

# Influence of Organization Practices on Library Resources Provision in University Libraries in North Central Zone of Nigeria

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to determine the influencing of organization on library resources provision in university libraries in North Central Zone.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** the research design adopted for this work was *ex-post facto* research design. This population consisted of Ninety Nine librarians in the University libraries in this zone. Questionnaire which was face validated by experts, was the main instrument used for this study. Data collected were analyzed using description stabilities and regression analysis.

**Findings:** The results revealed that library resources were provided to a small extent in the university libraries in the zone. It also showed that organization has no significant influencing on provision of library resources.

**Practical Implications:** the absence of organizational influence on the provision of library resources in university libraries is an impediment to the development of the libraries.

**Originality/Value:** The originality of this paper lies on the proposal made by the researcher for the development of university libraries in the North Central Zone of Nigeria

**Keywords:** organization, libraries resources provision, university libraries, library resources, North Central Zone, Nigeria.

**Paper Type:** Empirical

## Introduction

Organization is a management function. It is variously known as organizing, for it can both be seen as an entity such as a hospital, a media house, a library, and also as a process (Nwachukwu, 2007). Organization is concerned with designing and maintaining systems of roles. Organization involves determination of the tasks to be carried out, establishing a framework of authority and responsibility between and among people who will perform the task and the arranging of the activities in a manner that they systematically support the attainment of organizational goals (Evans, 2005). Organization is a process that involves separating the activities into small individual parts and then reassembling them into units or departments together with delegation of authority to enable each supervisor of unit or department effectively supervise the subordinate staff as they carry out the activities assigned to them (Terry, 1977).

Organisation as a managerial variable cannot be ignored when considering the provision of

library resources given its numerous attributes and benefits (Nwachukwu, 2007). The attributes of organization include economic performance, ability to survive in a dynamic environment and the satisfaction of members, while among its benefits are that it helps to divide the work available into specific and identifiable jobs and units; assign tasks and responsibilities for individual jobs; cluster jobs into units; coordinate diverse organizational tasks; establish formal lines of authority; establish relationships amongst individuals, groups and departments, and allocate and deploy resources. His grouping of jobs can be done according to functional specialties, products, consumer, geographical or customer locations, or matrix or the mixture of bosses and functional and product managers. Furthermore, there are three forms of organization, namely, line organization, line and staff organization, and functional organization. In line organization, the flow of authority is straight from the top downwards and accountability is easily established; for line and staff organization, decisions are made by executives with the advice of staff executives

while the functional organization process allows a staff executive (such as Head of Division, IT Manager and Accountant) to make decisions and implement them within clearly defined guidelines. On these bases, a flexible rather than static organizational design responsive to the demands of a changing operating environment, if adopted by a library can help to enhance its human resource performance.

The researcher's observations of three university libraries in the northern part of Nigeria, including one in the North Central Zone, revealed a prevailing situation characterized by inadequate library resources and services. This was further buttressed by different studies, which were unanimous about the fact that book and journal collections in both print and electronic versions were small, largely obsolete and the print versions were mostly dilapidated; the use of ICT was low; reading spaces were congested with students endlessly scrambling for information resources scattered on the shelves and reading tables with few library staff to give the users attention. Other inadequacies observed include delays in completion and maintenance of library infrastructural resources and shortage of library staff (Ejiko, 1980; Bozimo, 1993; Raseroka, 1999; Agboola, 2000; Choudhury, 2003; Sani and Tiamiyu, 2005; Ogunsola and Okusoga, 2006; Akintunde, 2006; and Sharma, 2009).

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the influence of organization practices on library resources provision in university library in North central zone of Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to find out:

1. The extent of provision of library resources in university libraries
2. The extent of organization practices in university libraries.
3. The influence of organization practices on library resources provision in the university libraries.

### **Literature review**

#### **Definition and features of organization**

The organizing process of organization is capable of boosting the provision of human resources if properly harnessed as it involves identifying the activities to be executed to attain the objectives, identifying the staff with requisite knowledge and skills to execute the activities,

relating the experience of the staff to the activities, grouping the activities into positions that are logically related and balanced, defining and delegating authority and responsibility, and establishing relationships between positions and units to spur harmonious team work (Edoka, 2000). Usoro (2008) concluded that organization provides a framework in which tasks developed during a library's planning are assigned to staff working in different units of the library, ensuring the staff perform their individual tasks happily, productively and effectively. Wambugu (2005) and Evans (2005) both stressed the need to divide library activities into units, and assign each unit to staff that can perform it effectively and be satisfied with the ultimate end that they support the attainment of organizational goals.

