

An approach to quality improvement of Nigerian university library services: A framework for effective quality management implementation

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Abstract

The paper explores the different strategies in managing operations and delivering services and compares them to current trends in academic libraries in Southwestern (SW) Nigeria. The author objectively and comparatively examined the different models of quality management (QM) and strategies, from which a framework of quality improvement for Nigerian university libraries was developed. The article employed a pragmatic approach to unearth the complexities of investigating the phenomenon in academic library environments. This paper discussed the findings of three studies (online survey, interview and focus groups) in this research and how they relate to the existing literature. A comprehensive analysis highlights challenges of university library operations in SW Nigeria while a pragmatic approach was used to achieve the objectives of the paper. The paper concluded that improvement in quality of service delivery and operations is certain if the proposed framework for QM implementation is embraced in Nigerian academic libraries. Recommendations were made on the way forward toward improving academic library services nationwide.

Keywords

Nigeria, quality management, quality improvement, university libraries

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Introduction

Academic libraries are very important to the development of higher education institutions (HEIs) in teaching, learning and research. They are assessed on the basis of their contribution to the success of the parent institutions (Dewey, 2014). As vital parts of their host institutions, they have over the years expanded their range of services to match institutional goals and objectives and have in recent years endeavored to demonstrate their values to the respective user communities. This has necessitated the development and introduction of systems, philosophies and strategies for better management and provision of quality services, mainly in academic libraries of developing countries. Hsieh, Chang and Lu (2000) affirmed the need for special approaches to quality as a requirement in modern library services, due to the characteristics entrenched in different types of libraries.

In Nigeria, university library managers have, in the last two decades, identified the benefits of improving library procedures to support the goals and objectives of their respective institutions. They have consequently expressed increased interest in the application of quality management (QM) tools that will be applicable to their evolving managerial tasks. A review of the existing literature revealed a focus on quality assurance (QA) as an evaluation model in HEIs and the potential benefits of applying other models of QM implementation in Nigerian university libraries (Oladele, 2010). However, an understanding of the

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appropriate model and their dimensions is fundamental to the choice of suitable QM tools.

QM in relation to academic libraries is defined by Roberts and Rowley (2004: p.158) as “the processes . . . that contribute to the management of the products, services or other outputs from the organisation”. They define QM as a philosophy that incorporates two distinct dimensions, namely; quality assurance – which ensures adherence to “externally and internally set standards in higher education institutions”(p.159); and quality enhancement – which denotes holistic improvement of library products and services in promoting the quality of teaching, sustainable learning and research for institutional outcomes. This definition suggests a focus on quality enhancement as a suitable dimension for academic libraries as it focuses on libraries’ contribution to institutional development through quality improvement of their internal operations.

This study presents the outcome of a wider multiple case study (Egberongbe, 2016) that investigated the approaches to QM in 15 university libraries in South Western Nigeria between 2012 and 2014. In this wider study, a number of key findings were revealed: library managers defined QM from different perspectives which mainly pointed to the libraries’ roles in support of their parent institutions; awareness of the impact of QM practices on organisational outcomes; there were no empirical studies on QM implementation in Nigerian university libraries; the few available studies were descriptive and based on contextual considerations of how QA could be adopted for operational procedures; The adherence to QA prescribed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to the universities was for the purpose of accreditation of academic programmes.

The findings from the multiple case study affirmed Derfert Wolf’s (2005) assertion that successful adoption of and implementation of QM in the academic library requires cooperation from both the internal and external environments of the libraries. The internal (i.e library management and workforce) environment cooperates for effective delivery of products and services, while cooperation with the external environment (i.e. external stakeholders - the user community and funders) enhances provision of facilities and resources pertinent to quality improvement. In the university libraries investigated, the current study considers the existing situation from the perspectives of heads of libraries on one hand and focus groups on the other. The objective was to understand the

existing situation regarding QM practices and to explore the possibility of suggesting quality improvement through a model of QM implementation.

Context of study and characteristics

South-West (SW) Nigeria has a large concentration of public universities, established by the federal and state governments, and private universities. The university libraries are established to serve the universities which are further categorised as first, second or third generation universities, depending on when they were established: 1948 to 1965 for the first category; 1975 for the second; and 1985 to 1998 for the third. The public universities are established through statutes and acts of parliament, while at inception the private universities are licensed by the NUC.

The main reason for the choice of SW Nigeria was that the three types of universities operating in Nigeria are represented in the zone. There were a total of 117 universities in the country as at 2012, when the study was conducted, with 30 universities in the SW zone, which represented 26% of the total number of universities. The 30 universities in the SW region consisted of 15 public (6 federal and 9 state), while the remaining 15 were private universities, all with libraries established to support teaching, learning and research purposes.

Literature review

Quality Management in higher education institutions (HEIs)

The need for organisations to establish appropriate management systems regardless of their sector, size and structure has been emphasised by Michalska (2008). This, according to him, is vital in order to attain success and gain competitive advantage. However, this can only be achieved with proper knowledge and understanding of quality as a concept, as well as QM principles, especially as they relate to libraries in HEIs.

Quality in HEIs is illustrated as a ‘multi-dimensional construct’ which is interpreted in various ways by different stakeholders and which creates complexity in measurement and management (Becket and Brookes, 2008: p. 43). Harvey and Knight (cited in Becket and Brookes, 2008) identified a set of dimensions of quality in HEIs which can be broken down into five different but related dimensions as follows: ‘quality as exceptional; quality as

consistency; quality as fitness for purpose; quality as value for money and quality as transformative'. Harvey and Knight (in Beckett and Brookes, 2008: p.43), are of the opinion that 'quality as transformative' encompasses the other dimensions to an extent, because the first four do not represent end products. They refer to 'quality as transformative', as a process of empowerment to take action as well as enhance customer satisfaction. This notion about the quality revolution has thus resulted in the need for adoption of approaches to manage quality in HEIs.

A range of QM models and tools primarily developed for industry have consequently been adopted and tested in HEIs and are increasingly being integrated into library services (Beckett and Brookes, 2008). The eight models and assessment tools include Total Quality Management (TQM) (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2002); International Standardisation for Organisations (ISO) (Balague and Saarti, 2009); Quality Assurance (QA) (El-Bakry, 2009; Moghaddam and Moballeghe, 2010); the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Cullen, 2006; 2003); Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) (Arif and Smiley, 2004); the EFQM Business Excellence Model (BEM) (Stavridis, and Tsimoglou, 2012); assessment tools such as SERVQUAL (Beckett and Brookes, 2008; Parasuraman, 2004); and LibQUAL (Tiemensma, 2009; Kostagliolas and Kitsiou, 2008).

