METHODS USED IN EVALUATING STRATEGIC PLANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined the methods used in evaluating strategic plans in federal university libraries in North Central, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 162 librarians. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Mean scores and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data. The findings of the study showed the methods used to evaluate strategic plans in university libraries to include; surveying library units to know whether the planning process is effective and if the plan meets the objectives of the library, comparison of previous service and user records with the most recent records, collection of information about output in comparison against a set of predetermined goals or expected outcomes, staff assessment on set goals, university accreditation, considering the value of the library's resources, internal and external focus that influences strategic execution, evaluation of the university library's ability in meeting the needs and expectation of the user base. In view of the findings, it was recommended that, it is of utmost importance to carry all library staff along from inception of developing the plan to its execution in order to achieve successful strategic plan. Library administrators need to develop a platform to communicate, reinforce and provide a structure that supports the articulation and accomplishment of the strategic planning goals while every person in the library cannot make their voice heard on every issue within the strategic planning. There should be regular evaluation of strategic plan by the management against institutional goals, objectives, library's resources such as information resources, human resources among others.

Keywords:Methods, Evaluating, Strategic Plans, Federal Universities, University Libraries

Introduction

Effective library administration is very important for the smooth running and maintenance of university library goals and objectives. Effective library administration entails the degree of satisfying users' needs, quality of services, effectiveness as possibilities of realisation of users' needs and the library owners expectation, effectiveness as the library's possibilities of gaining the needed resources, effectiveness as the ability to achieve balance and stability, effectiveness as the degree in which the clients, the decision makers and the system administrators are satisfied with the service system. Effective library administration is the degree of aims realisation of the library (library efficiency) also perceived as the degree of satisfying the users' needs, because the primary aims of a library is the realisation of its surrounding needs. Effective library administration has measurement influencing it, as Wise; Henninger; and Kennan (2011) suggested that analysing the elements of libraries organizational and technological structures is imperative which can influence the increase or decrease of effectiveness, understood as the relations between expenditures and the level of the services provided by the library. According to them, the expenditures includes; the size of the library, the amount of the equipment and resources, etc. The parameters determining the level of provided services are; the time of users request realisation and the possibility of the request realization. That is, the effective library administration is determined by its organizational structure, preparation, the level of workers' engagement and the used technology. Wolosz in Wise; Henninger; and Kennan (2011) stateed that, the effectiveness of library administration can be considered in many surfaces, taking into consideration the effectiveness of management, the qualification level of the library workers, the modernity of norms and action methods, technical equipment and so on.

Effective administration of university libraries is necessary for achieving the desired goals and objectives. Where a university library is ineffectively managed, it will negatively affect every aspect of the library operations; information materials will not be systematically acquired and properly organised for easy accessibility by users; right measures would not be employed in management of the human resources in terms of selection, employment, training and retraining and retention of staff. According to Nwalo (2013) the effectiveness of a library administration is determined by how well the library meets the users' needs relative to the library's goals and objectives. Consequently, library patrons are the best source to determine whether or not the library is playing its role satisfactorily. It is only when the patrons are satisfied that the library can be considered to meet the users' needs. Nse and Okorafor (2011) indicated that, many or most students visit the library only when they have to prepare for examinations or collect materials to do their assignments. The level of patronage of libraries is dependent upon the quantity, currency, and relevance of information materials which are available to meet the needs of the patrons. Lack of high patronage is therefore an indication of ineffective library administration.

Another indicator of ineffective library administration is inadequate staff and development. Staff training and development has been identified by various scholars and anchors to be very crucial to an organization and its effectiveness (Olaniyan & Ojo, 2008). Adequate staff and development constitutes one aspect of the human resource management processes in any organization. It is the most powerful tool of any organization's success. Every staff in an organization needs professional training and development. It is however the responsibility of the

university management to train and develop the library staff to deliver existing and future services to users. In the quest to develop the library staff, there should be regular training programmes to help them understand, improve on their skills and perform their work better. However, it appears that there is a dearth of training and development of staff in libraries and if there are, they are not enough and also do not address the specific needs of staff in federal university libraries especially in North Central Nigeria where most of the universities were new by establishment. Lack of a library policy: A library policy is supposed to offer guidelines for actions and decisions to be taken within the library for effective library administration. Thus, without written guidelines, it would be difficult to have effective library administration. The policy should act as the roadmap to library management practices.

