

Intersectoral Collaboration in the Provision of Library Resources for Effective Polytechnic Education in Rivers State

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Abstract

It is increasingly recognized that the coming together of different people, organisations, and sectors in understanding and solving an identified social problem especially for the good of the public is a sure route to development. This work therefore, studied inter-sectoral collaboration in the provision of library resources for effective polytechnic education in Rivers State. The method used in carrying out the study was a descriptive survey design, the population of the study consisted of 40 librarians drawn from four libraries in Rivers State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 of them in 3 libraries which served as sample for the study. Findings of the study show that other sectors can collaborate with the library to provide information resources, conducive learning environment, and technological devices for library operations. The study recommends that, there should be there should creation of more awareness and sensitization on the need for intersectoral collaboration in solving societal problems. The government at all levels should draw up plan policies to guide intersectoral collaboration among institutions, the library in particular and the school system at large should synergize with other sectors in its plans and policies to enjoy the support of other sectors.

Keywords: collaboration, resources utilization, educational system, librarians

Introduction

Intersectoral collaboration is the new foundation and most efficient requisite for an effective and efficient growth in the contemporary educational system. Individuals, professionals and institutions collaborate to judiciously use available scarce human and material resources to contribute meaning to the development of the different sectors of society including education. No man is an island of knowledge as skills, expertise and finances are being shared to holistically accomplish personal and organizational set goals.

Collaborative efforts give greater and better outcome; promote mutually beneficial relationship that brings people to partner for development. According to Commonwealth of Australia (2004) as in Ochalla (2008) collaboration is partnership, alliance or network, aimed at a mutually beneficial clearly outcome. In academics, professional collaborate to create, share, use and exchange intellectual properties, ideas to advance knowledge, enhance peer review and constructive criticism for greater productivity. This helps in producing efficient ideas for growth and development of the individual and the society.

Intersectoral collaboration in a 21st century context requires the ability to work in teams, learn from and contribute to the needs of others through concerted effort, use social networking skills, and demonstrate empathy in working with diverse groups. This also requires bringing solutions to issues through building cooperation. New skills and knowledge are necessary to enable team members collaborate digitally and contribute to the collective knowledge base, whether working remotely or in a shared physical space with a common goal of solving identified problems (Siinamari & Riitta-Liisa, 2021; Okonedo & Popoola, 2012)

There should be collaboration in the development of resources for accreditation of programs in the institution. Accreditation is a usual routine or exercise of evaluation of programs and

resources by regulating agencies with the view of ensuring standard specifications. Nkiro and Yusuf (2007), described it as a process of standardizing the programs of study offers for learners in an institution, is an exercise aimed at evaluating policies and procedures to establish the quality of a particular program, these accrediting bodies may be either government agencies, specialized or professional entities. There is supposed to be a synergy between the librarians and faculty members as well as all stakeholders in the sector to ascertain and develop the necessary relevant, accurate and current information resources to enable to the program of study to succeed accreditation.

A library has evolved into a resource center, a co-creator of knowledge, a transmission point where users converge to solve their information needs without any constraints or prejudice (Bello, 2014). According to Okogwu and Akidi (2022), the library played an important role in ensuring that the institution passed a successful accreditation. To achieve this, the institution's libraries ensure the provision of facilities, services, and information resources that are relevant to supporting the teaching, research, and learning activities of their parent institution.

Collaboration to provide accessible and conducive learning environment is an important area to partner with other sectors. Higher education is a transformative journey that goes beyond classrooms and textbooks. It requires access to a wealth of knowledge, resources, and a supportive environment. In this context, the libraries play a vital role in promoting higher education. They serve as dynamic spaces that foster intellectual growth, provide crucial resources, and offer invaluable support to students, faculty members, and researchers. The role of the university library in promoting higher education is multifaceted and essential to the academic development and success of students, faculty, and researchers.

Libraries serve as knowledge hubs, providing access to a wide range of resources necessary for higher education. They offer extensive collections of books, journals, research papers, and digital materials that cover various academic disciplines. By curating and organizing these resources, libraries ensure that students and scholars have the necessary materials to support their coursework, research, and intellectual exploration. The availability of diverse resources encourages academic curiosity and enables individuals to delve deeper into their areas of interest. Therefore, there is need for collaboration in providing information resources by faculty members especially in the policy of reserving three copies of internally published materials with the library.

Libraries in higher institutions are to foster a culture of learning and collaboration. The library spaces become the catalysts for stimulating dialogue, exchanges and generation of innovative ideas (Wijayasundara & Nayana, 2008). In contemporary times, libraries and other knowledge management organizations all over the world drive on the wheel of technology. Librarians work more with the help of technology, they are no longer mere books keepers in a stock room but an active player in the dissemination, creation and storage of information which is an important resource needed to drives teaching, learning and research in every institution. Other sectors can collaborate with libraries and the entire educational systems to enhance the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) and other collaborative technological tools as well as trending artificial intelligence applications to enable professionals' to collaborate in teamwork for problem solving and improve service delivery irrespective of place and time.