Simon's (1960) a succinct summarization of the features of an organization includes dividing the activities into sections and units, number of levels, locations of decision-making authority, physical layout of building, types of persons to be employed, information distribution and access, and what behaviors are rewarded. For French (1974), organizing includes the building of an organizational structure, dividing up the sum total of the jobs into departments, divisions, jobs, etc. The essence of organization is to enhance staff satisfaction and improve staff performance (Wambugu, 2005; Evans, 2005). This supports the work by Wight (1957) that had explained nearly five decades earlier that libraries usually group their activities in a way that would be enhancing and six types of organizational structures were identified, namely, activity or process, clientele, form, function, geography and subject.

According to Stueart and Moran (1998), organization enables a library to divide the activities to be carried out in pursuance of set objectives by establishing horizontal specialization and vertical differentiation. Both horizontal specialization and vertical differentiation are necessary for an organization to be efficient and effective. Vertical differentiation involves creating a hierarchy of positions in the organization in which structuring authority, power, accountability and responsibility are clearly defined. On the other hand, horizontal specialization is generally departmentalized and concerns the creation of departments to perform specific tasks. For Aina (2004), such departmentalization could be by function, form or subject, and organization could also mean the allocation of input resources for

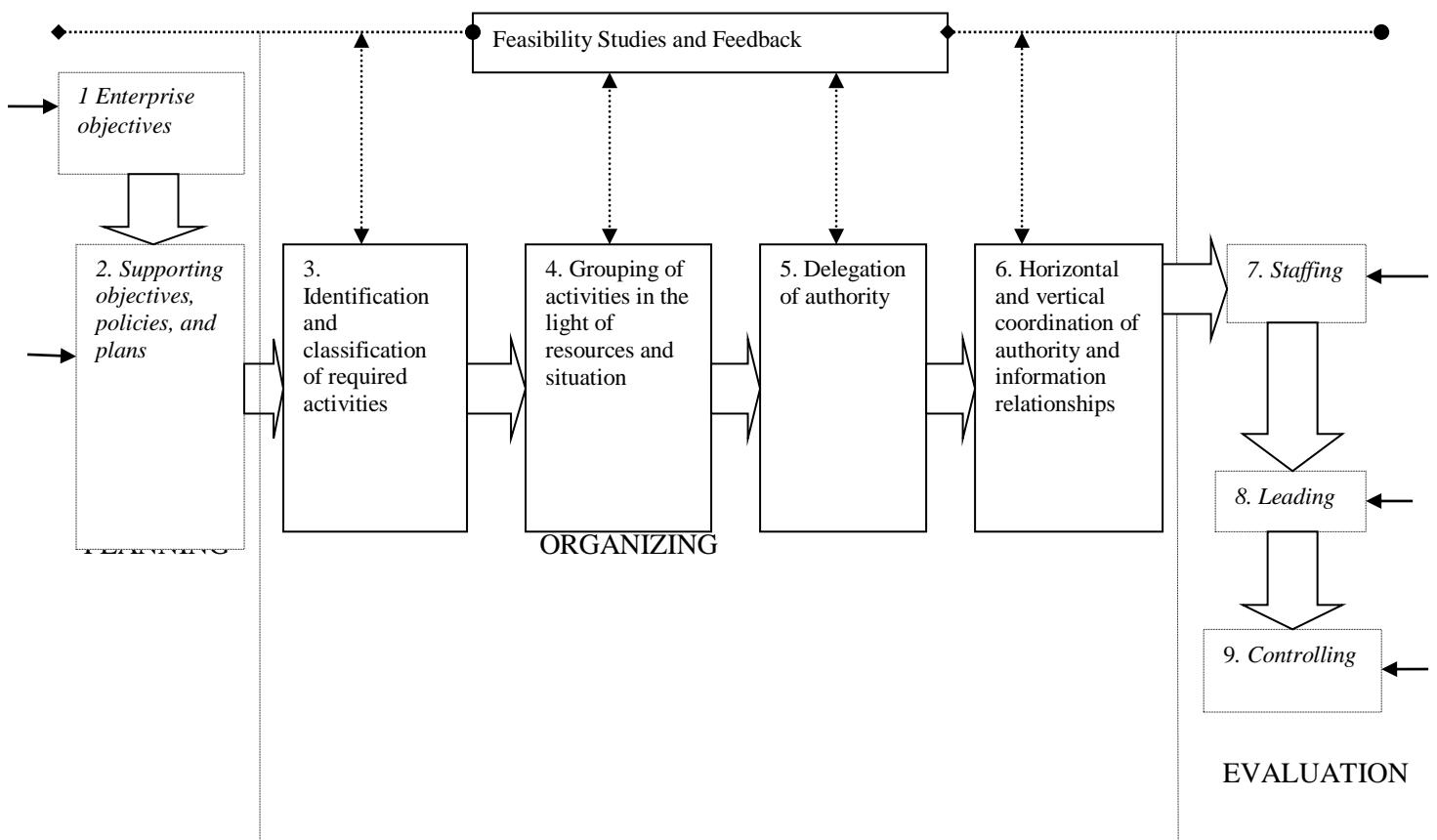
specific tasks to ensure high productivity. Functional specialization prevails in a library when the library is departmentalized along the functions and activities of the library, thus giving rise to departments such as: acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, reference and reserve. In form specialization, departmentalization reflects the forms of information resources held. Form specialization arose due to increase in the number of non-book materials, hence a library could have a serials department, map department, Arabic department, manuscript department, etc. All the functions of the library are carried out by each department. Subject specialization on the other hand, is based upon