Successful implementation of QM requires identification and definition of the critical success factors (CSFs) necessary for achievement of the organisation's mission. CSFs are defined as 'the key areas of activity in which satisfactory results will ensure successful competitive performance for the individual organisation' (Rockart, 1982: p.4; Bullen and Rockart, 1981: p.7). Oakland (2004) describes CSFs as what the organisation must accomplish in order to achieve its desired goal.

Five principles identified from the foregoing models as common to defining QM implementation in HEIs and which are equally established as CSFs (Beckett and Brookes, 2008), include leadership, human resource management, customer service, process management and performance measurement. These principles and their related elements represent essential features of QM implementation and practice. They equally characterise the aspects of changes required for management and improvement of quality in university libraries.

For example, leadership is defined as a relationship between top management and employees in mutual

pursuit of organisational goals which are driven by increasing customer expectations (Anderson, 1994; Evans and Lindsay, 2005). It is confirmed as an attribute of management that contributes significantly to organisational development (Moghaddam and Moballeghe, 2008).

Customer focus and satisfaction is considered as a significant factor in quality management. It enables an organisation to maintain a competitive edge over its rivals by addressing customers' needs and expectations, while anticipating and responding to their evolving interests (Sureshchandar, Rajendran and Anantharaman, 2001).

Oakland (2004) asserts that managing personnel is an important aspect of an organisation's activities that involves effective coordination and organisation of staff in order to achieve its goals. In the HE context, however, approaches indicated as crucial to the development of QM are selection policy, employee training and motivation; and commitment to quality (Ogba, 2013; Calvo-Mora, Leal and Roldan, 2006).

Process management concerns how an organisation controls and improves its processes by setting quality measures (Conca, Llopis and Tari, 2004). Service organisations' activities involved in this procedure include creating products and delivering services. Such activities are designed to transform the organisation by converting input into output, and by achieving good outcomes.

Brophy (2006) describes performance measurement as the measuring of past activity in an organisation and the use of data to generate a plan for an improved future. He adds that it involves a wide range of aspects including accountability, budgetary pressures, changes in the socio-technical environment and improvement and comparison.

Quality management and service delivery in Nigerian academic libraries

Quality in academic library context is defined by the standard ISO 11620 as the "totality of features and characteristics of a product or a service that bears on the library's ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (ISO 11620, 1998: p. 12). Nigerian academic libraries have undergone changes in the last two decades and assumed new roles through introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Nkanu and Okon, 2010). This has no doubt necessitated the use of management techniques designed to increase efficiency in libraries. However, despite the low

financial resource allocation as reported by Ifijeh (2011) and as detailed in the NUC Needs Assessment (Anyia, 2013), Nigerian academic libraries have embraced the need to establish systems to enhance internal communication, cooperation and collaboration with users. With this development, therefore, they are required to engage in active collaboration with faculty members to ensure effective bibliographic instruction and skills as well as other information use.

The academic library is crucial to the existence of any university through its support for the mission of the parent institution. Brophy (in Kostagiolas and Kitsiou, 2008: p. 585) emphasises the central role of the library user, to whom services and content of the library must be delivered, and regards the task of meeting these needs by academic libraries as challenging. Academic libraries are therefore required to change, develop and provide services and products for improving quality of teaching, learning and research, while doing so in conformance with institutional goals (Schmidt, Croud and Lyons, 2000). Popoola and Zaid (2007) maintain that effective delivery of services in the context of Nigerian university libraries has a functional relation with availability of resources. Thus, of utmost concern to Nigerian university library managers is the need to provide a variety of resources to users and to support institutional programmes.

Quality management implementation in Nigerian academic libraries

Successful implementation of quality management in Nigerian academic libraries requires appreciation of appropriate management approaches. Segun-Adeniran (2015) identified choice of appropriate types of leadership styles as essential to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the library in realization of overall institutional outcome. Dewey (2014) confirmed the role of leadership from two major studies (Kranich, Lotts and Springs, 2014; Lynch et al., 2007) that have confirmed the relationship between university library leadership and successful institutional outcome in HEIs. Johnston (2016) emphasised the choice of transformational style of leadership, which he described as the approach that centres on high expectations from employees as key to ensuring service quality, by focusing on the value of the customer. The type of leadership style practiced influences human resource development in ensuring the selection and recruitment of the right personnel,

to provide adequate training for developing and empowering the workforce (Bamgbose and Ladipo, 2017; Lamptey, Boateng and Antwi, 2013).

Ensuring sustainable provision of facilities and resources through effective management for continuous improvement of processes and procedures also contributes to a successful QM implementation in the university library. Such improvement efforts thus require a systematic focus on aspects of products and services such as user surveys, staff evaluation and benchmarking of activities, to promote quality library services as well as a cordial library/user relationship. Knowledge of the contextual characteristics of Nigerian academic libraries in terms of understanding their internal and external environment is vital to QM implementation and practice.

Problem statement

Nigerian university library managers have over the years expanded their range of services to match their institutions' goals and objectives, and have in recent years endeavoured to demonstrate their values to their respective user communities. They have equally demonstrated increased interest in the application of new management tools that will be appropriate to their evolving managerial tasks. However, a review of the literature on QM application in Nigerian university library development revealed a number of gaps. The few available studies were descriptive and based on contextual considerations of how quality assurance (QA) could be adopted for operational procedures. Moreover, despite a growing literature on QM, there had not been any systematic adoption of QM nor any empirical research on the adoption and implementation of QM, and therefore very little knowledge of the methods used to manage university library operations. The study's focus was therefore to ascertain whether there was an existing and systematic QM structure for Nigerian university libraries.

Objectives

1. To assess management procedures in Nigerian university libraries and the extent to which they are based on principles of QM.
2. To find out the available range of services in Nigerian university libraries in recent years.
3. To ascertain the existence of a systematic QM implementation structure in Nigerian university libraries.

Methodology

Research was conducted from the perspective of a pragmatic paradigm. QM research in the pragmatic paradigm for academic libraries mainly focuses on monitoring and measuring library stakeholders' needs and expectations, including resources delivery and service environment (Robert and Rowley, 2004). It is aimed at improving the fitness for purpose of the library, which requires the application of both quantitative and qualitative measurements for evaluation of its overall performance.

A sequential mixed methods approach was employed for the study, which was conducted in two phases.

In the quantitative phase, questions for the data collection instrument were developed from a number of QM sources, which included QM models and QM measurement instruments used in various empirical studies (Santos-Vijande and Alvarez Gonzalez (2007; Hernon and Altman, 2005). The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire, which was developed using the Lime Survey online tools. The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions made up of 29 items (see Appendix A). It was basically designed to assess organisational contexts in relation to QM practices and service quality delivery in academic libraries in SW Nigeria. The participants were required to complete it at a specified website which was forwarded to them. The first phase of study was conducted between October and December, 2012.

