

The Relationships Existing between Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Coordination and Physical Facilities and Availability of Postgraduate Theses in Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationships between the administrative functions of planning, organizing, staffing, coordination and physical facilities and postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. Five null hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance. A sample of 169 librarians and library officers and 44 postgraduate school administrators were randomly selected from five universities within the south-south zone of Nigeria. Two survey instruments were used for the study namely: Librarians' and Library Officers' Questionnaires (LALOQ) administered on librarians and library officers and Theses Collection Attribute Descriptive Scale (TCADS) administered on postgraduate school administrators. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used in testing the hypotheses. The study found that staffing, physical facilities, coordination and planning have significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. It was recommended that adequate attention be paid to planning, organizing, staffing and coordination functions as well as the provision of adequate physical facilities by university librarians to make postgraduate theses readily available to users in universities in the south-south zone of Nigeria.

Keywords: Planning; Staffing; Physical facilities; Postgraduate school; Theses availability; Libraries

Introduction

Theses and dissertations are the result of scholarly research and although they often remain as unpublished works, they contribute to knowledge in their own rights. They are normally supervised by lecturers who are authorities in the students' areas of specialization. When Gupta (1995) stated that the output of theses should be worthy of publication at any point in time after production, he

implied that the student is required to defend his research project before a team of experts appointed by the university for this purpose. Eyo (1984) confirms this when he stated that in the academic tradition, a scholarly work intended for the achievement of scholastic honour of an academic degree be defended before a team of internal and external assessors who are experts in the subject area of research. This defence is always in the form of an oral examination called *viva voce*.

As a matter of policy, at least a copy of a thesis for a higher degree is required to be deposited by the student who wrote it in the library through the graduate school (Duru, 1987). The regular route through which theses pass from the student to the university library is illustrated in Figure 1.

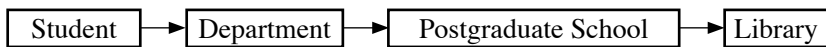


Figure 1 Steps in Submission of Theses/ Dissertations

Theoretical framework

This paper is founded upon the theories of administration and management as advocated by the early scientific and administrative management theories of Taylor (1947) and Fayol (1949) as well as the theory of availability of materials in libraries as established by IFLA (Nweke, 1991). Availability of theses is the process of ensuring the presence of theses in physical form for immediate use. Librarians perform specific management functions including planning, organizing, staffing, coordination and the provision of physical facilities so as to achieve the administrative goals of their organization, one of which is to ensure that patrons will find desired materials available on library shelves when they need them (Hall, 1985).

Research Method

This study investigated the relationships existing between planning, organizing, staffing, coordination and physical facilities and theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. Five null hypotheses developed and tested in the study were:

- 1.Planning has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.
- 2.Organizing has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.
- 3.Staffing has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses

- availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.
4. Coordination of movement of postgraduate theses from the postgraduate school to the university library does not have any significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.
 5. Physical facilities have no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.

Population and sample selection

A total of seven out of the ten universities located in the south south zone of Nigeria have postgraduate programmes. Of these seven universities, five were randomly selected to participate in the study namely, University of Calabar (UNICAL), University of Uyo (UNIUYO), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPOINT), University of Benin (UNIBEN) and Delta State University (DELSU).

From the records available, the total population of librarians, library officers and postgraduate administrators in the sampled universities was 242 as presented in Table 1. Because of the smallness of this population, the population was used in its entirety to form the sample for the study. Therefore, participants in the survey comprise all the 44 postgraduate school administrators serving in the five randomly selected universities within the south-south zone of Nigeria as well as all the 198 librarians and library officers working in the theses collections of the five universities, thus giving a total of 242 respondents.

Table 1 Distribution of Population of Library Staff and Postgraduate School Administrators in Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria

Universities	Librarians and Library officers	Postgraduate school administrators	Total
University of Calabar (UNICAL)	60	9	69
University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	56	7	63
University of Port Harcourt (UNIPOINT)	18	12	30
University of Benin (UNIBEN)	30	8	38
Delta State University (DELSU)	34	8	42
Total	198	44	242

Data Collection and Analysis

The research design for the study was a survey research design which comprised two instruments: Librarians' and Library Officers' Questionnaire (LALOQ) used to collect data from librarians and library officers, and Theses Collection Attribute Descriptive Scale (TCADS) administered on postgraduate school administrators. The Spearman-Brown Prophecy Method (Hill & Kerber, 1967)

was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and this gave a reliability coefficient of 0.93.

The data gathering exercise lasted from July to December 2004, approximately six months. At the end of the exercise, a total of 125 valid copies of the questionnaire for librarians and library officers were received out of a total of 198 copies distributed to the respondents giving 63.13% response rate.

Table 2 Distribution of Librarians and Library Officers by Number of Respondents from Each University

Universities	Number of Copies of Questionnaire Distributed	Number of Copies of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage
University of Calabar (UNICAL)	60	41	68.30
University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	56	35	62.50
University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	18	12	66.60
University of Benin (UNIBEN)	30	18	60.00
Delta State University (DELSU)	34	19	55.90
Total	198	125	63.13

All the copies of the questionnaire administered on postgraduate school administrators were returned, thus giving one hundred percent response rate (see Table 3).

