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LIBRARY CONSORTIA AND COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE SHARING IN ALBERT ILEMOBADE LIBRARY, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AKURE

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing at Albert Ilemobade Library, the Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA). The research aims to identify the benefits and challenges of these initiatives and evaluate their impact on library services and resources. The study also proposes strategies for improving collaborative efforts among academic libraries. The research employed a Simple Random Sampling technique, selecting 60 staff members from the Albert Ilemobade Library as participants. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, and the Chi-square test method. The findings reveal that library consortia and collaborative resource sharing are perceived positively by the majority of respondents, with benefits including enhanced access to resources, cost-effectiveness, and knowledge exchange. However, several challenges were identified, including insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, technical difficulties, limited awareness, and lack of staff expertise. To address these challenges, the study recommends establishing dedicated funding mechanisms, providing staff training and professional development, enhancing awareness and communication, developing interoperable systems and standardized protocols, and formalizing partnerships and collaboration agreements. These recommendations aim to optimize the effectiveness of library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives, thereby enhancing the provision of library services and resources at Albert Ilemobade Library, FUTA.

Keywords: Collaborative, consortia, knowledge exchange, library services. resource-sharing.

Introduction

Libraries are indispensable pillars of academia, serving as repositories of knowledge, hubs of intellectual discourse, and catalysts for scholarly pursuits (Jenkins, 2018; Pascual, 2016). In the digital age, the role of libraries transcends mere book repositories to dynamic information centres, where access to diverse resources is essential for fostering research, learning, and innovation (Joel and Ayinla, 2015). However, the ever-expanding landscape of scholarly materials and the constraints of individual library budgets often pose challenges to meeting the diverse needs of users. In response to these challenges, library consortia and resource-sharing initiatives have emerged as effective strategies for optimizing resource utilization, enhancing access, and promoting collaboration among academic institutions (Schonfeld and Housewright, 2018; Kaur, 2013).

The Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), established in 1981, is one of Nigeria's leading institutions of higher learning with a focus on technological innovation and scientific research. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in fields like engineering, environmental technology, and the physical and life sciences. FUTA's vision is to be a world-class university committed to the

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development of technology through cutting-edge research and education. The Albert Ilemobade Library at FUTA plays a vital role in supporting the institution's academic and research agenda, providing students, faculty, and researchers with access to a vast range of scholarly materials, including books, journals, databases, and digital resources (Ogbomo, 2012).

The library is instrumental in facilitating the research goals of the university, with a particular emphasis on scientific and technological resources. In addition to supporting academic programs in engineering, technology, environmental science, and related fields, the library provides services that include interlibrary loans, information literacy training, and access to specialized research databases (Brenda et al., 2014). The Albert Ilemobade Library boasts a collection size of over 100,000 print volumes, 50,000 e-books, and subscriptions to numerous academic databases. It serves a user population of approximately 15,000 students and 1,000 faculty members. Currently, the library participates in limited resource-sharing arrangements with other Nigerian universities and is exploring opportunities to expand these collaborations (Ossai, 2010).

Library consortia refer to collaborative arrangements among libraries, typically academic institutions, to pool their resources, share expertise, and collectively negotiate access to electronic resources, subscriptions, and services (Bos, 2019; Pradhan et al., 2016). This collaborative framework allows member libraries to leverage their collective purchasing power, thereby enhancing their ability to provide a broader range of resources and services to their respective user communities. Resource sharing, on the other hand, involves the exchange of materials, such as books, journals, and other scholarly resources, among libraries within the consortium or with external partners (Van Scoyoc and Dresang, 2020; Prakash and Janardhana, 2017). Through resource-sharing agreements, libraries can supplement their collections, fill gaps in their holdings, and ensure equitable access to information resources for their users, regardless of their physical location or institutional affiliation.

Despite the potential benefits of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing, academic libraries face several challenges in forming and maintaining these partnerships. These challenges include differences in organizational structures, funding models, institutional goals, governance issues, decision-making processes, and communication barriers, which often hinder the effective implementation and sustainability of such initiatives (Rogers, 1995).

In the evolving landscape of academic libraries, the establishment of library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives has emerged as a strategic response to the increasing demand for diverse resources and services. The Albert Ilemobade Library, recognizing the significance of such collaborative endeavours, seeks to enhance the scholarly experience for faculty, students, and researchers.

The primary aim of this study is to explore the benefits and challenges associated with library consortia and collaborative resource sharing at the Albert Ilemobade Library, FUTA, and to provide insights into how these initiatives can be improved.

The specific objectives of the study are:

i. To identify the benefits of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing in Albert Ilemobade Library, FUTA.

