information and stagnating budgets of institutions of higher education, have made it very difficult for all institutions to be self reliant.

Benefits

Magari (1991), highlighted the benefits accrued to institutions with networks of resources sharing as follows:
1. Access to information, freedom of expression and opinion and universal library and lifelong learning (Thapisa, 2000)
2. Efficiency of library services, easy acquisition of information with low cost and improvement on in-house operations of libraries.
3. To advance the use and usability of globally distributed networked information resources (Okebukola, 2002)
4. Better and wider knowledge of effective use of resources
5. Resources of the participating institutions to supplement each other.
6. Some services which could not be attended to due to financial constraint or otherwise could be met by other members through cooperative networking.
7. Adds to the general improvement and development of the personnel of participating libraries.

Looking at the advantages of centralizing of information resources, which is time and cost/ saving; the library can save users a considerable amount of time by acquiring these resources and putting them in one place. Information retrieval can also be in a simplified form through which the e-mail can be used to connect other networks.

However, the academic networks are free to its users and this does not stop any library to use its own rules to avoid traffic jam when searching, which eventually allows the libraries to collect those materials of interest, systematically and periodically as part of their collections from the networks in order to provide easy access and utilize the resources for their clients.

In Nigeria, resource sharing could be effectively used by first having knowledge of what is available for sharing from other sites through such means as (NUC) National Union Catalogue or Bibliographic Utilities. National bibliographic of Nigeria (NBN) that lists all the books published by Nigerians and about Nigeria. It also includes National Union Catalogue that lists the holdings of the participating libraries within Nigeria published by national library of Nigeria.

**Services of Resources Sharing among Cooperative Members**

The main services rendered among cooperative members by consortia are inter library loan, search in web catalog of each library, serials collective catalog, provision of photocopies or digitalization of journal articles and theses access to full text data bases, without any fees.

Other services can include meetings, conferences, and workshops to librarian’s commercial contacts between editors, information providers, library services providers, and the library members of the consortia to promote planned acquisition and collection development.

**Determinants of Member’s Holdings**

Traditionally, library users discovered potential useful titles from book advertisements, through word of mouth, from a friend or an authority on the subject, consulting the bibliographies found at the back of books or published as a separate book, or a printed union catalogue of all the books in a group of libraries. Since mid 1980s, searching for books located at other libraries has become easier, as many libraries have allowed library users to search their own line catalog at the library or over the internet.

The users at this point need to find aid for remote documents and text when the union listings became more sophisticated. A union list is an index which can lead the researcher or librarian to the needed document held by a lender. Some of the union lists are NUC, LC, OCLC or RLIN that began with hard copies consisting of many bound volumes but now many of them have evolved into digital databases where we
can find the position a document is located and in a situation where they have eligibility, one can borrow either the original hard copy or perhaps scanned the original copy.

Nigeria’s involvement in the participating resource sharing of electronic information used the Nigerian Periodical Index (NIP) which is a resource sharing Project of the Committee of University Libraries of Nigerian Universities (CULNU). This is a university affair and all members are to participate with each being responsible for indexing, serial titles in a given field. National Documentation and Libraries Centre for Science and Technology (NADLCEST) aims at providing access to current and retrospective information on science and Technology to facilitate research. All academics and research libraries are expected to be members to examine the special subject areas.

Challenges

Past studies have shown that libraries have grown in numbers during the last decade due to expansion of universities which according to Waiganjo (2006), has posed demand for growing need for networking and online information sharing. Although, Shin (2006), remarked that to establish network among libraries with homes and work places is the biggest challenge for libraries now. However, Etim citing Idowu & Mabawonku (1999), stated that, in early 70s some libraries in Nigeria had attempted to automate their operations with few success stories. Generally some University libraries in Africa are gradually seeing the need for resources sharing but still facing various dilemmas such as:

Finance

This is most effective driving force behind any meaningful transformation and development. There is no library that can survive in this technological era without a reasonable financial support. According to Bappah (2006) financial support for most libraries in Nigeria has been on decline. In the same vein, Kaul (2001) study revealed that drastic cuts in the library budgets have aggravated problems of the present day librarianship also Tonto (2001) stated that librarians are faced with the challenges of providing services with shrinking budgets. There is a desperate and urgent need for libraries to be allocated some reasonable amount because of the high cost of internet access as well as need for efficient configuration of campus networks for distance education.