The second phase was a multiple case study conducted in two segments, i.e, face-to-face in depth semi-structured interviews with 15 heads of university libraries and 10 focus groups (73 members), which comprised 29 members in Principal /Senior Librarian cadre and 44 in Assistant Librarian cadre. This was meant to elicit in depth views of participants on QM operations in their libraries, which were investigated in the first phase. The procedure of inquiry was in depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviewing as well as interactive discussions with focus groups. The guide for both interview and focus group discussions are presented in a table at Appendix B. The data generation exercise for the second phase was conducted during field visits between August and October 2014.

Data collection

For the first phase, 24 university libraries constituted the respondent population out of 30 university libraries that participated in the online survey.

Prior to the second phase of study, a single case pilot study of one of the university libraries surveyed in the first phase was conducted to test the usability of the research questions and the study guide (Egberongbe, 2015). This involved a semi-structured, face-to-face interview with the university librarian and a focus group session with six library employees. The success of the pilot study in exploring participants' identification with QM concepts encouraged the confidence with which the multiple case studies were conducted. Thus, the study adopted a pragmatic world view to address the issues of investigation which has a real-world orientation to accommodate practical decisions and evaluation within the project.

During the second phase, 15 university libraries (10 public, i.e. 5 federal and 5 state; and 5 private) were purposively selected on the basis of their readiness to participate in the interviews, from the 24 respondents to the first phase of study. One individual – a university librarian or a representative – was chosen from each of this group to obtain in depth views through semi-structured interviews on QM approaches in their libraries. Focus groups were also conducted in 10 out of the 15 university libraries under study with participants from different units of the libraries. Snowball sampling was applied to obtain the perspectives of non-management staff. Data generated in this phase included recordings of 15 individual interviews and 10 focus group discussions and documentary evidence (mission statements, handbooks, organisational charts).

Data analysis

The total response for the first phase of study included academic libraries from all 15 public universities (six federal and nine state institutions); and nine of 15 private universities in SW Nigeria, as shown in Figure 1.

Descriptive (non-parametric) statistics were used to analyse the results, with SPSS version 19.0 and Microsoft Excel software. Inferential statistical analysis was also conducted using Pearson's Chi Square test with SPSS version 19.0 to measure associations between the variables.

Results

A total of 24 (80%) of the 30 heads of libraries completed and returned copies of the questionnaire. The overall response rate of 80% was high and that ensured that the survey results were representative of the population.

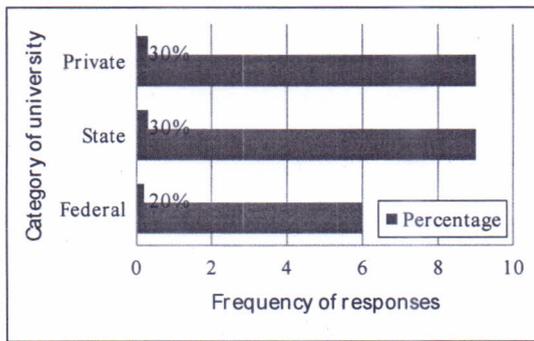


Figure 1. Response rate by category of university.

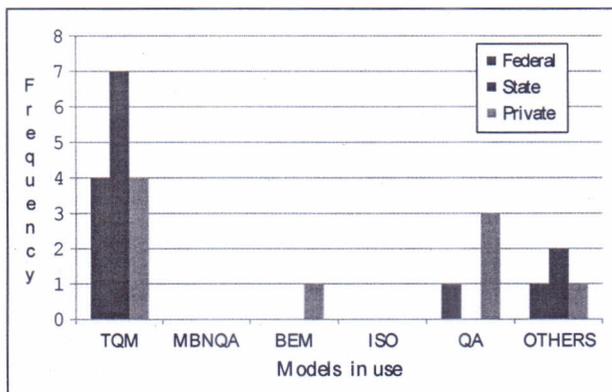


Figure 2. Frequency of use of Quality Management models

The study also indicates distribution of quality management models in use in the three categories of academic libraries surveyed as shown in Figure 2. Results indicate awareness and adoption of QM practices in the surveyed university libraries with TQM as the most adopted model (62.5%) in use against other models (37.5%), as depicted in Figure 2. Quality Assurance (QA) is also indicated as being in use (12.5%), mainly in private university libraries.

The second phase of study was designed to build on the first; it explained the QM concepts as explored in the first phase and also involved a consideration of other factors that provided deeper perception of the phenomenon. This paper therefore focuses mainly findings on the basis of evidence derived from the second phase of study.

The 15 university libraries interviewed were each given an institutional descriptor – ‘F’ for federal university; ‘S’ for state and ‘P’ for private university, to distinguish them from each other. These included numbering of cases according to the sequence of the interviews and focus groups respectively (See Appendix C). For purpose of analysis, participants were also

identified as UL for University Librarian, while FG was the identifier for focus group participant.

The data generated from the study were managed and coded with the aid of NVivo 10 software. Framework analysis was the analytical method used to illuminate the data. It was chosen because of its effectiveness in storing and managing original data obtained from participants and maintains a structured approach to organising data. The deductive nature of the analytical method was useful for the study as it is suitable for studies with preset research questions, as well as for analysing data with ‘a priori’ themes (Ritchie, Spencer and Lewis, 2013).

The 286 coded words and statements generated from the data were categorised under five themes: leadership, human resource management; customer focus and satisfaction; process management and performance measurement. These were further categorised under three overarching factors for QM implementation: management procedures and quality service delivery; evaluation of QM framework; and possible application of QM frameworks for library improvement efforts. The focus of this paper is on the improvement efforts factor and its effect in the university libraries studied.

Findings

The findings in the first phase reveal that the respondents were aware of QM practices, service delivery and its impact on the mission and vision, learning outcomes, employee satisfaction, staff development and performance. They were therefore able to give informed views on the issues being investigated in the study. It was also revealed that despite the different categories of universities, the majority of university librarians agreed on the need for QM practices as a means of improving academic library services. There was an indication that quality management models existed and were in use in the libraries surveyed, though further investigation was needed for in depth inquiry into the mode of usage. It was also observed that there was no uniformity in the methods of obtaining feedback and the frequency of conducting them among the libraries surveyed. University librarians’ perceptions of leadership, availability of resources, resource management, commitment to customer service, policy and strategy and partnership building within and outside their institutions were also found to be very positive, as they considered the criteria ‘very important’ or ‘important’. The first phase

enabled the investigation of the concepts of quality and QM within the university library context. The findings revealed an overall improved performance in different areas, while it also provides an understanding of the degree of readiness of application of quality to both management procedures and service delivery in university libraries studied.