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ii. To assess the challenges faced by the library in participating in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing.
iii. To evaluate the impact of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing on the provision of library services and resources in Albert Ilemobade Library, FUTA.
iv. To recommend strategies for improving library consortia and collaborative resource sharing among academic libraries.

To achieve these objectives, the study will address the following research questions:
i. What are the benefits of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing in Albert Ilemobade Library, FUTA?
ii. What are the impacts of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing on the provision of library services and resources in academic libraries in Ondo State, and how can this impact be measured?
iii. What are the challenges faced by the library when participating in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing?
iv. What strategies can be recommended for improving library consortia and collaborative resource sharing among academic libraries in Nigeria, and how effective are these strategies in enhancing the provision of library services and resources?

Additionally, the study will test the following hypotheses:
(H0): There is a significant difference in outcomes resulting from library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives among academic libraries.
(H1): There is no significant difference in outcomes resulting from library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives among academic libraries.

Methodology of the study

The design of this study is a descriptive survey. A descriptive survey is a research design that aims to describe the characteristics, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviours of a population or a specific group of interest. This method involves collecting data through questionnaires, interviews, or observations to summarize and characterize the population's features or a subset of it.

The population of the study comprises all the staff members employed at Albert Ilemobade Library, the Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), totalling 60 staff members. This includes librarians, library assistants, administrative personnel, and technical staff. The diversity of this population, in terms of roles and responsibilities, plays a crucial role in the functioning and development of the library. The sample size for this study was determined using John Curry's Rule of Thumb for determining sample sizes in descriptive studies. According to Curry's rule when dealing with a population of fewer than 100, selecting 100% of the population is recommended (Gay et. al., 2009). Therefore, all 60 staff members of the library were included in the sample. This approach ensures that the study is both practical and statistically significant, allowing for comprehensive insights into the research objectives. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency tables and percentages.

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Results

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaires

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	60	100
Returned valid	56	93.3%
Invalid	4	6.7%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 above shows the distribution of questionnaires in a study where 60 were initially distributed. A high response rate of 93.3% was achieved, with 56 questionnaires returned and deemed usable for analysis. Only 4 questionnaires were invalid, suggesting a clear and understandable survey.

Table 2: Demographic Features of the Respondents

Feature	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	37	66.07%
	Female	19	33.93%
	Total	56	100.00%
Educational Qualification	ND	9	16.07%
	HND/Bsc	30	53.57%
	Msc	17	30.36%
	Total	56	100.00%
Experience	1-2 years	2	3.57%
	3-5 years	19	33.93%
	5 years and above	35	62.50%
	Total	56	100.00%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above presents demographic information, educational qualifications, and experience levels of a sample group. In terms of gender distribution, the majority of the sample consists of males, accounting for 66.07%, while females represent 33.93% of the total. Regarding educational qualifications, the highest proportion belongs to individuals with an HND/BSc degree, comprising 53.57% of the sample, followed by those with an MSc degree at 30.36%. Notably, 16.07% of respondents hold an ND qualification. In terms of experience, a significant portion of the sample (62.50%) has five or more years of experience, while those with 3-5 years represent 33.93%, and those with 1-2 years make up a smaller proportion at 3.57%.

Table 3: Benefits of Library Consortia and Collaborative Resource Sharing

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Items	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing enhance access to a wider range of resources and materials	20 (35.71%)	15 (26.79%)	8 (14.29%)	7 (12.50%)	6 (10.71%)

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Items	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	U Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	SD Freq (%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing promote cost-effectiveness by reducing duplication of resources and expenses	18 (32.14%)	17 (30.36%)	8 (14.29%)	7 (12.50%)	6 (10.71%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing foster knowledge exchange and sharing among participating libraries	22 (39.29%)	12 (21.43%)	6 (10.71%)	8 (14.29%)	8 (14.29%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing enhance the quality and diversity of library services offered to users	19 (33.93%)	16 (28.57%)	7 (12.50%)	8 (14.29%)	6 (10.71%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing facilitate interlibrary loan services, enabling access to materials not available within one's library	21 (37.50%)	14 (25.00%)	8 (14.29%)	6 (10.71%)	7 (12.50%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 summarizes respondents' perceptions of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing, showing generally positive views. A majority of respondents strongly agreed (35.71%) or agreed (26.79%) that these initiatives enhance access to resources, with a smaller group undecided (14.29%), disagreed (12.50%), or strongly disagreed (10.71%). Many respondents strongly agreed (32.14%) or agreed (30.36%) that collaboration promotes cost-effectiveness by reducing duplication and expenses, while others were undecided (14.29%) or disagreed (12.50% or 10.71%). Most respondents strongly agreed (39.29%) or agreed (21.43%) that these initiatives foster knowledge exchange, although some were undecided (10.71%) or disagreed (14.29%). A significant number strongly agreed (33.93%) or agreed (28.57%) that collaboration enhances service quality and diversity, with a portion undecided (12.50%) or disagreeing (14.29% or 10.71%). Finally, most respondents strongly agreed (37.50%) or agreed (25.00%) that these initiatives facilitate interlibrary loan services, despite some being undecided (14.29%) or disagreeing (10.71% or 12.50%).