If libraries are to be managed effectively so as to achieve the university goals or programmes of the universities, they must be sensitive to changing conditions both within their internal structure and external environment. The library must move towards a more assertive role within the community it serves influencing university plans, programmes and priorities rather than simply copying with events as they occur. The effective administration of university libraries has become increasingly important because of their growing size and complexity. There is high demand of their services, yet the cost of library and information materials is beyond their budget. Hence the need for the librarians to confront the challenge to maintain the operation, services, and collections in the face of the rising cost and relatively stable or declining budgets. This can be achieved through a strategic planning practice like SWOT analysis of the library's internal and external environment, constructing and implementing library goals, objectives,mission, and vision statements, library values and policies among others. Saka (2010) noted that "in every organisation or institution (library) there are various objectives set aside to be achieved. These objectives could be adequately achieved when human and material resources are strategically planned and managed.

Statement of the Problem

Strategic planning in federal university libraries in north central Nigeria is aimed at total concentration of the library's resources on mutually predetermined measurable outcomes. As with management tool, strategic planning is used in guiding the library to perform maximally and as well focus its energy to ensure that, staff are working towards the same goals, to assess and adjust the library's direction in response to a changing environment. However, the process of strategy evaluation is often overlooked in the overall strategic planing process. After the flurry of activity in the initial planning stages, followed by the reality check of executing the library strategy, evaluation of the strategy is often neglected. When this happens, strategies quickly become outdated and out-of-sync with the changing face of the library. On the contrary, when an efficient strategy evaluation process is set in place, libraries can benefit from insights and learnings from past performance to inform more efficient and effective library administration and it is on this note that this study is set to investigate the evaluation methods in federal university libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the methods used to evaluate strategic plans in federal university libraries in North Central, Nigeria.

Research Question

The study seek to find answers to the following question:

1. What are the methods used to evaluate strategic plans in federal university libraries in North Central, Nigeria?

Scope of the Study

This study covers methods used to evaluate strategic plans in federal university libraries in North Central, Nigeria. The universities covered are federal universities in North central Nigeria which includes; J. S. Tarka University Makurdi, University of Jos, University of Abuja, University of Illorin, Federal University Lafia, Federal University Lokoja and Federal University of Technology Minna. All the professional librarians in federal universities in North Central Nigeria were covered by the study.

Literature Review
Methods Used in Evaluating Strategic Plans in University Libraries

Strategy evaluation implies collecting information about how well the strategic plan is progressing. Strategic evaluation can be defined as the process of determining the effectiveness of a given strategy in achieving the organizational objectives and taking corrective action wherever required. Chrldler and VanHouse in Piorun (2011) identified two steps in the evaluation process for strategic plans in libraries. First, information is collected about outputs (measures that quantify the amount, quality, or volume of use) and then that information is compared against a set of predetermined goals or expected outcomes (change in behaviour, attitude, skills or knowledge) second, judgment is exercised to determine if the expected outcomes are still applicable to the organisation; if the answer is "yes" the expected outcomes will be compared against the actual outcomes. If the comparison is positive, the evaluation will deem the programme, plan or process to be effective. These outcomes will be reported through progress reports, financial reports, and annual reports. However, Kumau (2008) wrote, operational efficiency (outputs) should not be confused with strategy (outcomes). Operational efficiency is easily imitated through the rapid diffusion.