Table 3 Number of Postgraduate School Administrators Surveyed in Each University

Universities	No. Surveyed	Percentage
University of Calabar	9	20.40
University of Uyo	7	15.90
University of Portharcourt	12	27.30
University of Benin	8	18.20
Delta State University	8	18.20
Total	44	100.00

Data collected were analyzed through the use of descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The dependent variable (theses availability) and each of the independent variables (planning, organizing, staffing, coordination and physical facilities) were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 point for Strongly Disagree to 4 points for Strongly Agree. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test each of the five null hypotheses.

Findings and Discussions

Each null hypothesis was presented first followed by data analysis procedures before testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

- (i) The first null hypothesis which states that planning has no significant rela-

tionship with postgraduate theses availability was rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.498 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195. Hence there was a significant relationship between planning and postgraduate theses availability (see Table I in the Appendix). This by implication means that good planning by librarians responsible for postgraduate theses collection would make theses readily available to users. This is in conformity with the view expressed by Evans (1983) and Etuk (1995) that the purpose of planning is to reconcile resources with objectives and opportunities by selecting a given part to the future from possible alternatives. Therefore, if theses collections are not carefully planned and developed by the theses collection librarians, the library's goal of making theses available for teaching and research will not be achieved.

(ii) The second null hypothesis which states that organizing has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability was rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.476 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 needed for significance at 0.05 level of significance (see Table II in the Appendix). Operationally, availability of theses requires an organized method of theses collection. By organizing the theses collection, the roles and responsibilities of the staff in that section are identified and clearly spelt out. The task of organizing includes determining what is to be done, who is to do them, how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom and where decisions are to be made in order that postgraduate theses are made available to users. In line with the views of Ologbonsaiye (1994) therefore, libraries need to be well organized and efficiently managed if they must realize their multifarious objectives.

(iii) The third null hypothesis which states that staffing has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability was also rejected (see Table III in the Appendix). Baird, Post, and Mahon (1990) support this finding when they defined staffing as the continuous process of identifying the types of jobs that need to be done, filling this position with appropriate people and managing their performance. Thus, staffing is a key element in the organizational and administrative plan of the university library. Therefore, without staffing no collection including postgraduate theses can be made available to users. According to Thompson (1973), the key elements of a university library are professionally qualified graduates, supported by auxiliary staff.

(iv) The fourth null hypothesis states that coordination of the movement of postgraduate theses from the postgraduate school to the university library has no significant relationship with availability of such postgraduate theses. This hypothesis was rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.481 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 (see Table IV in the Appendix). This is an important finding

because the faster the movement of the postgraduate theses from the postgraduate schools to the university libraries, the sooner the theses will be made available to the users.

(v) The fifth null hypothesis states that physical facilities have no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. This hypothesis was also rejected because the calculated r-value of 0.434 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 needed for significance at 0.05 level of significance (see Table V in the Appendix). This means that physical facilities have a strong relationship with postgraduate theses availability and is in conformity with section D of Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Academic Library Standards (Hall, 1985) which stresses that a university library shall have facilities which meet the present and anticipated requirements of the university and its programmes. This explains why Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) bemoan the fact that Nigerian libraries are generally deficient in the area of physical facilities. That this study has established a strong positive relationship between theses availability and physical facilities should go a long way to explain the need for better physical facilities not only in the theses collection sections but also in the entire university libraries system.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions appeared to be warranted:

1. There was a statistically significant relationship between staffing and postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. This means that if the theses collection unit were well staffed with efficient and effective staff, then postgraduate theses would easily be made available to the users.

2. Organizing was found to relate significantly with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria. This indicates that the theses collection needs to be well organized for theses to be made available for use by the readers.

3. Coordination of movement of postgraduate theses from the postgraduate schools to the university libraries has no significant relationship with postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.

4. There was a significant positive relationship between physical facilities and postgraduate theses availability in universities in south-south zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings that emerged from the study:

1. Every library should be well staffed and well equipped since staffing is an important predictor of theses availability in universities in the south-south zone of Nigeria.

2. Most libraries do not regularly link with the postgraduate schools as far as the transfer of theses to the library is concerned. As coordination of the movement of theses is an important management function, it is recommended that every university should appoint a coordinator who should be made to be in charge of transferring theses from postgraduate schools to university libraries to ensure that they are readily available.

3. Staffing of the theses collection should be given priority attention as it is the key element in the organizational and administrative plan of the university library.

4. The theses collection should be well equipped with adequate facilities to make the environment conducive for readers.

5. Inter-library loan system should be encouraged and readily implemented by universities in the south-south zone to make theses available to users within and outside the zone.

6. Policies formulated and implemented for theses collections should be regularly reviewed to guide staff to administer theses collections effectively.

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Appendix

Table I Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Planning and Postgraduate Theses Availability

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Planning	16.11	2.93	
Theses availability	25.58	4.43	.498*

* Significant at 0.05 level, df=124; r=0.195

Table II Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Organizing and Postgraduate Theses Availability

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Organizing	13.22	2.23	
Theses availability	25.58	4.43	.476*

* Significant at 0.05 level, df = 124; r = 0.195

Table III Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Staffing and Postgraduate Theses Availability

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Staffing	13.37	2.18	
Theses availability	25.58	4.43	.607*

N=125

* Significant at 0.05 level, df=124; r=0.195

Table IV Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Coordination and Postgraduate Theses Availability

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Coordination	16.69	2.51	
Theses availability	25.58	4.43	.481*

* Significant at 0.05 level, df=124; r=0.195

Table V Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Physical Facilities and Postgraduate Theses Availability

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Physical facilities	12.59	1.99	
Theses availability	25.58	4.43	.534*

* Significant at 0.05 level, df=124; r=0.195

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