Figure 02: The Organizing Process

the broad subjects offered in the institution, hence there could be: education library, law library, art library, engineering library, medical library, etc. Libraries usually combine these forms of departmentalization. Thus, in a particular library, there could be a reference library, a manuscript library, and a medical library.

## Models of organizations

The model of organization by Koontz and Weihrich (2007) provides an enhanced understanding of organization as a managerial variable as illustrated by figure 02 below.



Source: Adapted from: Koontz, Harold and Weihrich, Heinz. (2007). *Essentials of Management*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.- New Delhi: Tat McGraw-Hill, p. 154

The organizing process model above presents the organizing function as a management function which is positioned between the management functions of planning on the one hand and evaluation on the other. There are basically four steps to the organizing function. They are: identify, analyze and classify the activities required to achieve enterprise objectives, policies and plans; group the activities considering available human and

material resources and how best to use them; delegate authority to the head of each group to enhance optimum performance by the group; and tie the groups vertically and horizontally, through authority relationships and information flows. Thus, the organizing process has to reflect the objectives and plans of the enterprise which form the basis from which the activities of the firm derive. Also, it must reflect the authority available to the management of the enterprise. Such authority is essentially the right to exercise

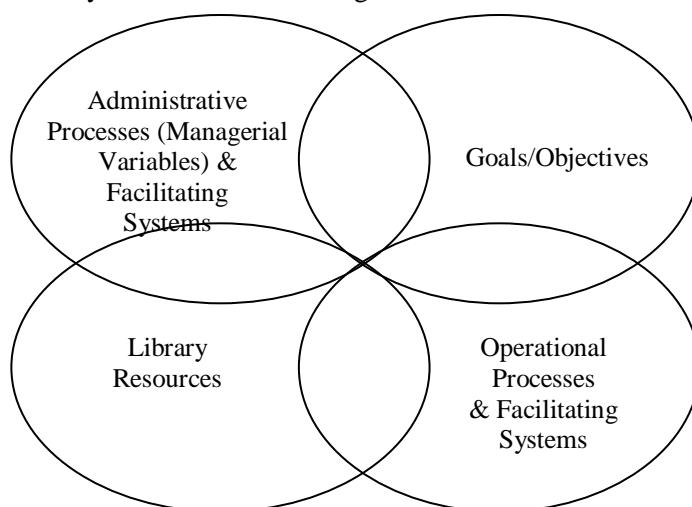
discretion in a social context and is not static but subject to change. Thirdly, the organization structure must reflect its environment. As every social environment is subject to change, so must an effective organization structure depend on the environmental situation; it must be flexible and not static. In the fourth place, an organization structure must reflect people's limitations and customs since it is people that staff the enterprise. Therefore, people must be an important consideration in the grouping of the activities and the authority relationships.