Through the use of document analysis, interviews with library directors, and a survey, McNicol (2005) investigated how closely library strategic plans are aligned with institutional plans. She stated that outcome measures are an indicator of how well the two plans are aligned. She also found there was no consistency among directors interviewed on the distinction between outputs and outcomes. McNicol did not report specific numbers; instead, she reported that a 'few' directors believed it was "self-evident" that the library had met targets, whereas other relied on more structured data gathering methods. Kettunen (2007) applied a balance scorecard approach to

the evaluation of strategic plans with a consortium of digital libraries across 29 finish universities, but at a high level based on four perspectives (customer, finance, internal processes, and learning) and focused on implementation. Methodology is only provided in overview and evaluation limited to general observation.

. Staines (2009) reviewed American and Canadian academic library strategic plans against association of college and research libraries top trends and identified space off-site storage, staff assessment and development as major trends. Other priority areas included digitization efforts, open access and scholarly communication. While plans from both countries libraries made references to user needs. University accreditation is another potential area of evaluating university library strategic plan. Accreditation organisations like the National Universities Commission in Nigeria set the standard against which universities and their libraries are assessed. Accreditation according to Saunders (2016) functions as a quality check and continuous improvement process and institutional accreditation is necessary for institution to receive federal funding. Okigbo (2010) states that, evaluation is carried out taking into consideration the changing environment. These implore, monitoring essential activities for purpose of control and should be in form of self-analysis at the start of the next planning circle. Questions to which should be given at each step are; is the boards focus relevant? Have external factor and demand changed the board objectives and possible programmes? What should be the libraries firm programme objectives for the next 3-5 years?

According to Oster in Saunders (2016), techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of a library's strategy include; internal and external focus that influences strategy execution, meaning the library's performance and determining appropriate corrective measures. He states that, strategy evaluation should begin with an examination of the internal forces that will influence the library's ability to follow the strategic plan. The evaluation should consider the value of the library's resources such as information resources, financial assets, proprietary information and the people who are available to guide the library to meet its goals. This evaluation helps the library to understand how these asserts can be developed to expand the library's capabilities. All of these internal forces combined are what set the library apart from others.

The next method for strategy evaluation according to Oster is to consider the external forces that will influence the library's ability to complete its mission. The primary external force the library must free as the users. Users of the university library will determine the success of the library. Is the university library meeting the expectation of the user base? Along with the consideration of your users, the library must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its competitors. Do the competing libraries have differentiating capabilities that will pull your users away? Another method is measuring performance; the evaluation process will help you to determine of the strategy you have developed is leading the company to meet its mission and goals. Begin this evaluation method by evaluating if the results that have been realised through the library operation have been successful in meeting all of the set goals. Are the information resources meeting the information needs of the users? Are the sitting spaces enough? Is there enough usage of the resources? Another method after the evaluation has considered all the library's historical performance data, the next step is determining what corrective measures should be taken to ensure library's operations are correctly aligned with the strategic plan. Many times making correction to

strategic operation will force changes that will cause objection, yet, change is an essential element of the controlling process. It must be ensured that the library will be able to meet all its short and long term strategic goals. Adjusting strategic operation is an essential method of strategy evaluation.

Piorun (2011) in a study evaluation of strategic plans in academic medical libraries indicates evaluation methods to include; availability studies, balanced scorecard, bench marks, changes in staff skills, financial assessments (cost per use, cost of service) focus groups, formal feedback forms (evaluation firms, liaisons, library committee) informal feedback (words of mouth, email, blog) library use study, suggestion box; surveys, counting outputs, users' statistics (usability).

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 162 librarians. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaires. The response options were; VHU-Very Highly Used; HU- Highly Used; LU- Less Used; NU- Not Used. Data for the research was analyzed in line with the research question that guided the study. Data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation.

