

LIBRARY COLLABORATION IN THE CHANGING WORLD: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS.

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Abstract

In librarianship activities today, there is need for collaboration exercise among different libraries. There is need for indispensable collaboration among library and information professionals in fostering and sustaining digitally oriented research endeavors in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It investigated the purpose of library establishment and the meaning of library collaboration. It evaluated collaboration as a process through which two or more libraries can work together to achieve set goals and emphasized collaboration as a global trend where different types of libraries share their resources through networking activities. The study analyzed the rationale for collaboration, drawing examples from leaders and examined the prospects in these activities. It equally pinpointed some prospects of library collaboration in the (ICT) global era and challenges hindering effective collaboration among libraries. Some recommendations were made which includes proper funding of libraries by the governments; adequate training and retraining of library staff on the use of ICT tools, and to adapt changes to achieve a smooth collaborative opportunities for their libraries.

Keywords: Library collaboration, library services, librarians, and global change.

Introduction

Collaboration is the activities that bind different organizations, institutions, libraries, and individuals together to achieve their goals. Global information society is encouraging libraries to embrace collaborative arrangement to be able to satisfy the information needs of their clientele and enjoy the benefit thereafter. Libraries can improve on their services if they embrace the collaborative activities among themselves. This exercise will enable them to work as a team to achieve their set goals. Onwuzuruike & Okafor (2024) defined collaboration as the activities that binds libraries to jointly work together with others like, institutions, individuals and organizations to achieve their goals and objectives. They further asserted that it can also be seen as cooperative efforts among libraries, institutions, or organizations to share resources, expertise, and services with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of library services.

Libraries are established to serve as an information centre responsible for the collection, organization, preservation, storing and dissemination of information resources to render services to library users. These services are geared towards educating; informing and entertaining their clients for self-reliance and development. According to Encyclopedia of Britannica (2023), libraries are seen as places that keep records of human civilizations. They house the collections of books, journals, manuscripts, serial materials, audio-visual materials and other recorded information.

Libraries generally play important roles within and outside their communities. Be it academic, school, public and special libraries. Libraries are repositories of books and non-book materials, but are considered also as places where interactions between human and information takes place. (Hassinger-Das et al 2020), and (Ari 2017). Libraries provide access to information and other educational materials irrespective of the geographic location. The provision of library resources and services often cannot be achieved independently, therefore, libraries should engage in collaboration in order to increase opportunities to serve their users. To Ezekiel (2022), collaboration is the process in which

two or more entities work together to bring resources, share responsibilities, jointly plan, evaluate and implement programmes of activities to achieve a common goal. Similarly,

Akinson (2018) stated that collaboration has the potential of transforming institutions in a way that provides lasting mutual benefits to the collaborating entities. Collaboration in a rapidly changing world needs to ensure direct positive impact in the socio-economic; scientific, educational, political, technological and cultural development of people, communities and nations. Hence, the duties and functions of libraries in fostering and sustaining strategic collaboration in a changing world become***increasingly evident.*Discuss Changing world and its attributes here*

Library service delivery refers to the methods and strategies adopted by different libraries to provide quick access to information and their resources to library users. This includes services like circulation of materials, reference services, and information literacy programs, access to digital technologies etc. Effective library service delivery ensures that users can easily obtain the information they need in a timely and effective manner. It is a critical aspect of library operations, as it directly impacts user satisfaction and the overall success of the library in fulfilling its mission (Andre,2024). The importance of library service delivery is evident in both developed and developing countries. In developing nations, libraries are integral to lifelong learning and community engagement. In African countries, libraries contribute to education and development by providing access to information and resources that support literacy and learning. In Nigeria, libraries continue to face challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and insufficient ICT facilities, which hinder their ability to deliver effective services.(Andres, 2025).

Library collaboration refers to the strategic partnerships formed between libraries to share their resources, expertise, and services. This collaboration can take various forms, including inter-library loan agreements, joint programming, cooperative acquisitions, and shared digital resources. Such partnership enhances the capabilities of individual libraries, allowing them to offer a broader range of services and improve overall service delivery. It also includes sharing of resources, exchanging of knowledge, and coordinating services to

