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Article information:

To cite this document:

Abdulsalam Abiodun Salman, Janneke Mostert, Tinashe Mugwisi, (2018) "The governance and management of public library services in Nigeria", Library Management, Vol. 39 Issue: 6-7, pp.389-401, <https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-08-2017-0075>

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The governance and management of public library services in Nigeria

Public library
services in
Nigeria

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Received 11 August 2017
Revised 11 August 2017
Accepted 10 April 2018

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the managerial and governance issues that impact on service delivery in public libraries in Nigeria. Within many countries this seems to be a challenge often resulting in an ineffective service delivery resulting in underutilisation thereof. This study was conducted among administrators and managers of public libraries in Nigeria to establish the current status quo concerning governance and management issues impacting on service delivery.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative study using interviews was used to illicit data from three permanent secretaries, six public library directors, and six heads of rural community libraries, purposively selected for the study.

Findings – The findings show that variables such as relevant academic qualifications, years of experience, and designation of the administrators and managers of public libraries affect service delivery. A huge dependency on government bodies for decision making and funding was established. Impediments to good management of the libraries were found to be inadequate funding; lack of involvement of stakeholders in public library administration; and inappropriate public library legislation.

Practical implications – The study recommends the promulgation of a public library-specific act in order to regulate the administration and management of this public unit, involve stakeholders in public library administration, as well as the provision of alternative forms of funding in order to alleviate the dependence on governmental budgets.

Originality/value – With very little research available on these issues in Nigeria, this paper will create awareness among all stakeholders of specific governance and managerial issues impacting on effective service delivery to public library users so that it can be addressed.

Keywords Governance, Nigeria, Provision of public library services, Public library administration, Public library management, Public library services

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction and background

Public libraries are public organisations which are governed by the state since they are established and maintained with public funds and taxpayers' money. The delivery of public library services as a governmental activity requires efficient legislation and policies, and a management structure that is responsive both in terms of the implementation of the legislation and policies, and also in satisfying the needs of the people to whom services are delivered.

Service delivery takes place through an organised process which cannot be achieved without adequate governance and management structures in place, as the ability to deliver the expected public services at grassroots level requires commitment and efficiency in the capabilities of both the authority and the institution (Islam and Mezbah-ul-Islam, 2010). Foo *et al.* (2015) posit that service delivery is gauged by the performance of policymakers and managers. For an organisation to deliver the expected services to the populace resources must be available. However, these are in many cases in short supply and must be shared among competing organisations. In acquiring these scarce resources, organisations must demonstrate value by realising cost efficiency in the process of delivering high quality, useful products and services (The World Meteorological Organisation, n.d.). Therefore, if



public libraries are to deliver the services expected from them by their communities, policymakers should continuously assess through public participation the effectiveness of the services delivered.

Within the Nigerian public library context a number of studies have indicated widespread disillusionment with the services delivered by the public libraries. Challenges often mentioned concern issues such as a lack of appropriate laws and policies governing the public library system and inappropriate government support, funding issue, lack of efficient library management and staffing issues.

This study therefore aims to interrogate the issues mentioned to establish the reasons for the poor service delivery record of the public library system in Nigeria.

The objectives of the study include:

- to appraise the administrative and management structures of public libraries in Nigeria;
- to determine the governing bodies responsible for the governance and administration of public library services; and
- to identify the administrative and management challenges affecting the provision of effective public library services.

2. Literature review

Service delivery in public libraries is dependent on effective governance and management structures to be in place. The following sections provide an overview of these structures with specific reference to the Nigerian situation.

2.1 *Management and administrative structures in libraries*

For effective public administration, it is pertinent to adopt a workable administrative and management model with good formulation and enforcement of policies in order to deliver the expected services. Zaharia (2011) indicates that the concept of “public administration” is one that has no one clear definition describing it successfully. This opinion is shared by Aderibigbe and Olla (2014), who agree that it can be seen as a governmental action concerned with the executive part of government, and deals with the formulation and enforcement of public policies. Herbert, Thompson and Smithburg, in Zaharia (2011), describe public administration as “the activities of the executive branch of national, state and local government”. According to Zaharia (2011), public administration is a set of authorities working together and operating together as a coherent system which, through its entire activity, aims to satisfy the public interest, continuously and in accordance to social expectations.