Cooperation /Coordination

Creating awareness about information resources sharing is very important among libraries. Hussaini, Owoeye & Stella (2010) have identified lack of coordination among libraries to initiate a cooperative network. Isyaku and Ibrahim (2013) assert that resources sharing in Nigerian universities are been hampered due to lack of existing resources of information, lack of polices, poor security of materials, uncooperative attitude of parent institution, inflation and unstable budget allocation and lack of Union Catalogue. In addition Chisenga (2006) posits that unfortunately, there is a general absence of viable National Information Infrastructure (NII) in most Sub-Saharan Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data analysis and interpretation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>80(53%)</td>
<td>70(47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>10 (7%)</td>
<td>20 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>20 (13%)</td>
<td>70 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>70 (47%)</td>
<td>50 (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polytechnic</td>
<td>50 (33%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
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<td>18-24yrs</td>
<td>30 (20%)</td>
<td>20 (13.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-30yrs</td>
<td>20 (13.3%)</td>
<td>50 (33.3%)</td>
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<td>31-49yrs</td>
<td>50 (33.3%)</td>
<td>50 (33.3%)</td>
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<td>50 and above</td>
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<td>Marital Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>111 (74%)</td>
<td>30 (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>9 (6 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
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Section b. Population description

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>FUTA</th>
<th>UNAD</th>
<th>JABU</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the name of your university</td>
<td>50(33.3%)</td>
<td>50(33.3%)</td>
<td>50(33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What state is your university located</td>
<td>ONDO 50(33.3%)</td>
<td>EKITI 50(33.3%)</td>
<td>OSUN 50(33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will you classify your University</td>
<td>FEDERAL 50(33.3%)</td>
<td>STATE 50(33.3%)</td>
<td>PRIVATE 50(33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will you describe your Duty in this university</td>
<td>STUDENT 70(47%)</td>
<td>STAFF 80(53%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that only 33.3% of the respondents were from FUTA, and the same percentages were also applicable to other Universities Selected (i.e UNAD and JABU), this is so, because the researcher distributed equal number of questionnaires to each of the University, however, the number of students and staff that constituted our population varied. The students represented 47%, while the staff was 53%, the variation in number of respondents can be attributed to the fact that the staff are usually more knowledgeable in issue of this kind than the student.

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick (1) your opinion in the columns provided. “SD” is Strongly Disagree; “D” is Disagree; “U” is Undecided; “A” is agreed; “SA” is Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Description</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>_X</th>
<th>SDEV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Resources Sharing is the most important tool for survival of Library in today’s educational establishments</td>
<td>30(20%)</td>
<td>70(47%)</td>
<td>50(33%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2.1333</td>
<td>0.7204</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A successful library cannot operate without depending on another successful library</td>
<td>70(47%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>30(20%)</td>
<td>50(33%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>1.8667</td>
<td>0.8874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Electronic Library, involving the use of the internet and networking have made library operation very easy</td>
<td>80(53.3%)</td>
<td>60(40%)</td>
<td>10(7%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>1.5333</td>
<td>0.62031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Library staff sharing is the best way to facilitate</td>
<td>50(33.3%)</td>
<td>70(47%)</td>
<td>30(20%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>1.867</td>
<td>0.7204</td>
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5. Most successful library, are moving away from print age to paperless / electronic library.