meet the needs of library users. Joint programming involves libraries collaborating to offer educational and cultural programmes that are beneficial to different communities. These include workshops, lectures and events that promote literacy and community engagement. Such collaboration helps libraries to reach out to a broader audience and fulfill their educational mission more effectively. (Measad&Minakhwan, 2024). Similarly, Chima, (2023), stressed that collaboration by libraries can help to avoid duplication of efforts and provide efficiency, savings, streamline work processes and free up time for more value added activities. He further asserted that it can also increase the profile, visibility, credibility and influence of the library and library staff internally and externally. Collaboration and associated collaborative practices, particularly those premised on, and potentiated by the use of online interactive technologies, have become increasingly integral to successful exchange of ideas, enhancement of didactic techniques, nurturing competence in pedagogical skills, participation in community development initiatives, the crafting of policy documents, and engaging in joint research and publication efforts, etc. among academics and researchers of the 21st century era (Ibenne and Okai, 2020). Ezekiel, (2022), opined that collaboration is a process in which two or more entities works together to bring resources; share responsibilities jointly plan, evaluate and implement programs of activities to achieve a common goal. In a developing world, collaboration is required to ensure direct positive impact in the socio-economic world; it is needed to ensure direct positive impact in the socio-economic, scientific, educational, political, technological and cultural development of people, communities and nations. Hence, the roles and functions of libraries in fostering and sustaining strategic collaboration in a fast changing world become increasingly evident. Collaboration simply means any activity that binds libraries to jointly pull their resources together with other institutions like organizations and individuals to achieve established goals. It can equally be viewed as cooperative efforts among different libraries, institutions, organizations and individuals to share resources, expertise, and services with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of library services.

To Library and Information Science Network (2023), library collaboration is a vital and evolving facet of modern information management and dissemination. Collaboration in a digital age among different libraries has profound impact and relevance. It makes libraries more interconnected and assists them in promoting knowledge-rich society. Additionally, collaboration assists libraries to demonstrate and transform their operations and shape the future of information access and dissemination. Mohammed, (2022) observed the rapid change in technologies with reference to collaboration in libraries. He further identified technology devices like social media and mobile technologies and their impact on library collaboration, especially in academic setting. He equally noted that technology helps libraries to collaborate with students and faculty through social networking sites and provide access to quality services. Collaboration according to Association for Intelligent Management (2023) is a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve business benefits. Collaboration relies on openness and knowledge sharing, but also some level of focus and accountability on the part of the business organizations. Library collaboration is indeed a global trend, transforming the way libraries operate and serve their communities. By working together, libraries can share resources, expertise, and risks, ultimately enhancing their impact and relevance.

Finally, the application of technology allows libraries to improve access to digital resources, enhance information literacy programmes and expand their virtual services. There are some attributes expected of people participating in collaborative activities, they are as follows:

- a. They are expected to have a right attitude with an open approach and a willingness to share knowledge, information and skills freely.
- b. Willingness to challenge the conventional thinking and an ability to bring to bear free perspective and to rethink traditional library services.
- c. There should be the existence of a common sense of purpose. All the participants in the team need a common sense of purpose, a commitment to a shared goal trust.

Team members need to be able to ensure that there is mutual sharing of success (Atkinson, 2018).

Library Collaboration as a Global Trend:

The concept of library collaboration is becoming a global trend because global information society encourages promoting collaboration among themselves through open resources, networking and partnership. This type of collaboration allows them to work together towards managing their resources and rendering services to underserved communities. Global information society is built on information infrastructures that facilitate collaboration. It is characterized by massive creation, distribution, utilization, and integration of information. These processes and activities are seen as the basic roles of libraries globally. However, collaboration as a concept assists libraries in facilitating these processes for better services.

In a global information society, libraries are encouraged to promote collaboration among themselves through open resources, networking and partnership. This type of collaboration allows them to work together towards managing their resources and rendering services to underserved communities Onwuzuruike&Okafor (2024).

Cortada (2023) opined that global information society is built on information infrastructures that facilitate collaboration. This is characterized by massive creation, distribution, utilization and integration of information. These are the basic roles of libraries all over the world.

To the European Commission on Information Society and Media (2023), global collaboration will be used in the following ways:

1. 1)Libraries that wish to join any form of collaboration and partnership should comply with established rules and standards.

2. 2.Libraries should be supported to collaborate through national and international agreements.
3. 3.Libraries should be supported through research cooperation and allow their users to access global knowledge resources, technology and skills through collaboration.
4. 4.Collaboration among libraries should be used to address global problems of the emerging information society and support development of underserved communities.

In this technological era, collaboration among libraries has a huge impact and relevance. It makes libraries more interconnected and assists them in promoting knowledge-rich society. Furthermore, library collaboration helps libraries to demonstrate and transform their operations and shape the future of information access and dissemination.