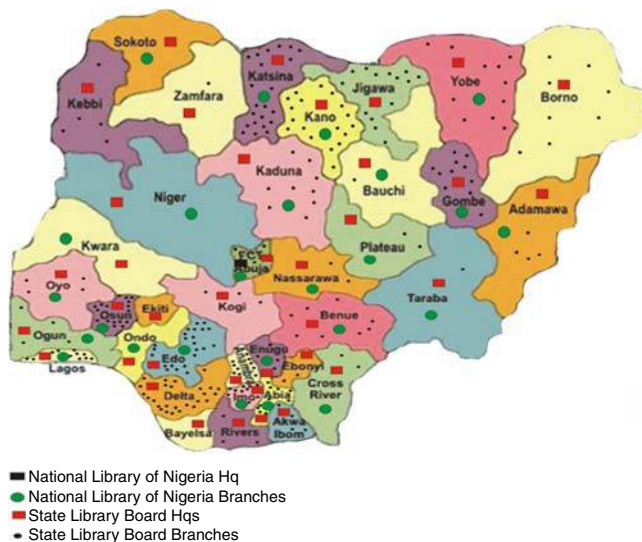
Nkuna and Sebola (2015) argue that the practice of administration cannot be separated from the ability of people in leadership positions within any given organisation. Governance structures involve the totality of planning, organising, staffing, coordinating and budgeting in any organisation which is important to the successful running of the organisation. Likewise, the governance of public libraries requires the coordination of both human and material resources for effective and efficient dissemination of relevant information (Saleh and Lasisi, 2011). Governance of public libraries in Nigeria is essentially the responsibility of the government because the public library is regarded as a service institution, established and managed with public funds. According to the Librarians’ Registration Council of Nigeria (2015), there are 316 public libraries in Nigeria, including the urban and rural libraries. There is one National Library of Nigeria at the headquarters in Abuja, and it has 25 branches nationwide. All the 36 states in the country have a public Library Board, each at the state headquarters. These Library Boards also function as the urban libraries. Abuja, which is the federal capital territory, also has a Library Board (Nigeria Library Association, 2011). There are 253 branches of the states’ Library Boards

spread across the rural communities in the country (Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria, 2015). These libraries are also known as rural or community libraries, and are governed and administered by the state Library Board as directed by each of the states' Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Figure 1 below shows the mapping of public libraries in Nigeria.

According to Ogbonna (2014), the public library system in Nigeria functions on three levels: federal, state, and local.

2.1.1 Federal level. At the federal level, the federal government provides funding for the National Library of Nigeria through the federal Ministry of Education. The National Library of Nigeria is categorised as a public library because it serves all categories of users at the national level. It is the responsibility of the National Library to channel the funding received from the annual budget allocation by the federal government to all the states and local governments of the federation. The governance structure of the National library is the responsibility of the federal Ministry of Education, and the allocation of funds is derived directly from the federal government's budget. The selection and acquisition of material, service delivery, and all other administrative responsibilities are discharged by senior librarians and the executives of the National Library of Nigeria.

2.1.2 State level. At the state level, all urban public libraries fall under the umbrella of the state Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, with the permanent secretary in the ministry as the overseer/supervisor of the libraries (Ogbonna, 2014). The permanent secretaries in each of the 36 ministries represent the interests of the ministries, and have the responsibility of ensuring the smooth operation of the public libraries and the affiliated/local libraries. The permanent secretaries report to commissioners, who are the officers accountable for the libraries' activities, and who are also the chief executives in these ministries. The ministries are responsible for policy formulation, budgetary allocation, the provision of staff, and the payment of their salaries through the states' annual budget as allocated by the federal government (Ogbonna, 2014).



Source: Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (2015)

Figure 1.
Mapping of public
libraries in Nigeria

Currently, the main public library at the state headquarters in each of the states in Nigeria has a Library Board that is responsible for its affairs and that of the affiliated rural libraries, with a chairman who is normally a political office holder, and may not necessarily be a professional librarian (Ogbonna, 2014). Members of the Board include the director of the public library, who serves as the secretary of the Board, one or two librarians, and some non-professionals who are political appointees.