Results

What are the methods used to evaluate strategic plans in Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1:   Mean Responses of Methods used to Evaluate Strategic Plans

S/No	Methods used to evaluate strategic plans	FULA $\overline{X}$	JTU $\overline{X}$	UJ $\overline{X}$	UABJ $\overline{X}$	UIL $\overline{X}$	FUL $\overline{X}$	FUTM $\overline{X}$	Overall $\overline{X}$	SD	R
1	Surveying library units to know whether the planning process is effective and if the plan meets the objectives of the library	2.67	2.92	3.13	3.08	3.18	3.10	3.08	3.04	.74	HU
2	Comparison of previous service and user records with the most recent records	2.50	3.04	2.83	3.08	3.09	3.00	3.04	2.97	.71	HU
3	Collection of information about output in comparison against a set of predetermined goals or expected outcomes	2.33	2.85	2.88	2.77	3.00	3.10	3.04	2.90	.67	HU
4	Staff assessment on set goals	2.83	2.96	2.75	3.08	3.18	3.50	3.00	3.00	.77	HU
5	University accreditation	3.00	2.96	2.83	3.08	3.27	3.40	2.84	2.99	.81	HU
6	Considering the value of the library's resources	2.67	2.92	2.92	2.77	3.00	3.40	2.60	2.87	.78	HU
7	Internal and external focus that influences strategic execution	2.33	2.73	2.79	2.85	3.09	3.30	2.72	2.82	.80	HU
8	Evaluation of the university library's ability in meeting the needs and expectation of the user base	2.83	2.81	2.92	3.00	3.09	3.10	2.68	2.88	.85	HU
9	SWOT analysis	2.67	2.92	2.96	3.15	3.18	3.00	2.92	2.97	.74	HU
10	Measuring performance of resources (i.e. are the resources meeting users' needs) are the sitting spaces enough? etc.)	2.67	3.19	2.83	3.08	3.27	3.10	2.76	2.98	.76	HU
11	Changes in strategy skills like redefined cultural values	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.85	2.91	3.00	2.84	2.85	.75	HU
12	Assessment of the funds allocated to the library and expenditures	2.67	3.00	2.71	2.85	3.10	3.00	3.08	2.93	.75	HU
13	Users statistics (usability)	2.33	2.96	2.79	3.15	3.18	3.10	2.96	2.95	.74	HU
14	Counting outputs	2.50	2.88	2.83	2.54	3.27	3.00	3.16	2.92	.76	HU
15	Informal feed backs (words of mouth, blogs, email etc).	2.67	2.92	3.08	2.85	3.09	3.10	2.96	2.97	.75	HU
16	Library use study	2.50	2.81	3.04	2.69	3.18	3.20	3.04	2.95	.78	HU
17	Suggestion box	2.33	2.85	3.13	2.62	3.27	3.40	2.88	2.95	.77	HU
18	Surveys	2.33	3.04	3.17	2.77	3.18	3.50	2.84	3.01	.81	HU
19	Focus group	2.17	2.85	3.04	2.92	3.18	3.40	2.80	2.93	.76	HU
20	Formal feed backs (evaluation forms, library committee, etc)	2.17	3.00	2.71	2.54	3.09	3.40	2.84	2.85	.88	HU
21	Bench marks	2.33	3.04	2.75	2.92	3.09	3.30	2.92	2.93	.79	HU
	Cluster mean	2.53	2.94	2.89	2.89	3.14	3.21	2.90	2.94	.57	HU

NOTE: FULA-Federal university Lafia; JSTU- Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University; UABJ- University of Abuja; UIL- University of Illorin; FUL- Federal university Lokoja; FUTM- Federal university of Technology Minna; R- Remark; HU- Highly Used

The above Table shows the mean rating of respondents on method employed to evaluate strategic plans in federal universities libraries in North central Nigeria. Using the principle of real limit of numbers; the result of the data analysis reveals the method highly used to evaluate strategic

plans in university librarites to include; surveying library units to know whether the planning process is effective and staff assessment in set goals ($\bar{x}$ 3.00) surveys ($\bar{x}$ 3.01) university acreditation ($\bar{x}$ 3.00) comparison of prevsious services and users records with the most recent records ($\bar{x}$ 2.97) SWOT Analysis ($\bar{x}$ 2.97), measuring performance of resources ($\bar{x}$ 2,97) informed feed back ($\bar{x}$ 2.97) library user study and suggestions box; user statistics, all ($\bar{x}$ 2.95) among others with the least internal and external focus that influences strategic execution (2.82). A clustered mean of 2.94 and standard deviation of .57