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<th></th>
<th>50(33.3%)</th>
<th>70(47%)</th>
<th>30(20%)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1.8667</td>
<td>0.7204</td>
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6. Most used among resources sharing is Computerized information resources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>80(53.3%)</th>
<th>50(33.3%)</th>
<th>20(13.3%)</th>
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<th>0(0%)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1.6000</td>
<td>0.7141</td>
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7. Resources sharing by library can affect confidentiality of the library

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10(7%)</th>
<th>0(0%)</th>
<th>0(0%)</th>
<th>60(40%)</th>
<th>80(53.3%)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1.6667</td>
<td>1.0144</td>
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8. The lack of adequate knowledge of operating a computer can affect the effectiveness of resources sharing

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>80(53.3%)</th>
<th>50(33.3%)</th>
<th>20(13.3%)</th>
<th>0(0%)</th>
<th>0(0%)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7333</td>
<td>1.0011</td>
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</table>

9. Resource sharing can lead to wrong decision of downsizing or sacking of staffs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10(7%)</th>
<th>50(33%)</th>
<th>0(0%)</th>
<th>90(60%)</th>
<th>1.5333</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.8082</td>
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10. Resentment and lack of cooperation has been the most important cause of failure of resources sharing in recent time.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>100(67%)</th>
<th>20(13%)</th>
<th>30(20%)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2667</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1852</td>
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</table>

Interpretation of Data

The statistical analysis in column 1, revealed that 47% agreed that resource sharing is very important for survival of library while the other options showed very low percentages, thus we can infer that the respondents agreed that the resources sharing have a significant influence on the survival of the library. Similarly the respondents in column 2, were of the opinion that most libraries cannot exist on their own because the highest percentage of 47% was chosen by them under these questions.

Electronic library involving use of internet and networking was also seen as very important strategy that will enhance library operation. This is because most of the respondent in column 3, chose strongly agreed which represented the highest percentage (i.e 53.3%) while the other option recorded lower percentages.
The column 4, above also showed that library staff sharing is the best way to facilitate development of the library, this is because majority of the respondent chose 47% while 20% were indifferent. The statistical analysis in column 5, also revealed that 47% was the highest percentage of strongly agreed and that most libraries are embracing the idea of electronic/paperless library operation.

Column 6, shows that computerized information resources are the mostly used resource sharing, with highest percentage of 53.3%. Column 7, also established that significant number of the respondent disagreed that resources sharing will affect the confidentiality of the library, with 53.3%. While others recorded lower percentages.

Column 8, revealed that 53.3% of the respondent agreed that lack of computer knowledge can affect the effectiveness of resources sharing. Column 9, shows that greater percentage of the respondents disagreed that resources sharing can lead to the sacking/downsizing of the workforce in the library with 60% responses.

Finally, column 10 confirms that resentment and lack of cooperation were the major problems inhibiting resources sharing with highest percentage of 67%.

Conclusion

Resource sharing in the past has evolved as a result of the increase in the demand for information at the expense of scarcity of fiscal resources that resulted in the reduction of cost and depth of information the individual libraries could make available. However, the growth of computers and communication technology networks, the process of resource sharing has radically been revolutionalized and it has brought about a fundamental transformation from the traditional approach to a modern one.

Though, several researchers has identified some militating factors facing libraries engaging in information resources sharing; amongst include lack of effective human resources trainers concerning the subject matter because of constant technology change. Also lack of effective policies, epileptic power supply as well as bibliographic compilation with lack of supports from the parents institutions, all these have led to inconsistencies in making information resources sharing a reality. In addition, the Statistical analysis also established that resentment and lack of cooperation is a major problem that can affect the success of resources sharing.

On the other hand, different solutions have been suggested to tackle the problems such as, creating the union catalogue, the inter library lending services, the preparation of bibliography as well as establishing the bandwidth consortia to cut down the prices of materials through economies of scale. Furthermore, it is considered also, necessary to occasionally train the library personnel as soon as new technologies are introduced in effecting, information resources sharing.

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