The urban public library services under the auspices of the Library Boards are given more attention than their rural counterparts, by the government with regard to the provision of infrastructure and library services, resulting in better service delivery to the patrons. This in turn normally results in a relatively high level of patronage (Oyeronke, 2012, p. 68). This is observation corroborated in a study done by Erinle (2001, p. 451), who found that public libraries in the urban centres perform more effectively than those in the rural or local communities because considerable more resources are available, especially reference materials and staff.

2.1.3 Local level. At the local level, most rural/community and local government libraries are either affiliated to, or supervised by, the public Library Boards, and function as branches of the urban libraries (Momodu, 2014). These libraries are funded and governed by the Boards, except for the local government or privately owned libraries; but even these libraries are supervised and assisted by the state Library Boards.

Information, service delivery, and all administrative activities are channelled through the Boards, but the selection and acquisition of information material are the responsibility of the professional librarians (Ogbonna, 2014). The library management staff comprises professional librarians who ensure the smooth running of the library's day-to-day activities. The library management is in charge of public library services, finances, staff motivation and discipline. Regular meetings between the management of the library and staff address issues and challenges that affect the development of the library and staff for possible intervention.

Most of these rural libraries experience problems of infrastructure and service owing to lack of sufficient funding by the government, and its failure to provide effective library and information services in these areas to serve the rural dwellers, who are the bulk of the population (Anunobi *et al.*, 2014). The result is commonly a lack of patronage of public library services at this level. The above studies have established that the non-government funded rural/community libraries and information centres are better governed, with services that meet the needs of the users in the rural communities.

2.2 Legislation governing public libraries in Nigeria

According to Lajeunesse and Se (2004), legislation underpins the creation, development and maintenance of library and information services globally. Adequate and current legislation is therefore important for the successful implementation of public library policies in any country. In response to the recommendation by the UNESCO seminar in 1953, Nigeria implemented legislation to govern the country's library systems. Initially, owing to the lack of articulate public library laws, public library activities in Nigeria were governed by the National Library Act of 1964. Mu'azu (2014) explains that the government's intention was to provide access to educational materials for Nigerians by establishing branches of the main National Library. The legislation provided funding to the ministry responsible for the administration of library services, and also for the establishment of a Library Board that would manage the affairs of both urban and rural libraries. The National Library Act of 1964 provided the foundation for all public libraries' activities. Its aims were to constitute a Library Board as the key authority for library activities, establish and maintain the National Library, establish a public library branch affiliated to the National Library in each state of

the federation, advice the federal government on all library matters; assume responsibility for the National Bibliography of Nigeria, and set up National Bibliographic Centres. The states' public libraries carried out their activities under the National Library Act of 1964 as no specific public library laws under which the state's public libraries could operate had been put in place (Mu'azu, 2014).

Because the National Library Act of 1964 was limited in scope and content, a replacement was needed six years later, resulting in the National Library Act, No. 29, of 1970, which presently serves as the legal instrument that regulates public library activity in Nigeria. This Act stipulates the provision of funding for the activities of public libraries in Nigeria. The National Library Act of 1970 gives more powers to the directors/chief executives of the library. Section 3 subsection 4 of the law stipulates that:

Subject to sub-section (4) requires that the Library Board provide financial, operational and administrative policy programmes, in which the director shall be free to manage the library as he deems fit in accordance with this Act, and the board shall not interfere with his methods or manner in which he deploys the material and human resources of the board, in order to obtain results in accordance with this Act.

An amendment of the 1970 Act, known as the National Library (Amendment) Decree No. 9 of 1970, enlarged the membership of the Library Board from 17 to 19 in order to reflect representation of each of the then 19 states of the federation. The 1970 Act was an improvement on the 1964 Act because of the additional provision which widened the services to be provided by the Library Board, and the powers of the Board to give it more autonomy. Despite this improvement, the National Library Act's emphasis was only on funding, administrative policy, legal deposit, the obligations and benefits of directors and Board members, and the extension of powers to the director/chief executive (Mu'azu, 2014). According to Bello (1983, p. 376), the act is limited in scope and the ability to legally support the services of public libraries in a way to deliver ideal public library services. The Act was in fact not specifically geared towards state-owned public libraries, nor did it give attention to an information communication technology (ICT) implementation framework. This is why Yusufu (2010) argues that the lack of distinct legislation towards the development of the public library system in Nigeria contributes to the difficulty of providing satisfactory public library services to the public.