Another model that was found to be relevant to organization as it concerns the provision of library resources is French's (1974) the process-system model of organization which defines organization in the context of "concepts", "system", "administrative processes" and "operational processes." Accordingly, an organization is viewed as essentially a man-directed and multiple goal-oriented network of interacting administrative and operational processes and corresponding facilitating systems that is immersed in a broader network of processes and systems with which it interacts. This definition recognizes several useful characteristics of organizations, although presented in form of theoretical propositions which include the fact that an organization is essentially "man-directed", which means that human planning and direction are its primary attributes. It is only essentially directed by man because as an open system it is open to the influence of a network of external environmental processes over which members of the organization may have little or no control. Moreover, an organization is an incompletely structured system, which means that there are some internal processes less structured than others and that some may be consciously directed by man while others may not. Again, some processes may be deviating from the direction of the enterprise goals. Secondly, organizations are in general adaptive systems; in view of the fact that they are in a condition of continuous interaction with their environment. Thirdly, organizations exist in a highly

interdependent condition with other systems. Fourthly, organizations are usually directed toward the achievement of multiple goals, this makes the network of internal processes and systems more complex. Fifthly, organizations are dependent on a network of systems which are necessary for channeling processes in the direction of the fulfillment of organizational goals. Sixthly, the complex channels of interdependent activities that make up the organization concern human planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of the procurement and use of the various types of resources, human and non-human. This gives rise to two major types of processes which are highly interdependent in their interaction, namely: managerial functions of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling; and operational processes, that is, personnel management, marketing management and research, development and engineering management. Both categories are not mutually exclusive, but overlap each other. The second category is the basis for the departmentalization of most organizations.

The other important attributes of organisation, according to the model, include: every organisation has a network of processes and systems unique to itself and no two organisations are exactly the same; changes in the inputs or processes of one organisational subsystem tend to have an impact on one or more other subsystems, and in general, the task of top management is to crystallize the processes necessary for the attainment of these goals, and design, direct and control the network of facilitating systems, including feedback systems. Thus, in the context of organizational goals which are usually flexible and changing, administrative processes and facilitating systems include: planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling; organizational resources include: human, financial, materials and machines; operational processes and facilitating systems include: personnel management and financial management.

Figure 03: Process- System Model of the Organization



Source: Adapted from: French, Wendell (1974). The personnel management process: human resources administration.- 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.- Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 45.

As viewed from the perspectives of the management of university libraries, the Process-System Model of Organization is particularly relevant. A university library is a complex system which involves many goals. Such goals, for example, relate to the availability of various services like reference, serials, reserve, circulation, etc. The management of a university library requires systematic management and control of a highly complex network of interacting processes, including those processes of infrastructural resources, such as library buildings and equipment; information resources like books and journals of diverse formats; human resources and financial resources. All of these processes must be maintained in some kind of balance that will promote the optimal attainment of the library's goals. The interdependence of funding, staff, reading spaces, lighting, reading tables and chairs, ventilation, books and journals presents a typical library challenge. If the reading spaces are too few, too small or poorly lighted or poorly ventilated, these will translate into several library problems regarding provision of services such as: limited shelving and reading areas, poorly lighted environment, and unconducive temperatures for information resources and patrons. On the other hand, if the financial resources are too limited, the library management will be unable to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of library buildings and equipment; restrict the recruitment of additional staff and training of the existing ones; it will also limit or even hamper the expansion of the library stock. All these

situations, hypothetical as they may appear to be, are practical and if not properly handled could become detrimental to the attainment of the noble goals for which the university evolved. Therefore, it is the task of the university management to devise subsystems to control various overlapping processes and to maintain a dynamic balance appropriate to the attainment of set goals.