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Table 4: Impact of Library Consortia and Collaborative Resource Sharing on Library Services and Resources

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Items	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have improved the availability and accessibility of resources for library users in academic libraries	22 (39.29%)	17 (30.36%)	6 (10.71%)	6 (10.71%)	5 (8.93%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have enabled academic libraries to expand their collection and provide a broader range of materials to users	20 (35.71%)	18 (32.14%)	7 (12.50%)	5 (8.93%)	6 (10.71%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have enhanced the ability of academic libraries to support the research and scholarly activities of their users	21 (37.50%)	16 (28.57%)	8 (14.29%)	5 (8.93%)	6 (10.71%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have improved the efficiency and timeliness of interlibrary loan services for academic library users	23 (41.07%)	15 (26.79%)	7 (12.50%)	5 (8.93%)	6 (10.71%)
Library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have fostered collaboration and networking opportunities among academic libraries in Ondo State	20 (35.71%)	19 (33.93%)	6 (10.71%)	5 (8.93%)	6 (10.71%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 presents respondents' perceptions of the impact of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing on library services and resources, with frequencies and percentages for each response category. Respondents generally agree on the positive effects of such collaborations. A significant proportion, 39.29% (22 respondents), strongly agree that these initiatives have improved resource availability and accessibility in academic libraries. Similarly, 35.71% (20 respondents) strongly agree that library consortia and collaborative resource sharing have enabled academic libraries to expand their collections, offering a broader range of materials. Additionally, 37.50% (21 respondents) strongly agree that these collaborations enhance the support for research and scholarly activities. Moreover,

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41.07% (23 respondents) strongly agree that these initiatives have improved the efficiency and timeliness of interlibrary loan services. Collaboration and networking opportunities among academic libraries in Ondo State are also recognized, with 35.71% (20 respondents) strongly agreeing and 33.93% (19 respondents) agreeing. Overall, the data indicates a widespread perception of the positive impacts of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing on academic library services and resources, with varying degrees of agreement across different aspects of these collaborations.

Table 5: Challenges Faced by Academic Libraries in Participating in Library Consortia and Collaborative Resource Sharing

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Items	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Insufficient funding and financial resources hinder the active participation of academic libraries in library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing	17 (30.36%)	15 (26.79%)	9 (16.07%)	8 (14.29%)	7 (12.50%)
Lack of institutional support and commitment affects the involvement of academic libraries in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing	18 (32.14%)	16 (28.57%)	8 (14.29%)	7 (12.50%)	7 (12.50%)
Technical challenges, such as interoperability issues and incompatible systems, pose obstacles to effective participation in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing	16 (28.57%)	14 (25.00%)	9 (16.07%)	8 (14.29%)	9 (16.07%)
Limited awareness and understanding of the benefits and processes of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing discourage academic libraries from engaging in such initiatives	19 (33.93%)	17 (30.36%)	7 (12.50%)	6 (10.71%)	7 (12.50%)
Lack of staff expertise and training in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing hampers effective participation and utilization of shared resources	18 (32.14%)	16 (28.57%)	8 (14.29%)	7 (12.50%)	7 (12.50%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

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The table outlines the challenges faced by academic libraries in participating in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing. Insufficient funding is a significant barrier, with 30.36% (17 respondents) strongly agreed. Lack of institutional support is also a challenge, with 32.14% (18 respondents) strongly agreed and 28.57% (16 respondents) agreed. Technical challenges, such as interoperability issues, and limited awareness of the benefits are noted as obstacles, with 28.57% (16 respondents) and 33.93% (19 respondents) strongly agreeing, respectively. Additionally, the lack of staff expertise and training is a hindrance, with 32.14% (18 respondents) strongly agreeing. Overall, the data highlights financial constraints, institutional support, technical issues, awareness gaps, and staff expertise limitations as key challenges to active participation in library consortia and collaborative resource sharing.