2.3 The 2012 national ICT policy

The development of ICT-related information services has necessitated the introduction of these services into public library services. This is also the case in Nigerian public libraries, where the introduction of ICTs into government's institutional services, of which the public library is one, is regulated by the National ICT Policy of 2012. This policy was initiated in 2011 when the Federal Ministry of Communication Technology in Nigeria was created in order to ensure better coordination of ICT activities and development in the country (The Ministerial Committee on ICT Policy Harmonization, 2012). The policy was meant to lay out the inputs necessary for the strengthening of all productive sectors, and would indicate the way to transform Nigeria into a knowledge-based and globally competitive country. The National ICT Policy (2012) addresses issues such as the policy and regulatory framework, internet and broadband development, local content, and coordinated ICT enhancement across all sectors of the country's economy. One of the stated goals in the policy concerns the development of human capacity in the ICT sector and across other sectors in the country. By providing the required ICT infrastructure, and making ICT hardware and software available to public library users, these institutions are contributing towards this goal. In a report on the state of the Nigerian public library system the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (2015) acknowledged the role of ICT as a driver

of the information economy, describing it as a “must have” for human development. The report acknowledged that for Nigeria to be a key player in the global economy, the efficient and effective deployment of ICTs are of paramount importance, and therefore recommended that public libraries be adequately provided with ICTs in order to fulfil their roles as the “people’s university”, especially in rural areas, where the people cannot afford ICT facilities.

2.4 Funding and budget allocation

Adequate funding is an enabler of the successful provision of public library services. According to Ubogu and Okiy (2011), services of libraries cannot be provided optimally without the necessary funding as it is essential for a library to possess the resources that will enable it to meet its goals. The amount of funding given to libraries directly influences the quality of services provided. Funding of public libraries in Nigeria is made available by the government, philanthropists, friends of the library, and other non-governmental agencies (Salman, 2016). As indicated earlier, the funding of public libraries in Nigeria is currently the responsibility of the state governments through the states’ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Opara (2012) notes that government funding of public libraries in Nigeria has not been conducive to service delivery since the 1980s. For example, public libraries in Edo and Delta States, in the South-South Zone, are currently performing poorly because of their appallingly low resources. According to Opara (2008), the bane of public libraries in Nigeria is poor funding, owing to budgets not taking inflation into consideration. Opara (2012), Nnadozie (2013) advocate that it is desirable to put in place aggressive mechanisms to get more money because it is the only way public libraries in Nigeria can grow independently. According to Nnadozie (2013), budget allocations to libraries will continue to be insufficient because of the country’s bad economic situation. Hence, fiscal discipline is required by the public libraries to spend the available funding wisely, and generate additional funds. Alternative measures resorted to in order to improve available information resources include gifts, exchange, resource sharing, donations, endowments, internally generated revenue (IGR), solicited and unsolicited funds, and book aid international.

3. Methodology

The study employed interpretivism as guiding research paradigm. This is because qualitative research methods were used for the interviews in gathering and analysing the data that were collected. A case study formed the research design. The population consisted of the permanent secretaries, directors of the State Board (urban) libraries and the heads of rural libraries across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, of which three permanent secretaries, six directors of public libraries, and six heads of community rural libraries were purposively selected to form the sample size of the study. Interviews were conducted for all the three permanent secretaries, six public library directors and six heads of community rural libraries across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Only three permanent secretaries were selected to represent this population group as the roles and functions of all 36 permanent secretaries are more or less the same and therefore it was assumed that data saturation would be reached after interviewing three of them. Interview schedules were prepared for both the permanent secretaries and the librarians, and after permission was obtained from the relevant government ministries from the sampled states in each of the geo-political zones, appointments were made with the permanent secretaries and the librarians to conduct the interviews. This proved to be a daunting task as the permanent secretaries were very busy people and scheduling and keeping an appointment were problematic. Some of the librarians were apprehensive fearing that they might be discriminated against if they spoke their minds freely, thus they had to be assured that permission was given for them to participate and give their honest opinions. The data gathered were thematically analysed and presented.