#### **Organization and provision of library resources**

Human and information resources are not the only library resources requiring proper organization. As a matter of fact, a library also requires proper organization for its financial and infrastructural resources if it must effectively fulfill the purpose of its existence. Various studies confirm that proper organization of financial resources is a *sine qua non* for libraries even in times of extremely lean budgets as it enhances the library's ability to cope with emerging challenges such as the ones associated with the amount of annual book and serial production; number of courses offered by the university; cost of books; number of faculties, and the number of students. A well planned budget is enhanced by an efficient process of implementation. This implies the desirability for proper organization of the implementation of the library budget, thus preventing a haphazard approach which gives rise to confused financial records and lack of clear accountability. Clear and continuously updated records of income and expenditure vis- a- vis the maintenance of accurate budget heads provide essential financial

guides for the library (Penan and Danton, 1987; Jin-Chuan Ma, 1998; Cohen and Leason, 1979).

Proper organization of infrastructural resources enables the library perform efficiently. Recognition of organization as crucial to the provision of functional library infrastructure that enhances library effectiveness gave rise to continuous emphases on the necessity for a program for every library building prior to its construction (Metcalf's, 1962; Lodewycks, 1961; Gelfand, 1968; Thompson, 1974). Having a program helps the library to produce structures that will be flexible and amenable to modification reflection changing needs. This underscored Hemphill's (1987) proposal for some basic cost saving alternatives to the construction of a new library building: rearrangement, conversion, addition, and portable or prefab structure. According to Thompson (1974) the importance of a programme lies in the fact that it is based on all the critical facts relating to the library's building needs and serves as a useful guide to the architect in designing the library building with regard to such issues as library service to be provided, types and qualities of materials to be stocked, number of readers expected, library staff population and their office requirements, and probability of future changes to the building. It is reasoned that working out the full details regarding the book capacity, and spaces for processing, shelving, readers etc., help the librarian and library staff to clarify the needs of the library, and to cost out the space needs to enable the university and also the architect grasp the full import of the needs in university terms. Fifoot's (1968) insistence on the flexibility of a library building was anchored on the desirability for interchangeability of all major stock areas and staff areas. This implies a building which will bear stack loads throughout, which will light and ventilate a large number of readers anywhere, no interior load bearing walls grouping the services and other fixed elements so as to free the largest area on each floor for changing library use. Flexibility is best achieved by building the library according to the modular system whereby the building is supported by columns placed at regular intervals. In this case nothing within the building is weight bearing except the columns; nothing within the building is fixed or immovable except the columns, though it is practically impossible to change the location of the stairways, elevators, heating facilities, ducts and plumbing. A modular

building is made up of identical bays, any of which may be furnished as part of a reading area filled with ranges of shelving or divided by partitions into offices or combination of two or even three of these may be used. No difficult structural alternatives are required when a bay that has been serving one purpose is assigned another purpose. This saves money and prevents complications which often arise as space requirements change. Complete flexibility in a library building requires uniform standards of lighting, ventilation and flooring for the purpose of achieving absolute interchangeability (Fifoot, 1968).

### **Methodology**

The research is an ex- post facto research designed to determine the influence of organization on the provision of library resources in universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The population consisted of all the ninety-nine librarians in the university libraries in all the six state and four federal-owned universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The major instrument for data collection was questionnaire.

The instrument consisted of three main sections, beginning with section A used to provide the needed demographic data. Sections B and C dealt with the provision of library resources and organization activities in the university libraries respectively. Section B had 46 items clustered under the four types of library resources, namely, information resources, infrastructural resources, financial resources and human resources. Section C, on the other hand, had ten items measuring evaluation activities in the University libraries. Each item in section B was designed to elicit responses that indicate the extent of library resources provided while the items in Section C were designed to establish the extent of organization activities in the University libraries

The instrument was subjected to face validity. Two senior lecturers in library and information science and an expert in educational measurement carried out the face validation. The expert and senior lecturers were specifically requested to validate the instrument in terms of the relevance and adequacy of content and clarity of the statements. The experts vetted the items of the instrument in the light of the study's purpose, constructs and hypotheses. This is to ensure that each instrument is capable of

collecting complete, precise and accurate information.

The researcher and some research assistants specially trained for the purpose distributed the questionnaire to all the librarians, chief library officers and assistant chief library officers in each of the universities under study. A total of

100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Out of this number, 90 copies were returned but only 75 copies were correctly filled by the respondents. This gave a response rate of 75%. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions posed in the study.