Table 6: Strategies for Improving Library Consortia and Collaborative Resource Sharing

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Item	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Establishing a dedicated funding mechanism for supporting library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives would enhance participation and sustainability.	20 (35.71%)	18 (32.14%)	6 (10.71%)	5 (8.93%)	7 (12.50%)
Providing training and professional development opportunities for library staff on library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing practices would improve their engagement and competence.	21 (37.50%)	16 (28.57%)	7 (12.50%)	6 (10.71%)	6 (10.71%)
Enhancing awareness and communication about the benefits and opportunities of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing among academic library administrators and staff would encourage active participation.	19 (33.93%)	17 (30.36%)	8 (14.29%)	6 (10.71%)	6 (10.71%)
Developing and implementing interoperable systems and standardized protocols for sharing resources would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of library consortia.	22 (39.29%)	15 (26.79%)	7 (12.50%)	6 (10.71%)	6 (10.71%)
Establishing formal partnerships and collaboration agreements between academic libraries within Ondo State would facilitate resource sharing and collaborative initiatives.	20 (35.71%)	18 (32.14%)	6 (10.71%)	5 (8.93%)	7 (12.50%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 6 outlines strategies to improve library consortia and collaborative resource sharing, with strong support shown for various initiatives. Establishing a dedicated funding mechanism is supported by 35.71% (20 respondents) strongly agreeing and

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32.14% (18 respondents) agreeing. Providing training and professional development for library staff has 37.50% (21 respondents) strongly agreeing. Enhancing awareness and communication about the benefits of these collaborations is prioritized by 33.93% (19 respondents) strongly agreeing. Developing interoperable systems and standardized protocols is considered essential by 39.29% (22 respondents) strongly agreeing. Overall, the data highlights the need for funding, training, awareness, interoperable systems, and formal partnerships to improve library consortia and collaborative resource sharing.

Discussion of Findings

The study on the impact of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing provides valuable insights into the dynamics and challenges faced by academic libraries in Ondo State. Out of 60 distributed questionnaires, 56 were returned, yielding a high recovery rate of 93.3%, which is considered sufficiently large for statistical reliability and generalization of findings.

The demographic analysis of the respondents reveals a gender imbalance, with 66.07% males and 33.93% females. Educational qualifications are predominantly HND/BSc holders at 53.57%, followed by MSc degree holders at 30.36%. In terms of experience, 62.50% of respondents have five or more years of experience, while 33.93% have 3-5 years, and 3.57% have 1-2 years of experience.

Regarding the perceived benefits of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing, respondents generally expressed positive attitudes. A significant proportion agreed that such collaborations enhance access to resources (62.50% strongly agree or agree), promote cost-effectiveness (62.50% strongly agree or agree), and foster knowledge exchange (60.72% strongly agree or agree). However, there were varying levels of agreement concerning the enhancement of service quality and diversity (62.50% strongly agree or agree) and the facilitation of interlibrary loan services (62.50% strongly agree or agree), with some respondents expressing disagreement or uncertainty.

Similarly, respondents acknowledged several challenges hindering active participation in library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives. Insufficient funding and financial resources were identified as significant barriers, with 56.43% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. Other challenges include lack of institutional support and commitment (60.71% strongly agree or agree), technical issues (53.57% strongly agree or agree), limited awareness and understanding (64.29% strongly agree or agree), and lack of staff expertise and training (60.71% strongly agree or agree).

To address these challenges and improve participation in collaborative initiatives, various strategies were proposed. These include establishing a dedicated funding mechanism (67.86% strongly agree or agree), providing training and professional development opportunities (66.07% strongly agree or agree), enhancing awareness and communication (64.29% strongly agree or agree), developing interoperable systems and standardized protocols (65.78% strongly agree or agree), and formalizing partnerships and collaboration agreements (67.86% strongly agree or agree).

Conclusively, the findings underscore the importance of addressing challenges and implementing strategies to enhance the efficacy of library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives in academic libraries. By doing so, libraries can better leverage collective resources and

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expertise to improve access, efficiency, and service quality for their users.

Conclusion

The study conducted on the impact of library consortia and collaborative resource sharing provides valuable insights into the dynamics and challenges faced by academic libraries, particularly the Albert Ilemobade Library at the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA). Through a comprehensive analysis of the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with these collaborative initiatives, this research underscores the critical role of library consortia and resource sharing in enhancing access to scholarly resources, promoting cost-effectiveness, and fostering knowledge exchange within the academic community.

The findings reveal a generally positive attitude towards library consortia and collaborative resource sharing among respondents, with significant acknowledgement of the benefits, including improved access to resources, cost-effectiveness, and knowledge exchange. However, challenges such as insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, technical issues, and limited awareness persist, hindering active participation and effectiveness in collaborative initiatives.

In response to these challenges, various strategies have been proposed, including establishing dedicated funding mechanisms, providing training and professional development opportunities, enhancing awareness and communication, developing interoperable systems, and formalizing partnerships and collaboration agreements. Implementation of these strategies can significantly enhance the efficacy of library consortia and collaborative resource-sharing initiatives, thereby improving access, efficiency, and service quality for users.

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