The second phase built on the first, detailing general knowledge and understanding of the concepts of quality and QM by participants. The highlight of the various definitions of concepts was ensuring 'user satisfaction', which was illustrated as fundamental to the development of an academic library as a service organisation. Library leadership practices were derived through the vision and mission of the parent institution, though few university libraries had mission statements of their own.

The study further revealed that development and management of library resources were not evenly spread among university libraries, due to inadequate infrastructural resources to sustain them, with power supply to drive the resources being a major concern. Results also indicated ad hoc arrangement for conducting both internal and external evaluation of library operations. An important revelation was that there were no quality management tools in place for use in Nigerian university libraries, though libraries employed the concept to guide their procedures without any systematic procedures.

Thus, there was generally an identification of disparity between the perceived responses from the online survey and the actual responses obtained from face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. However, the study suited the research philosophy well with issues raised in both phases complementing or negating each other (Egberongbe, 2016).

Discussion

As explained above, findings from the two phases of research are considered in line with objectives of study as discussed in the ensuing sections, where implications of the findings for Nigerian university library development, practice, strategy and policy will be considered in detail.

Quality management procedures in Nigerian university libraries

The study revealed participants' appreciation of the importance of effective management in university library development. From the interviews, it came

up that library leadership practices were derived from vision and mission of the parent institutions, though only a few university libraries (F1, F3, F5 and P3,) had mission statements of their own. Particularly demonstrated was knowledge of how operational procedures, such as styles of leadership and matters on library policies influence every aspect of the organisation's development. This is in line with Dewey (2014) and Kranich et al. (2014) who posit leadership as the key attribute that plays an important role in organisations' development, providing smooth running of operations by enabling staff to operate effectively; while library policy mainly establishes a general framework to assist library management to make decisions about developing and exploiting library collections for effective service delivery. Perceptions of leadership styles were equally anticipated by participants, as gleaned from the data: "By ensuring conducive library environment with participatory management style, I encourage the staff to be friendly, show competence..." (F4-UL). Application of appropriate leadership styles is arguably critical to determining how an organisation's goals and objectives are achieved (Ogba, 2013). Segun-Adeniran (2015) has equally linked the choice of appropriate styles of leadership to improved organisational productivity. Participative leadership was confirmed as the style of leadership practiced in most cases and served as a reflection of a sense of commitment to organisational goals exhibited among the groups. This is at variance with the pilot case study, where the focus group revealed non-involvement of employees in library decisions, though members were unable to clarify the style of leadership being practiced. Though each style has its benefits and limitations, the way it is used is invariably determined by the organisation concerned. Findings from focus groups revealed that style of leadership, collaboration among libraries and intervention of professional regulatory bodies were factors considered as enablers of QM implementation, while those factors that could militate against QM implementation included issues of career progression, inadequate funding and negative attitude to change (Philip, 2013; Akindojutimi, Adewale and Omotayo, 2010).

The data revealed that there were no written library policies (see Appendix 1) available in the libraries studied. The trend was the adoption of ad hoc procedures by individual libraries to manage operations and for ensuring effective service delivery. As explained by an interview participant: "We don't have a detailed

library policy . . .” (F3-UL); with a confirmation from a focus group member: “One of the things I think the library should adopt is the issue of collection development policy . . .”, The foregoing statements no doubt revealed staff adherence to conventional rules based on long-term practice. There was equally confirmation that libraries did not have appropriate mechanisms for policy implementation for activities such as those pertaining to collection development and library services.

It was revealed from the study that human resources management is considered from different perspectives by participant libraries. Few interviewees attributed successes in leadership of their libraries to staff motivation through adequate training and involvement in operations for smooth running of the libraries, while a reasonable number were yet to fully exploit staff motivation, as integral to successful staff performance and quality services delivery. However, it was revealed from the focus group discussions that library staffs in private universities were well-motivated in comparison with their counterparts in public university libraries. This is in line with Germano’s (2010) argument that effective library leadership can shape its personnel, resources, and interaction with patrons. The importance of motivation on staff performance and quality has equally been emphasised in the literature where Kanyengo (2012) and Lamptey et al. (2013) equally confirm employees’ role as an organisational responsibility in developing and sustaining quality culture. It is also consistent with two separate studies (Ogba, 2013; Bamgbose and Ladipo, 2017) in which exclusion of personnel from involvement in organisational decisions was found to have a negative influence on organisational commitment. Thus, whilst the library employees may be intrinsically motivated to carry out their duties, improving extrinsic motivation will be useful in inspiring them to strive for excellent service delivery.

Quality service delivery in Nigerian university libraries

An area of the interest to the researcher was to ascertain how customer-focused the libraries were and what strategies were employed to ensure customer satisfaction from library services encounters. The survey findings indicated that librarians appreciated the importance of providing quality services to customers as the majority (87%) found the “availability of a variety of library resources to meet the needs of

individual departments/schools and a well-planned user-orientation programme and information skills and bibliographic instructions (85% and 88%),” respectively, very important. This was in line with views expressed by Sureschandar et al. (2001) on the need to focus on and satisfy customers by responding to their needs and expectations and at the same time anticipating and responding to their evolving interests. Though from the focus group discussion, there were indications of inadequacies in current awareness services, despite claims of commitment to user satisfaction, which translates to a focus on tangibility of service (physical attribute) (Parasuraman et al, 2004), that is, providing a comfortable and welcoming space that encourages study and teaching.

From interviews, the data on customer service and satisfaction provides a picture of varied efforts made by participant libraries, though a few libraries (F1, P2, P3, P4 and S3), mainly from private universities, indicated innovative efforts and positive developments in service delivery to the respective user communities, though methods used were found not systematised. There was thus evidence to show that the libraries required a more concerted effort to be deemed as customer-focused, especially given that the responses were those of university librarians and library staff. Ideally, service quality is best measured from the perspective of customers (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Nitecki, in Jayasundara, 2011). But whilst capturing the views of staff instead may not seem to really reflect the actual quality of service, the candidness with which the staff expressed their opinions during interviews and focus group discussions meant that participant libraries acknowledged the need to be more customer-focused in serving their user communities. This calls for the need for library managements to establish systems that ensure the internal customer (staff) satisfaction which would then be expected to impact positively on the provision of quality services to external customers.

Quality management implementation in Nigerian academic libraries

This study evidently revealed efforts within the LIS sector through workshops, seminars and conferences aimed at charting pathways to quality improvement in library operations in Nigerian university libraries. Though the trend was adoption of ad hoc procedures by individual libraries to manage their operations and to provide effective services, described as ‘purely an

in-house thing to ensure that we drive standards and compete with the very best anywhere in the world' (P3 - UL). Libraries expressed the need for collaboration with professional and government regulatory bodies for the series of activities such as training, workshops, and consortium building, to facilitate the development of a 'common QM policy' (P5 - FG3) for Nigerian university libraries. The survey findings showed participants' awareness of QM practices by library managers as the creation and deployment of activities in developing policies and acknowledgement of the university library's contribution to institutional goals. The interview findings equally confirmed the role of top management in the development of a quality culture, though the general situation in individual larger institutions determined the cultural orientation of each library. Most interviewees attributed successes in leadership of their libraries to staff motivation through adequate training and involvement in operations for smooth running of the libraries. This is consistent with Ogba's (2013) study in which exclusion of personnel from involvement in organisational decisions was found to have a negative influence on organisational commitment.