4. Findings and discussion

The analysed data received from the interviews with the permanent secretaries are provided first. These interviews aimed at gaining insight into the role of government in the governance of public libraries.

4.1 *Permanent secretaries*

The respondents were asked to indicate their years of experience and qualifications. The table below shows the demographic responses from the permanent secretaries (Table I).

The responses indicated that all the three public library parent body officials are permanent secretaries in South-West, North-West, and North-Central zones. The years of experience of the respondents varied between 28 and 33 indicating that all of them are highly experienced, but also very close to retirement after 35 years' work. None of the respondents held a degree directly relevant to Library and Information Science (LIS). As indicated, one had a Master's in Business Administration; another an MSc in Mathematics, while the last respondent obtained an MSc in Agriculture.

4.2 *Governance and administration of public library services*

To establish the roles both the government and the permanent secretaries play in the governance and administration of public library services the respondents were asked to expand on these issues.

The responses revealed that the public libraries are governed and administered by each of the state governments through the respective Ministries of Education, Science and Technology, while the permanent secretaries were the officers directly supervising the general activities of the library boards under them. One of the respondents indicated that the library boards consisted of a chairman, a library director, and other members.

On the roles of the government in the effective administration of the public libraries the respondents indicated that their respective government ministries were responsible for the recruitment of library staff and the payment of their salaries, making provision for relevant books and other library materials, and the carrying out of administrative responsibilities towards the libraries. They all confirmed that providing a budgetary allowance towards service delivery in the public libraries, as well as the supervision of the activities of the public library is the responsibility of their respective ministries. One respondent added that he "[...] in most cases plays an advisory role in ensuring the smooth running of the library activities" He added that: "The government transfers some of the Ministry staff to the library when they have issues with staffing".

Asked what they perceived to be the role of government towards the effective management of the public libraries the respondents indicated that the government should provide appropriate legislation, sufficient funding, and adequate human resources to allow librarians to manage the library activities. One respondent indicated that efficient service delivery in the libraries "[...] could be achieved by providing a conducive atmosphere for the managers of public libraries through the provision of functional public library legislation, qualified staff, current and relevant library materials, and making available sufficient funds".

Respondent	Zone	Designation	Years of experience	Highest qualification
R 1	South-west	Permanent secretary	28	Master's in business administration (MBA)
R 2	North-west	Permanent secretary	33	Master's in mathematics (MSc)
R 3	North-central	Permanent secretary	33	Master's in agriculture (MSc)

Note: $n = 3$

Table I.
Demographic
information of the
permanent secretaries

Challenges identified by the respondents in the governing and administration of the libraries included lack of enough professionally qualified library staff, inadequate support from stakeholders and non-governmental organisations, and unnecessary bureaucratic processes. Asked what solutions they suggested to overcome these challenges a recurrent theme among the responses was to invite the involvement of external individuals or organisations, to either actively support the libraries, participate in public library management, or to outsource the administration of the libraries to private organisations. One respondent stated: “I think public libraries can be adequately managed by involving stakeholders in the affairs of the library. Government cannot do it alone. People should donate their personal books and useful items that reflect the thinking of the people. I have travelled outside this country and saw how communities participated in the management of public libraries”. While another respondent was more vocal about the role of external bodies by advocating the total privatisation of public library services, as according to him, “There is always efficiency in a privately run organisation”. The third respondent indicated that private individuals and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO’s) should also be invited to support the library services. It was also suggested that more autonomy should be given to public library administrators to allow for administrative flexibility and the eradication of unnecessary bureaucratic processes.

4.3 Urban and rural librarians

The librarians were questioned to provide their opinions on the administration and management of the public libraries.

4.3.1 Demographic information. The librarians were asked to indicate their designations, years of experience and qualifications. Table II below provides the data as gathered from the respondents.

The findings revealed that the designations of the directors of the urban public libraries varied, i.e. two are called executive directors, two directors, one is known as a deputy director, and one is called a director/state librarian. Their years of experience indicated vast experience ranging between 23 and 34 years. Regarding the highest qualifications, three directors were holders of a Bachelor of LIS degree, and three directors had Master’s degrees in LIS.