## Results

**Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent of library resources provision**

S/N	Organization practiced	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decisio n
1	Information resources	2.43	0.58	SE
2	Infrastructural resources	2.61	0.52	LE
3	Financial resources	2.36	0.64	SE
4	Human resources	2.27	0.62	SE
<b>Over all</b>		<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>SE</b>

VLE- Very Large Extent; LE- Large Extent; SE- Small Extent, VSE- Very Small Extent, SD-Standard Deviation,  $\bar{x}$  = Mean

**Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents on extent of organizational practices in the library**

S/N	Organization practiced	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decisio n
1	The information materials are processed by means of CCIA	3.45	.811	LE
2	The information materials are grouped according to their formats	3.91	3.913	LE
3	The library practices a subject arrangement	3.26	.074	LE
4	The library building is centrally located in the university	.30	.891	LE
		6		
5	Library budget is done under various sub-heads	2.72	1.070	LE
6	Assignment of tasks is done according to the skills experience and competences	.29	.962	LE
		6		
7	Schedule of duty are designed for staff	3.04	.110	LE
8	The structure of authority in the library is clearly defined	3.03	.976	LE
9	Library has a clear structure of authority and responsibility	2.93	2.928	LE
10	There is communication to the staff about things which staff need to know	3.00	.936	LE
<b>Over all</b>		<b>3.14</b>	<b>.044</b>	<b>LE</b>

VLE- Very Large Extent; LE- Large Extent; SE- Small Extent, VSE- Very Small Extent, SD-Standard Deviation,  $\bar{x}$  = Mean

**Table 3: Standardised Beta Coefficients of the Influence of Organization on library resources provision**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.280	.172		7.444	.000
Organization practiced in the Library	.097	.061	.163	1.603	.112

VLE- Very Large Extent; LE- Large Extent; SE- Small Extent, VSE- Very Small Extent, SD-Standard Deviation,  $\bar{x}$  = Mean

Table 1 shows that library resources were provided to a small extent in university libraries in North Central Zone ( $\bar{x}=2.42$ ). However, only

infrastructural resources were provided to a large extent ( $\bar{x}=2.61$ ).

Table 2 shows the mean rating on the extent of organizational practices in university libraries in

the North Central Zone. The greatest of all the organisational activities also carried out to a large extent include grouping information materials according to their formats ( $\bar{x}=3.91$ ), processing information materials by means of ICT ( $\bar{x}=3.01$ ), defining structure of authority ( $\bar{x}=3.11$ ) and indicating very clearly responsibilities within this structure ( $\bar{x}=3.12$ ).

Also table 3 sows that organization has no significant influence on provision of library resources in university libraries.

## Discussion

The results of the data analysis in table 1 show organizational activities carried out to facilitate the provision of library resources.

Organization as a management function was found to be carried to a large extent. Specific activities that are capable of predicting library resource provision include processing information materials by means of ICT, grouping information materials based on formats, subject arrangement of library materials, defining structure of authority and assignment of tasks based on skills, experience and competence. These findings are not surprising because organization is one of the critical features of librarianship. As far as librarians are concerned, organization is multi-dimensional. On one hand, it creates access to the avalanche of library information resources, which is achieved through information organization. On the other hand, it creates a defined structure of the library organization as such in many available organograms of libraries. However, it was also found that organization had no significant influence on library resources provision

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion to be drawn from the above findings is that there are factors within the organizational environment that can help university libraries to provide resources to enhance their growth and development. These factors are also important in predicting the extent of development of the library's information, infrastructural, financial and human resources. What this portends for the future development of the university library system is that adequate attention should be paid to organisation of library resources by the university library administrators in the management of university libraries. Critical to this is the understanding that the library environment has a lot to offer in the

management of university libraries. Ugwu (2010), in recognition of this critical role of the library environment, tried to establish the relationship between organizational practices and knowledge management application. Etuk (2008) also tried to establish the relationship between the management variables of planning, organizing, staffing, coordination and physical facilities and postgraduate theses availability, while Usoro (2008) examined the views of university librarians on the influence of organizing on the availability of library information resources. All these studies were focused to emphasise the importance of library environment as well as its contributions to the development of the university library system in terms of its human and material resources. It is recommended that university librarians should show serious commitments to information, infrastructural, human resources and financial planning with a view to improving library resources provision and that university librarians should begin to get involved in knowledge innovation as a means of developing knowledge resources for their university libraries.

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