The lack of documented policies for the libraries to follow in their services delivery has been a matter of great concern in the Nigerian Library and Information Science (LIS) sector as expressed by Ifidon (In Agboola, 2000). QM is based on the formulation of policies and plans to serve as a reference point in the QM initiative. A well-developed policy, to guide library management procedures and service delivery, is considered as one of the CSFs for QM (Oakland, 2004). However, from the focus group discussions, participants confirmed non-availability of written policies to guide library operations. This is contrary to the need to have written policies, plans and continuous improvement programmes as part of QM initiatives (Nabitz et al., 2000; Stavridis and Tsimpoglou, 2012). The governance structure of academic libraries in Nigeria comes into question, and calls for review in conformance with modern corporate governance principles if QM initiatives in academic libraries in Nigeria are to be successful.

Most of the libraries studied indicated that they were operating in adherence to the university-wide QA system, which is earlier explained as mainly employed for programme accreditation and accountability to external stakeholders. This is also in respect of investment of public funds on library processes, resources and services. A few of the libraries indicated attempts to

deploy mechanisms for internal evaluation of their operations or that focused on building QM systems. Their efforts in this regard are, however in line with Schmidt, Croud and Lyons (2000), who have expressed the need for a library to have its own operational plans, developed in line with the institution's strategic plans and as an essential tool for provision of the best services to users. Most participants (F5, P2, P4 and P5) equally appreciated the need for innovation and change in organisational culture through the introduction of new technologies to enhance management and service delivery. None of the libraries, however, had mechanisms in place for internal evaluation of their operations or that focused on building a QM system to ensure the quality of their services.

The lack of formal QM policies was confirmed by the majority of interviewees from across all categories of libraries. From the interview data, librarians acknowledged some level of practices oriented towards QM values and vision and a trend towards the development of quality culture, which was a confirmation of the survey results where the majority (21 or 87%) of participants agreed that library management maintained quality culture with staff members. These were demonstrated from the reflection of QM principles in managing procedures and providing services from interview and focus group participants' responses in most cases. The findings were equally consistent with Appleby (2000) who expressed the need for leaders to ensure staff participation at all levels of organisational activities, as such actions tend to enhance staff orientation towards achievement of institutional goals. There was, however, no formal, tried and tested, standardized, and explicitly developed QM policy in use by the participant libraries, though from interviews, most participant libraries acknowledged that they adhered to the QA policies of their parent institutions (Appendix C), which were basically meant for meeting requirements for accreditation of academic programmes by the NUC and which were not specifically geared towards quality improvement of the libraries.

An aspect of library service improvement is in the area of resource development. Apart from developing the human resource capacity of the library staff, it is equally important to have a sustainable infrastructure resources plan. Just providing library services is beside the point, whilst developing the library collections through infrastructure development is very much the right thing for a quality-driven library to do. The survey data had shown that there was little

support from faculty regarding library resource selection and acquisition, as the majority (54%) 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' with the existence of faculty support in both public and private university libraries. This gives an indication that resources development in the libraries may not necessarily satisfy the needs of users, though 'resources availability in fulfillment of university goals and objectives' were perceived very important by the majority (87% and 100%) of heads of libraries, respectively, from both public and private university libraries. The results also showed that library resource development and management were not evenly spread among the university libraries and these were in most cases not backed with adequate funding and infrastructural resources to sustain them, with power supply to drive the resources being a major concern. Challenges encountered by some of the libraries studied were in respect of government's involvement in resource acquisition and the impact of such intervention on the quality of resources. Consequently, obsolete equipment, dated materials and lack of current information resources remain a bane of most academic libraries in developing countries like Nigeria, as expressed by Ejedafiru and Oghenetege (2013).

Perhaps the most significant challenge identified in the study is concerned with how policies from the wider institutional environment affect university library practices and the latter's reaction to it, for the realisation of quality outcomes. This involves the inability of government or professional regulatory bodies to institute minimum standards for academic library operations in Nigeria, to guide libraries towards quality operations. The expressions of concern for a lack of minimum standards in this regard were mainly made by focus groups from public university libraries. This underscored the need for standards for operations that will be common to all academic libraries. For example a focus group member had this to say on the need for standards:

'... When you're talking of quality management... there must be a standard, a yardstick for all the academic libraries, before we now know which university is lacking behind or which one is not'. (S3 – FG2)

This statement falls in line with the study conducted by Sali and Mohammed (2011) which revealed that there were no uniform standards of assessing library operations in Nigerian university libraries.

In effect, QM in the form of QA mechanisms is available and used in some Nigerian university libraries (Sali and Mohammed, 2011), only that it needs formalisation, appropriate implementation and continuous enhancement. Indeed the current study confirmed lack of empirical research on the adoption and implementation of QM approaches for academic libraries, as claimed by Oladele (2010) and Opara (2010), which is the gap this study had sought to fill.

The current study has therefore led to the proposal of a model (See Figure 3) which describes the QM concepts recommended for adoption and which also provides the rationale for adopting such concepts as well as explaining how they could potentially be applied in university libraries studied for quality improvement of services. The model pays attention to approaches to managerial operations and service delivery in the university libraries studied. It explores the various characteristics of university libraries and notes the relationships and differences among them in terms of operations, physical and other resources. It attempts to identify the role of HEIs in Nigeria and their contributions to the development of academic library quality. Thus the model as presented in Figure 3, emerged and is informed by data analysis of the existing operations and development in the libraries studied. The aim is to move beyond operating on ad hoc basis, by developing a model that provides a systematised method for quality improvement in library operations and services. However, the predictive ability of this model would require a longitudinal quantitative study to test for a wider application.