As was the case with the urban librarians the designations of the heads of rural community libraries also showed variations with two called library officers, two assistant

Table II.
Demographic
information of the
directors of
public libraries and
heads of rural
community libraries

Library	Designation	Years of experience	Highest qualification
<i>Urban libraries</i>			
1	Director	28	Master's in Library and Information Science
2	Director	32	Master's in Library and Information Science
3	Executive director	23	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
4	Deputy director	34	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
5	State librarian/director	24	Master's in Library and Information Science
6	Executive director	31	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
<i>Rural libraries</i>			
1	Library officer	6	National Certificate of Education
2	Library officer	16	Diploma in Library Science
3	Assistant chief library officer	12	Diploma in Library Science
4	Librarian II	7	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
5	Assistant library officer	4	Higher National Diploma in Library and Information Science
6	Assistant chief library officer	18	Diploma in Library Science

Note: n = 12

chief library officers, one a librarian, and one an assistant library officer. Years of experience ranged between four and 18 years. With regards to qualifications, three respondents were holders of a Diploma in Library Science, one had a Higher National Diploma in LIS, one a National Certificate of Education, while one had a Bachelor of LIS degree.

4.3.2 Administration and management of public libraries. Asked who was responsible for the general management of the libraries and how these appointments were made the urban librarians generally agreed that it was the responsibility of the designated director. The basis for their appointment drew a variety of responses with one respondent indicating that seniority played a role, while another one indicated that it was made by the state government by way of promotion based on merit. The other four all agreed that their appointments was by way of appointment through the respective Ministries of Education, Science and Technology in their states but did not indicate on what merits they were appointed into their positions. Among the rural librarians five of the respondents indicated that the state Library Boards were responsible for their library's management as they were affiliated to the State Library Boards. One respondent indicated that his/her library was established by a politician and financed by the local government. The respondent for this library indicated that it was managed by the community, though the state library board provided advisory, moral, and sometime material support.

Asked to indicate the nature of the services provided in the libraries all the librarians agreed that they provided services to all community members without any form of discrimination. Only one respondent indicated that they provided services aiming specifically at handicapped community members. The services offered were mainly print based though one urban library indicated that they were in the process of introducing e-sources. Two of the libraries served as legal deposit libraries.

Respondents were asked to indicate how they managed the resourcing of their libraries, and whether they were adequately supported by the government in the process. All the libraries indicated that the budgetary allowance received from the government was their major source of funding to assist them in acquiring resources for the library, though the general consensus was that it was not enough for efficient service delivery. Two of the libraries indicated that the legal deposit system was their main avenue of resourcing their library materials. Three of the libraries used additional sources such as donations, support from "Friends of the Library" and exchanges to supplement their resources. The one rural library established by a private individual indicated that "the management of the library finances takes place through the local government that took over the library. Some friends of the library in the community also support it financially. We also receive goodwill and advice from the state library board".

Challenges identified in the administration and management of the libraries illicit a number of responses. One respondent indicated that: "Although, we don't have current materials, the general management of the library lacks adequate funding. We also have a shortage of staff, as you can see for yourself". Another respondent expressed his/her challenges as: "Financial stress, insecurity of books occasioned by students pilfering of the books, the exodus of public library staff to academic libraries for higher pay are some of the challenges experienced in the provision of library services. There is the need for an e-library to meet modern demands of clientele". To this another respondent added: "We are challenged with inadequate funds, lack of skills in IT for staff, lack of staff motivation, irregular supply of electricity, poor working environments, and inadequate working materials". The issue of staffing was a recurring theme with one respondent stating that: "We have a serious challenge in the area of staffing where inexperienced staff are transferred from the Ministry to the library. These are Ministry staffers who know little or nothing about the library profession. This poses a lot of challenges in the daily running of

the library activities. We also do not have enough space, as you can see for yourself. Although, the building was recently reconstructed to wear a new look, we require a bigger building". To this another respondent added "We are constrained by funding. Without funds, you can hardly achieve anything". Among the rural libraries the same challenges were experienced which resulted in very low patronage. They however felt that the identified challenges could be addressed if the library boards and the local government authority concerned paid more attention to the roles of the community library services.