Rationale for library collaboration in the Era of global change:

There are different rationales for library collaboration among libraries in this new era, they are as follows:

1. Stakeholders Engagement: The need to engage stakeholders to justify and define areas of improvements and inadequacies in view of meeting the expectations of library users in different parts of the world. This is vital, and each relevant stakeholder can help to provide a kind of engagement for the success of library collaboration.
2. Feasibility study: This is required to ensure that the objectives and expectations of the individual networking libraries are properly aligned. Knowledge needs to be gained from other collaborative initiatives and consortia including benchmarking against similar initiatives nationally and intentionally.
3. Inter-facility Networking: This has to do with the real networking of participating libraries and information centers to attain set objectives.

4. People, organization and change: As the world changes rapidly, it is expected that librarians, institutions and infrastructure are enhanced to optimize efficiency and delivery outcomes. People's attitude, organizational structures and institutional infrastructure are required to change in response to prevailing new realities (Onwuzuruike&Okafor 2024).

Tools for library collaboration:

Most of the popularly used collaborative tools are widely known to function with a combination of text, video and graphics, while some are either text oriented or video oriented in the features. Some of the popularly utilized collaboration tools among academic libraries include: Facebook, skype, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Google Hangout, Research gate, Google Docs and E-mail platforms such as G-mail, Yahoo mail and organization hosted e-mails. Others includes: Wechat, 290, IMO, Webinar, Weblogs (blogs for short) and Doodle (used for scheduling meetings). People can as well collaborate by establishing Wikis and utilizing them to create and edit content cooperatively.

Prospects of Library Collaboration in the Era of Global change:

Libraries have witnessed significant evolution as a result of some advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT worldwide has greatly impacted the modes of collaboration and provision of library and information services. Recently, there have been several global changes as a result of new technology. These changes have huge prospects for libraries and information centers. Libraries have witnessed significant evolution as a result of advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Globally, ICT has impacted the modes of collaboration and provision of library and information services. To Lassace, (2023), ICT deals with the application of modern technological advancements for communicating and sharing of information. The author stressed that in the past, collaboration was limited by physical boundaries, but today, libraries are using ICT tools to collaborate in several ways.

To Lassace (2023), ICT deals with the application of modern technological advancements for communicating and sharing of information. They further stressed that ICT tools like email, video conferencing and chat have made it easier for libraries to share knowledge resources and expertise with sister libraries: with the application of ICT tools, a library can harness the knowledge and experience of other libraries and come up with better services. For a successful collaboration in a changing world, libraries must carefully navigate these prospects emphasizing on flexibility, adaptability and user-centric approach to collaboration. Some of the prospects include:

1. **Saving Cost:** Collaboration on shared initiatives like collection development or digitization projects leads to significant saving of money and resources. They can collaborate to pool their financial resources and find expensive project that may not be feasible for a single institution or library. It provides an opportunity for libraries to deal with an activity too large for a particular library to handle individually.
2. **Exchange of scholarly published articles** from printed and electronic materials
3. **Collaborate in organizing local or international conferences.**
4. **Invitation to attend any conferences hosted by either institution**
5. **Cooperate in the exchange of information relating to the activities in the current trend of librarianship (Mahammed 2022).**
6. **Advocacy and Collective Voice:** Proper collaboration provides libraries with a stronger collective voice when advocating for funding, policy changes or public support while working together. Libraries can amplify their influence and ensure that they are adequately represented in making decision processes.
7. **Community Engagement and Partnership:** Libraries can form partnerships with other organizations like schools, museums or local government agencies. This will allow them to extend their reach and engage with diverse communities resulting to greater impact and relevance. The points of content for users are equally minimized

through the development of an integrated services, single user interfaces, single input of data etc.

8. Global knowledge sharing: Libraries are becoming central hubs for global knowledge sharing, facilitating international collaboration and access to resources.
9. Enhance services: Collaboration enables libraries to offer more comprehensive services, including digital collections, virtual reference services, and personalized learning experiences.
10. Innovation: Collaboration efforts drive innovation, as libraries leverage emerging technologies like AI, block chain, and big data analytics.

Collaboration activities can change the role of libraries and take it beyond the usual traditional clients' service approach. It allows for wider and deeper input from people with variety of perceptive expertise and experience that helps to develop a more sophisticated area and a richer service for users of libraries (Mohammed 2022).