Structure of the model

In the model, a two-stage development process is proposed which involves: 1) QM policy formulation and implementation; 2) QM continuous improvement programmes. The model reads from left to right and is divided into three sections. The first column shows stage 1 of the diagram which is QM policy formulation and implementation. The diagram shows activities involved in this stage as national QM policy formulation; QM policy implementation; QM policy adoption and alignment; QM policy planning by libraries; and QM implementation in libraries. As part of stage 1 the policy formulation and implementation procedure segments appear in the order of importance beginning with government (stakeholder) initiation of the programme from the external environment, as shown in the diagram (Figure 3). An arrow from the

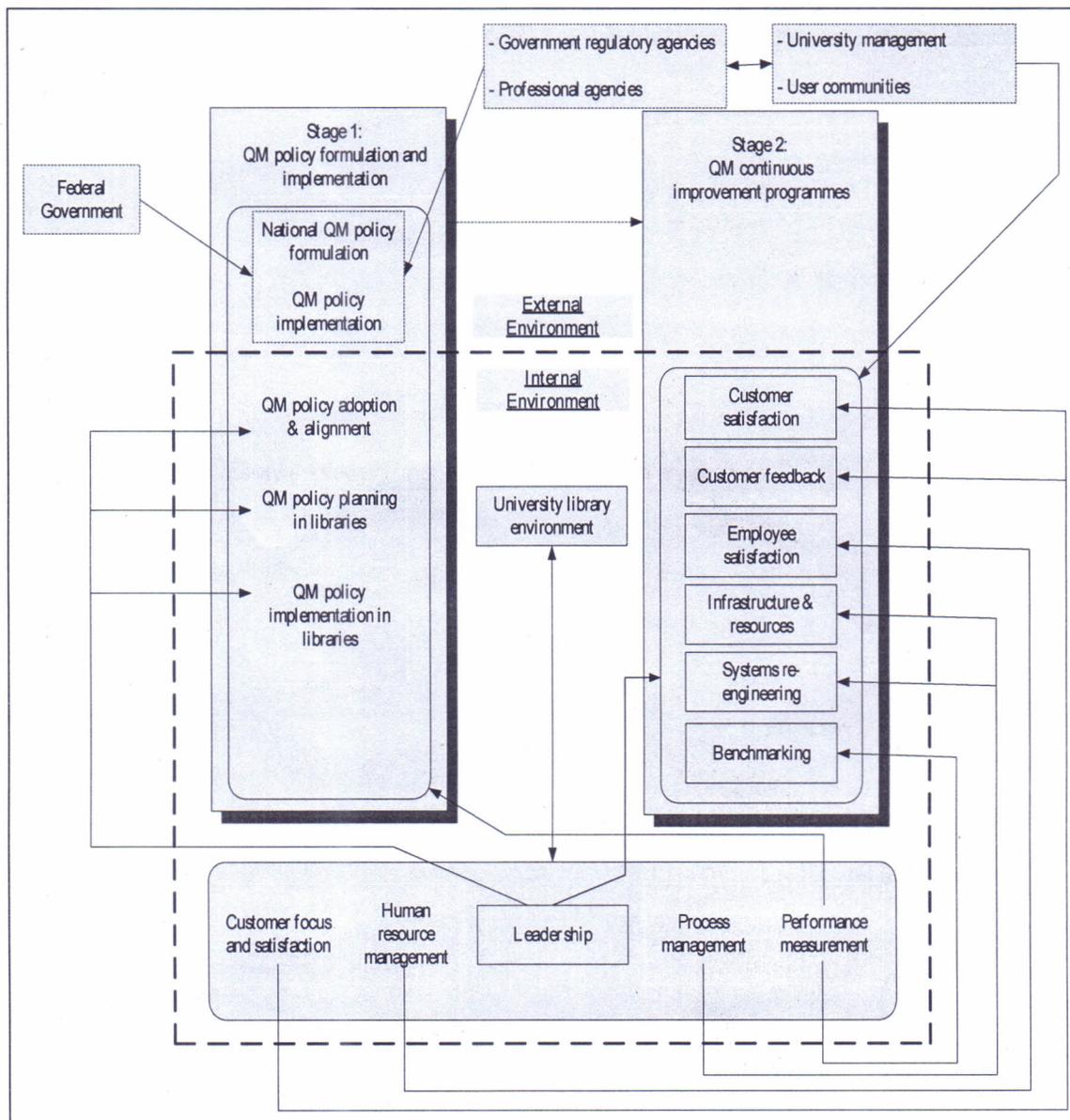


Figure 3. Proposed QM framework for academic libraries in SW Nigeria (Egberongbe, 2016).

first stage to the second stage from the external environment shows the link between the two stages.

As the diagram shows, there is a two-way arrow between the government and professional agencies on one hand and university and user community on the other. It shows there is a relationship between them and they affect each other. The box showing the university management and the user community shows a direct relationship with the outcomes of the programme in stage 2, i.e. QM continuous improvement programmes.

These dimensions are considered as facilitating or enabling conditions necessary for the two-stage

process of the QM initiatives. These dimensions are necessary to drive the QM policy formulation and implementation as well as sustenance of the QM initiatives through continuous improvement programmes together with the complimentary support of external stakeholders, namely the federal government, government regulatory agencies, professional regulatory agencies, university management, and user communities. The model thus takes cognizance of the role of internal and external environmental factors in achieving the two-stage QM framework. Whilst it is acknowledged that these dimensions may not be the only sufficient necessary factors to ensure successful

QM initiatives in academic libraries in Nigeria, they provide strong building blocks on the evidence of the data for the study, and a baseline for future QM initiatives and improvement programmes. The dimensions constitute the key success factors in QM implementation process. The successful adherence and application of these principles is required to assist in defining both short-term and long-term QM strategies by libraries.

In order that the QM policy formulation would not be seen as foreign to the university library environment, the leadership of the academic libraries (acting through the university library and other senior library staff) should be actively involved in providing necessary inputs for the formulation of QM policy. In addition to this, the leadership, acting through and on behalf of the university management and other stakeholders (the user communities) must be involved in the implementation of the national QM policy whilst leading and coordinating the implementation of the QM initiatives in the libraries. This highlights the inter-relationship between the internal and the external library environments and shows the kind of strong relationship required from them for a successful QM initiative in Nigerian academic libraries. The significance of leadership as the most important dimension of the enabling factors for a successful QM initiative is highlighted through its relevance in the adoption and alignment of the national QM policy with that of the vision and mission of the academic libraries. Effective leadership is equally required for the QM policy planning and implementation in the libraries.