5. Discussions and conclusions

In order to provide satisfactory public library service delivery, library managers need to be enabled at an administrative/management level with supporting legislation, policies, resources, funding and human resources. Autonomy at library level to take decisions pertaining to service delivery for a specific community is an important means of ensuring service delivery. From the interviews with the permanent secretaries and directors/heads of the libraries it was clear that all of these advantages were lacking, thus affecting the development of public libraries in Nigeria. The social and political challenges facing public libraries in Africa are similar to those in the West, though the challenges are minimised in the developed countries because of the implementation of progressive management models such as the New Public Management in public organisations. Muralidhar and Rao (2013), in their study on public libraries in India, support this viewpoint, and point out that though Indian libraries experience very much the same challenges as their Nigerian counterparts, public library service delivery was much improved because of the encouragement and support from their governments in providing supportive legislation, and actively encouraging the libraries to source alternative sources of funding.

Legislation and policies provide the guidelines as to how a public organisation functions, and how it is to be administered and funded. Relevant public library legislation is currently lacking in Nigeria, affecting the development of public libraries and how services are provided (Olden, 1985). The lack of autonomy to make decisions and put policies in place at library level has been identified by the directors/heads of the libraries as a challenge in the effective provision of services. The current study established that public libraries source their funding mainly through the annual budgetary allocations from the state governments.

The lack of funding that has been widely reported in studies on the Nigerian public library system (Ebiwolate, 2010; Saleh and Lasisi, 2011; Omotosho and Okiki, 2012) is not a problem unique to this country. Many public libraries, both in the developed and developing countries, seem to be plagued by the same problem (Ghosh, 2005; Psaila, 2006; Alexander, 2013). Though the sourcing of funds using alternative methods does not seem to be prohibited by government bodies, the findings of the current study showed that very few of the libraries actively engaged in trying to find sustainable alternative income from which to provide services that would satisfy their users. The sourcing of alternative forms of funding has been found to be a practice in some developed countries (Coffman, 2003; Agosto, 2008). Davis (2006), Elliott (2013) assert that public libraries in Nigeria should become more proactive in terms of raising IGR in order to be financially self-sustaining.

Administrative autonomy to take and execute decisions concerning management should be an ideal if service delivery is to be efficient, and issues addressed as they arise. Bach and Schofield (2017) in their study on public library autonomy, found that the New York State Library's Division of Library Development granted their local libraries autonomous status in terms of professional independence and involvement of the local stakeholders in the management of the libraries. They found that this autonomous public library model was to be recommended as it promoted self-sustainability and better management in the libraries. The current study, however, established that the libraries depend greatly on the Ministries

of Education, Science and Technology in each of the states for decision making, finances, and guidance in management matters, jeopardising their ability to be sustainable units actively involved in their own total management.

6. Recommendations

- (1) In order for the public library sector to function properly in Nigeria, adequate governance and administrative structures should be put in place through appropriate legislation. Currently, governing and administrative bodies consist largely of non-library professionals with qualifications irrelevant to library and information services, most of them being political office holders with political ideologies, none of which are conducive to public library development.
- (2) LIS professionals and other stakeholders should be more involved in the public library governance and the formulation of policies for their libraries instead of just being involved in the day-to-day operations.
- (3) Public libraries should be more proactive in exploring the possibilities of providing relevant and adequate services by approaching stakeholders in the society and encourage NGOs and local and international foundations to assist with funding.
- (4) The federal government of Nigeria should set up a central committee comprising professionals such as: librarians, IT experts and administrators of integrity to provide leadership in terms of how public library services can be improved, taking into account the findings of this study. It is envisaged that such a committee can eventually become a permanent national commission functioning as a regulatory body for the states' public libraries in Nigeria. This could enhance professional autonomy in the public library sector.
- (5) Public library-specific legislation should be developed to replace the inadequate National Library Act of 1970. This legislation should address issues such as governance/administration, funding, staffing, and the functions of all stakeholders, ICT policies, and library collaboration in order to provide better access to information sources for all users.
- (6) The basis for the allocation of funding to the libraries should be revised and realistic budgets made available to the public libraries in order for them to fulfil their roles as described in the IFLA guidelines for public library services.
- (7) There should be closer cooperation between library schools, as well as other education institutions that can offer further training, and the governing bodies in order to ensure that staff with appropriate skills is employed.

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