According to Paker and Walton (2017), leveraging on technologies, collaboration will not only enhance resource-sharing, but will sustain the growth and development of an efficient educational system. (Gasco & Luna, 2022; Lin, 2007; Kharabsheh, 2007; Gold 2001) and these are facilitated by the ability to use available emerging technologies in library services delivery

(Okonedo & Popoola, 2012). Collaborative technologies enable precision, fastness, wide coverage in service delivery in academic libraries (Mishra & Mishra, 2013).

The challenges militating against intersectorial collaboration in the educational sector are enormous, these include lack of awareness and sensitization among collaborating partners, lack of supporting policy to guide coordination of efforts, also inadequate funding is another major challenge Also, Fourie & Loe (2016) and Mabawonku (2010) explained that intersectorial collaboration suffers setback because of corruption does not mostly collaborate with librarians because of poor level of awareness, the lack the understanding of the numerous benefits they would gain from collaboration.

Omehia and Wiche (2019) in their investigation on extent of awareness of collaboration among librarians are of the opinion that there should be increase in the level of awareness and engagement on the needs to foster collaboration as to improve resources and services in the library.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study examined:

1. Areas of collaboration between libraries and other sectors to promote effective polytechnic education in rivers state
2. The advantages to be derive from the collaboration between libraries other sectors to promote effective polytechnic education.
3. Ascertain the challenges militating against the collaboration between libraries and other sectors and to proffer solutions.

Methodology

The method used in carrying out the study was a descriptive survey design, the population of the study consisted of 40 librarians drawn from four libraries in Rivers State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 25 of them in 3 libraries who successfully served as sample of the study. A four points rating scale questionnaire titled ' IntersectorialCollaboration and Provision of Library Resources in Nigeria (ICPLS) was used for data collection.

Results

The data collected from the respondents are analyzed and tabulated as follows.

Table 1: Areas of collaboration between the libraries and other sector.

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	S.D
1	Collaboration in the development of resources for accreditation of programs.	6	9	3	7	2.8	1.15
2	Collaboration for provision of resources for teaching, learning and research.	4	8	6	7	2.6	1.07
3	Collaboration for publications	4	8	6	7	2.9	1.07
4	Collaboration in the provision of conducive learning environment	3	11	4	7	2.5	1.04
5	Collaboration in providing technology	4	9	5	7	2.7	1.08
Aggregate Mean						2.7	

Table 1present data on areas that other sectors can collaborate with the library with an aggregate mean of 2.7 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

This affirms that all respondents agreed that other sectors can collaborate in the development and provision of resources for accreditation of programs, in theprovision of resources for teaching, learning and research, collaboration for publications, collaboration in the

provision of conducive learning environment, collaboration in providing technology to ease library operations.

Table 2: Benefits to be gotten from collaboration between Libraries and other sectors

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD
1	Growth in quality research and development	20	5	0	0	2.6	0.67
2	Enhance academic performance	15	7	3	0	2.8	0.76
3	Promote sustainable intersectoral relationship	10	10	4	1	3.0	0.64
4	Efficient use of resources	15	5	5	0	2.9	0.74
5	Promote efficient education system	20	5	0	0	3.2	0.64
Aggregate Mean						2.9	

Table 2 shows the different benefits that can be derived from intersectoral collaboration to include growth in quality research and development, enhance academic performance, promote sustainable intersectoral relationship, efficient use of resources and efficient educational system

Table 3: Factors militating against effective collaboration between librarians and other sector

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	SD
1	Lack of awareness and sensitization.	15	10	0	0	2.6	0.64
2	Lack of supporting policy	20	5	0	0	2.8	0.74
3	Lack of funds	22	3	0	0	3.2	0.76
4	Lack of synergy between the different sectors	22	3	0	0	3.0	0.78
5	Sentiment and sectoral bias	24	1	0	0	2.9	0.72
Aggregate Mean						2.9	

Table 3, respondents agreed to all the items with an aggregate mean of 2.9. This shows that lack of awareness and sensitization, lack of supporting policy, Inadequate funds, lack of synergy between the different sectors, sentiment and sectoral bias between partner agencies largely affect intersectoral collaboration negatively.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that, contribution to development of libraries with is a keyplayer and supporting pillar in every educational system especially in the area of provision of resources should not be a responsibility of government alone but should be a shared responsibility to between different sectors of the society. The study specifically pointed out some important areas other sectors can collaborate with the library to attend to, these include collaborate in the provision of resources for accreditation of programs, for teaching, learning and research, publications, in the provision of conducive learning environment, providing technology. However, there are so many benefits that can be derived from this collaboration which include provision of efficient library services and development of education system.

Findings revealed some major factors that militate against intersectoral collaboration to include lack of awareness and sensitization, lack of supporting policy, Inadequate funds, lack of synergy between the different sectors, sentiment and sectoral bias between partner agencies. This agreed with the views of Okonedo and Popoola (2012), Bello (2014).

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is established that, for a speedily growth and development of the society there should be more support for intersectoral collaboration approach in responding to issue that affect development

such as the support for a strong and efficient library services in particular and educational system at large.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. The educational sector should create more awareness and sensitization on the need for intersectoralcollaborational approach in solving societal problems
2. The government at all levels should draw up plan policies to guide intersectoral collaboration, this will serve as a legislative support for such actions.
3. The library in particular and the school system at large should synergize with other sectors in its plans and policies to enjoy the support of other sectors.
4. Sectoral bias should be discouraged as not particularly sector is more superior to the other

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