Summary of the findings
From the data analysis and the interpretation of results, the following findings emerged
        The methods employed to evaluate strategic plans in federal universities libraries in North central Nigeria were found to include; surveying library units to know whether the planning process is effective and staff assessment on set goals, surveys, university acreditation, comparison of prevsious services and user records with the most recent records, SWOT Analysis, measuring performance of resources, informed feed back, library user study and suggestions box; user statistics, among others.

Discussion of Findings
        The findings of this research is discussed based on the research question. It does this under the following subheading;

Methods used to evaluate strategic plans in federal university libraries
        The findings of the study showed the methods used to evaluate strategic plans in university libraries, these include: surveying library units to know whether the planning process is effective and if the plan meets the objectives of the library, Comparison of previous service and user records with the most recent records, Collection of information about output in comparison against a set of predetermined goals or expected outcomes, Staff assessment on set goals, University accreditation, Considering the value of the library's resources, Internal and external focus that influences strategic execution, Evaluation of the university library's ability in meeting the needs and expectation of the user base, SWOT analysis, Measuring performance of resources (i.e. are the resources meeting users' needs) are the sitting spaces enough? etc.), Changes in strategy skills like redefined cultural values, Assessment of the funds allocated to the library and expenditures, Users statistics (usability), Counting outputs, Informal feed backs (words of mouth, blogs, email etc), Library use study, Suggestion box, Surveys, Focus group, Formal feed backs (evaluation forms, library committee, etc).
        In view of the findings, Saunders (2016) stated that techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of a library's strategy include; internal and external focus that influences strategy execution, meaning the library's performance and determining appropriate corrective measures. Another method according to Shuah (2015) is measuring performance which will help to determine if the strategy employed is leading the organization to meet its mission and goals. Odongo and Datche (2015) postulated that the evaluation should consider the value of the library's resources

such as information resources, financial assets, proprietary information and the people who are available to guide the library to meet its goals. Also, Piorun (2011) pointed out that evaluation methods include; availability studies, balanced scorecard, bench marks, changes in staff skills, financial assessments (cost per use, cost of service) focus groups, formal feedback forms (evaluation firms, liaisons, library committee) informal feedback (words of mouth, email, blog) library use study, suggestion box; surveys, counting outputs, users' statistics (usability).

It is not enough to have strategic plans, but also of utmost important to have different evaluation methods to find out if the strategic plan put in place is working towards achieving the stated objectives.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there are different methods used to evaluate strategic plans. The implication is that, it is of utmost importance to evaluate the plans put in place in order to avoid waste of time and resources.

Recommendation

In view of the findings, these recommendations are given: It is of utmost importance to carry all library staff along from inception of developing the plan to its execution in order to achieve successful strategic plan. Library administrators need to develop a platform to communicate, reinforce and provide a structure that supports the articulation and accomplishment of the strategic planning goals while every person in the library cannot make their voice heard on every issue within the strategic planning. There should be regular evaluation of strategic plan by the management against institutional goals, objectives, library's resources such as information resources, human resources. There should be regular staff development to aid the development and fulfilment of strategic plan.

Conclusion

This study investigated the strategic planning practices among libraries for effective library administration in Federal universities in North Central, Nigeria. The design of the study is descriptive survey with the use of questionnaire as instrument of data collection to collect data from population of 162 librarians which also serve as the sample size because of its manageable number. The study found out that there are different types of strategic planning and that the application of these plans to library administration has lots of benefits, however, it was found out that strategic plans were overwhelmed by many challenges which serve as impediments to effective library administration. It is believed that if the strategies to overcome the challenges are put in place, it will go a long way in achieving best practices in strategic planning which will lead to effective library administration.

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