Challenges of library collaboration in the Technological global change:

Library collaboration as important as it is has its own hindrance to a successful collaboration among libraries. Ihedioha (2018), in Onwuzuruike and Okafor (2024), posited that libraries in general, like other fields of endeavor encounter series of challenges while having future prospect. He stressed that despite the fact that ICT has enhanced library collaboration in several ways, that the under developed and developing countries are facing challenges of implementing ICT in their libraries for an effective collaboration.

The following challenges therefore, are commonly bedeviling library collaboration in the era of global change:-

1. Funding constraints: Inadequate funding and support from parent organization can hinder collaboration efforts. For example, it has been a big challenge right from the time of Colonial government in Nigeria till date. Also funding has been a challenge to global library collaboration from the very beginning of its development. The

adequacy or other- wise of funding can either be beneficial to library collaboration or constitute a setback to its actualization

2. Lack of motivation: The practice of librarianship without motivation can become increasingly unrewarding. Librarians are dedicated to maintaining the relevance of the library as a place of intellectual stimulation and collaboration. Librarians believe that it is essential that we emphasize on motivating librarians for better collaboration. There must be ways in which librarians are encouraged to collaborate with one another for better and efficient services.
3. Low level of passion and competency: Librarians need to be passionate about new ideas, knowledge, skills, and practice of library collaboration. They also need to acquire basic competencies that will enhance collaboration. Similarly, lack of both passion and competency with regards to collaboration served as a challenge for libraries to successfully collaborate with one another.
4. Institutional and Staff ICT Capacity Enhancement: There is a crucial challenge on capacity building among librarians on ICT implementation for collaboration initiative. Some librarians in Nigeria and other developing countries are yet to be equipped with adequate ICT training for collaboration.
5. Cultural difference between collaborators: This ranges from different cultural identities that distinguish the collaborators. It cuts across different belief, values and rules of conduct that separate different libraries. This may likely hamper successful collaboration when libraries come from different cultural and geographical locations.
6. Resistance to change: This emanates when there is unwillingness among librarians to adapt to change especially in the globalized environment.
7. Interoperability issues: Different library systems and standards can create integration challenges.
8. Technological advancements: Keeping pace with rapid technological changes can be daunting.

9. Data privacy and security: Libraries must ensure the security and privacy of user's data.

To overcome these challenges, libraries are adopting strategies like:

- a. Consortia and partnerships: Collaborative models help mitigate funding constraints and share expertise.
- b. Digital integration: Embracing digital tools and resources enhances access and efficiency.
- c. User-centric Approaches: Focusing on personalized services and user engagement improves reliance.

Strategies for addressing the challenges:

- a. Develop clear agreements: Establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or partnership agreements outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- b. Foster communication: Regular meetings, workshops, and training sessions can facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- c. Embrace flexible technologies: Adopt cloud-based solutions and open-source software to enhance interoperability and scalability.
- d. Prioritizing user needs: Focus on user - centric services and involve users in planning and decision – making processes.
- e. Secure funding: Explore grants, sponsorships, and public-private partnerships to support collaborative initiatives.
- f. Build capacity: Provide training and professional development opportunities to enhance staff skills and expertise.

There are several modern ways of collaboration, but often libraries in developing countries are failing to utilize new standards of collaboration to promote their services and

operations. Change is considered to be inevitable, on the other hand library should encourage their staff to think in different ways on library collaboration and its benefits (Nworie et.al.2023).

Recommendations

It is therefore, recommended that

1. Librarians and libraries should learn/adapt to the technological tools and/or develops policies that enhance collaborative efforts among libraries within and outside the country in order to improve library service delivery.
2. There should be proper funding of libraries to enable them have modern facilities to collaborate with others.
3. There should be training and retraining of the library personnel to suit the new technological facilities to be able to participate effectively in the collaboration arrangement.
4. There should also be an effective network connectivity to ensure smooth and effective collaboration.
5. The library management should have the political will to support the idea of library collaboration at all times.

Conclusion

Library collaborations have become an integral part of modern library operations and services. It offers numerous advantages for librarians through networking and group projects. Collaboration promotes seamless communication among librarians, better knowledge sharing, transparency and community engagement, making it easier for libraries to produce better results (Onwuzuruike and Okafor 2024).

This work has highlighted the importance of collaboration as being able to remove physical barriers through the application of ICT in the libraries, thus, making it easier for libraries to work together irrespective of their location or cultural differences.

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