The specific QM framework can be based on the EFQM Excellence Model which has been described as a non-prescriptive framework that establishes nine criteria (divided between enablers and results), suitable for any organisation including the academic libraries, to use to assess progress towards excellence. The EFQM Excellence Model identifies Enablers – Leadership, policy and strategy, partnerships and resources, processes; and Results – People, customer and key performance (EFQM, 2013; Stavridis and Tsimpoglou, 2012). The model is comprehensive compared with TQM, Quality Assurance (QA) (the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) (Cullen, 2006); Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) as it combines systems with results and is relevant to the library environment (Mohammadesmael, Ebrahimi and Ghavidel, 2011). As earlier mentioned, it is also dynamic and incorporates sustainability elements as well (Fisher, 2011). It is, however, noted that the

EFQM model might not be the only applicable framework for possible adoption and adaption for Nigeria, but it could serve as a starting point, and together with lessons from other models, be useful in helping to develop a context-specific QM framework for academic libraries in Nigeria.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study has generated rich insights into university library operations in SW Nigeria. Though QM has been very well-known in western countries for many decades, reforms to improve the quality of higher education at all levels of global competitiveness, which includes universities and their libraries, commenced in the last two decades. The study, which came at a crucial time, portrays the current state of university libraries and the challenges of coping with the increasing demands of library users, in the face of fast growth and influence of technology. In general, there was evidence in the study to show participants' knowledge of QM and some QM processes that necessitate value-added service delivery in the libraries. An indication of participants' knowledge of how QM values correlate with quality improvement was evident from references to operational procedures such as styles of leadership, organisational structure, planning and controlling and matters on library policies. These QM processes are clearly consistent with those identified in the extant literature (Moghaddam and Moballeghi, 2008; Oakland, 2004).

The pragmatic approach to the study enabled the researcher to unearth the complexities of working in under-funded library environments. This was possible through both interviews and focus groups, which enabled participants to open up to the researcher for detailed insight into the situation. The issue of lack of minimum standards and documented policies was identified as inimical to implementation of meaningful university library projects. The study presents a framework of QM policy formulation and implementation for university libraries in SW Nigeria, based on a proposed EFQM model. The framework that accommodates the complexity of achieving issues involved in quality improvement is thus a major achievement for this study. A main implication of the framework to QM implementation is the provision of strong leadership to equip university library managements with the knowledge and skills to improve customer satisfaction, human resource management, process management and performance measurement. The proposed

framework may thus be extended or revised through further and comprehensive investigation. Beyond that, university library managers are required to exhibit proactiveness in embracing and deploying QM, based on their organisational culture and resources available for such projects. It has been recommended that university libraries deploy their own QM programmes. The EFQM proposed for the implementation stage of the programme is identified as a dynamic approach to initiate quality reforms within university libraries, though this is required to be in consonance with the broader university framework and also to support the QA requirements.

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are hereby made for consideration towards quality improvement of library services and operations in Nigerian university libraries:

1. To build a successful library and information sector, innovation and improvement must be integral parts of all processes in university libraries.
2. The proposed framework, which is the outcome of the study, can equally inform the development of sustainable university library management and services through the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. The merits of embracing the proposed framework in Nigerian university libraries are instant and tangible. These could immensely augment the role of university libraries in the development of the HEIs.
3. To a large extent the involvement of professional regulatory bodies – the Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and the Association of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities (AULNU, formerly CULNU), through collaborative efforts to provide professional guidelines for training and benchmarking is equally required to move not only university libraries, but also the LIS sector forward in the development process.
4. The development of draft guidelines for minimum standards in university libraries in Nigeria by the LRCN in early 2015 (still under review) is a step in the right direction, as it has a potential for serving as a leading player in developing standards and criteria for quality assurance in the LIS sector, reminiscent of the association of research libraries (ARL). The assumption of this role by the LRCN would

also serve as a catalyst that will enhance meaningful development in the quality of operations in the university library.

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APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Assessing Quality Management Approaches In University Libraries

Welcome to this survey

Please participate in an online survey on quality management approaches in Nigerian university libraries. The survey involves completing an online questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes. This research project is investigating (1) Management practices and service quality delivery in your university libraries; (2) Management's perception of service quality in academic libraries; (3) Improvement efforts in service quality by academic libraries. Your participation in the survey will be highly appreciated. The research has received full ethical approval from the Information School, University of Sheffield. All your survey responses will be treated as strictly confidential. You may contact me at ehalimasadia@gmail.com.

Click button to start.

There are 14 questions in this survey

Management practices and quality service delivery

1 [A1]

Please select the answers from the following list of questions on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is "Strongly Agree" and 5 is "Strongly Disagree").

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

The library management's performances /activities facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision of the institution.

The library's information resources fulfil the goals and objectives of your institution.

The quality of outcomes in the institution depends on the quality of library services.

It is easy to get the faculty/departments to select information resources for the library.

The library management maintains a quality culture with staff members.

Your library staff development effort has been very successful.

The library management encourages teamwork.

2 [A8]

What management strategy do you use in ensuring service quality in your library? Please choose all that apply:

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award (MBNQA)

Business Excellence Model (BEM)

ISO 9000

Quality Assurance (QA)

Other, [Please specify]

3 [A9]

What methods do you use to obtain feedback from users? Please choose all that apply:

Surveys

Questionnaires

Suggestion boxes

Focus groups

No feedback collected

Other:

4 [A10]

How often do you conduct feedback exercises for services provided in your library?

Please choose all that apply:

Every Semester

Annually

Every two years

Occasionally

Not at all

Perception of service quality

Please score each factor on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is "Not important" and 5 is "Very important").

5 [B]

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

Very important

Not important

1

2

3

4

5

Library management motivate, support and recognise the organisation's employees.

The range of resources available in the library meets the needs of individual departments/schools.

Information to users about how to use the library is effectively communicated.

Library equipment (computers, printers and photocopiers) are in good working order.

Library employees are committed to customer service.

The library staff learns from the feedback received from users.

The library has a well-planned user orientation programme.

The library provides training/teaching which enables users to make effective use of information resources.

The library enjoys effective cooperation with other services within this institution

The library enjoys effective cooperation with other libraries

Improvement efforts in service delivery

Please provide brief answers to the following questions

6 [C1]

In which area of the library's processes is teamwork most important?

Please write your answer here: _____

7 [C2]

How successful has your library been in the last five years in terms of service delivery? Please specify.

Please write your answer here: _____

8 [C3]

Taking everything into account, how would you rate the library's overall performance in the last five years? Please specify areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Please write your answer here:

Please respond to the following demographic details:

Name of Institution?

Please write your answer here: _____

10 [C41]

Role/Rank Please choose all that apply:

Senior management

Middle management

No management responsibility

Other, [Please specify] _____

11 [C42]

Length of service

Please choose all that apply:

5 – 10 years

10 – 25 years

25 years and above

12 [C43]

Please choose only one of the following:

Female

Male

13 [C44]

Would you like to have a further discussion on this survey?

Please choose only one of the following:

Yes

No

14 [C45]

If you answered 'Yes' to the last question, please provide your name or e-mail address.

Please write your answer here: _____

Submit your survey.

Thank you for completing this survey.

APPENDIX B: GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Questions	Interview participants	Focus Groups
General questions		
How long have you been in university librarian capacity?	x	
How long have you been working in this library?		
Would you please tell me what the term 'quality' means to you? How would you define 'quality' in the context of your library services?	x	x
Would you please tell me what quality management [TQM, QA, BSC, etc.] means to you? [To non-QM users] Can you tell me how the quality of service is maintained in this library?		x
a. What do you think are the benefits to users of this library?		
b. What do you think are the disadvantages to users of this library?		
c. What do you think are the benefits/disadvantages to the library as a whole?		
d. What do you think are disadvantages to the library as a whole?		
Management practice and quality service delivery		
Does the library have a mission statement? If so how is it aligned with the institution's mission?	x	
Does the library's mission statement reflect the goals that will assist the university in meeting its objectives? How is this done?	x	
Could you please tell me about your role (as a management staff) in ensuring quality management and service delivery in the library?	x	
Results of the survey indicate that your library is using [TQM, QA, etc.] to maintain service quality. When did you start using it? Was it an initiative within the library or is it a university-wide initiative?	x	
In which area of library services is it [TQM, QA, etc.] being applied? Can you identify any future trends in its usage?	x	

(continued)

APPENDIX B. (Continued)

Questions	Interview participants	Focus Groups
Can you remember how [TQM, QA, BSC, etc.] was first introduced to this library. Which area(s) of the library's services was/were being addressed?		X
Were you involved in the implementation process? If yes, how do you feel? If not involved, how do you feel? Why were you not involved?		X
Quality management is known to be a western concept, how (to what extent) do you think it is understood in the Nigerian context? How does it fit into your organisational culture?	X	
Perception of service quality		
How important do you think it is to have quality in the services your library provides?	X	
Are you able to get any feedback on your services? What mechanisms exist? Is it through questionnaires, interviews, suggestion boxes, focus groups, informal feedback from users?		X
How often do you conduct feedback exercises and what are your impressions on the feedback you get?		X
From your experiences, what kind of services or trends do you think would help your users (students, faculty, staff and the community) to use your library even better?	X	
What do you consider as good customer services that you have for your library users? What makes them good? Do you enjoy doing them?		X
What internal or external factors are, in your view, important in ensuring quality of your services?	X	
How do these factors contribute to enhancing quality in your libraries	X	
Questions		
How does your library relate to customers/users in terms of meeting their needs and expectations?	X	
Does your library have a written or detailed policy on library services? If it does, how is the library policy communicated to employees at lower levels?	X	
How is the library policy linked to expectations of your parent institution?	X	
How does the library motivate employees to provide quality services?	X	
How has technology improved service quality in your library?	X	X
How do you assess your library's performance?	X	
Improvement Efforts		
What are your future plans to upgrade quality in your library? [For non-QM users] What are your future plans to adopt quality management model in your library?	X	
Would you consider a common quality management framework for Nigerian academic libraries?	X	
What criteria would you recommend for inclusion in an effective QM framework for Nigerian academic libraries?	X	
What barriers can you identify that can militate against implementing quality management in Nigerian academic libraries?	X	
Finally, is there anything you would like to add that we have not discussed?	X	X
Concluding remark	X	X

APPENDIX C: CASE DESCRIPTION OF CASE SITES

Name of University Library in Acronym	University type/ Year established	Size of library No. of staff - Size - Gender	Student population Resources Seating capacity	Library Mission statement	Mechanism for assuring QM/ quality service
F1	Federal	Large; 63,000 sq. ft 140 Professional: 7 male, 12 female Para-professional 15 Non-professional 106	45,000 330,000 book titles 2000 journal titles 1,300 seater	To build, maintain and preserve diverse information resources to support teaching, learning and research	Resource management and service delivery is in compliance with the university's QA standard and mandate of SERVICOM
F2	Federal	Large 50 Professional: 16 male, 8 female Para-professional:11 Non-professional:15	6,000 50,622 book titles Access to 4 e-databases 1000 seater	No mission statement	Adopts a non-prescriptive QA measure in providing services
F3	Federal	Large 100 Professional: 6 male, 5 female Para-professional 12 Non-professional: 77	18,000 67,847 book titles 1500 journal titles; 503 seater	No mission statement	Operates in line with university's QA system
F4	Federal	Large: 42,000 sq. ft 30 Professional: 12 male, 8 female Para-professional: 10	26,000 5000 staff 700,000 book titles 40 print journals titles 22 databases of several e-book and e-journal titles 2,500 seater	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
F5	Federal	Medium 20 Professional: 7 male, 4 female Non-professional: 9	65,000 book titles 28 print journal titles 500 seater	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
S1	State	Medium 38 Professional: 11 male, 9 female 18 non-professional	20,000 2,152 staff	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place

(continued)

APPENDIX C: (continued)

Name of University Library in Acronym	University type/ Year established	Size of library No. of staff - Size - Gender	Student population Resources Seating capacity	Library Mission statement	Mechanism for assuring QM/ quality service
S2	State	Medium 32 Professional: 16 male, 6 female; Non-professional: 10	12,000 750 seater	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
S3	State	Medium 84 Professional: 5 male, 9 female Para-professional: 9 Non-professional 49	10,000 32,000 book titles 1,573 journal titles 350 seater	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
S4	State	Medium 16 Professional: 5 male, 3 female Non-professional: 8	14,000 1,340 staff 40,000 book titles 200,000 journal titles	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
S5	State	Small 18 Professional: 6 male, 8 female: Non professional: 4	12,000 book titles 35 journal titles	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
P1	Private	Small/hybrid	5000 volumes of books and bound journals 100 seater	No mission statement	No prescribed QM measures in place
P2	Private	Large 18 Professional: 7 male, 11 female 30 non-professional	6,000 63,350 book titles 44,116 volumes of journals 15,072 e-journals 1,500 seater	No mission statement	Operates in line with the Directorate of Quality Assurance of the university
P3	Private	Large (11,300 sq. metres) 49 Professional: 14 male, 15 female Para-professional:31	6,000 92,741 vols. of books 1,515 titles e-books 40,000 e-journal titles 2,398 journal print titles 700,000 e-books 3,500 seater	To build, maintain and preserve diverse information resources to support teaching, learning and research	Operates in line with the Directorate of Quality Assurance of the university
P4	Private	Medium 32 Professional:	2000 22,000 book titles	To serve as a gateway to the information research needs	No prescribed QM measures in place

(continued)

APPENDIX C: (continued)

Name of University Library in Acronym	University type/ Year established	Size of library No. of staff - Size - Gender	Student population Resources Seating capacity	Library Mission statement	Mechanism for assuring QM/ quality service
		5 male, 4 female Para-professional: 3 Non-professional: 20	200,000 titles of e-resources 6318 vols. of print journals	of the university staff and students irrespective of location, to enhance teaching, learning and research	
P5	Private	Medium; 20 Professional: 3 male, 3 female Para- professional: 3; Non-professional: 11	500 seater	To provide effective and efficient library services and access to excellent academic information resources to facilitate the teaching, learning, research and administrative services of the university	No prescribed QM measures in place