

Research article

# CO-ORDINATION AS A MANAGEMENT VARIABLE THAT ENHANCES AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION SOURCES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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## Abstract

Co-ordination enhances other management variables to be effective in the availability of information sources in libraries. This is done through rules/procedures and direct supervision in the library. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of co-ordination on the availability of information sources in university libraries. This study adopted ex-post-facto design and was carried out in 4 Federal University libraries in the South-South Nigeria. Forty-six (46) practicing librarians were selected through purposive sampling. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using simple percentages. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-square while contingency correlation co-efficient was used to test the strength of the influence. All the respondents 46(100.00%) attested to the statement that adequate co-ordination of the staff enhances availability of information sources. The calculated value of 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance indicated that coordination has significant influence on the availability of information sources in the university libraries. The study recommends that members of staff in the library should be co-ordinated to do shelving and continuous shelf-reading to ensure proper placement of information resources on the library shelves. **Copyright © [www.acascipub.com](http://www.acascipub.com), all rights reserved.**

**Keywords:** coordination, availability, information sources, management functions.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Co-ordination is the management function in which the manager ensures the success of managing an organization such as the library and the measurement of the achievement. Moreover, it is the process of

achieving unity of action among interdependent activities. It is required whenever two or more interdependent individuals, groups or departments work together to achieve a common goal in the library. Co-ordination may be done through rules or procedures. The details are specified ahead of time by the head Librarian together with the management staff of the library. The course of action each staff should take if a particular situation should arise is stated. Co-ordination may also be done through direct supervision using hierarchy in the library. The divisional head with the help of unit supervisors co-ordinates the work of the junior staff in order to achieve the set down objectives. Co-ordination enhances the management variables of planning, organizing, staffing and leading [supervision] to be effectively implemented. This function also allows the unit supervisors to issue instructions to staff and monitors the result in order to give feedback to the overall head librarian.

Co-ordination helps the management in the library to;

- a. Gather information that measures the present performance within the library
- b. Compare present performance with previous performance in terms of standards
- c. Decide the way forward in handling users' current challenges (Certo, 1994).

Therefore, co-ordination is a continuing process in which the management harmonizes all the resources into a coherent whole directed towards the achievement of the library organizational goals or objectives in order to enhance availability and accessibility of information resources. Hence, it is a stimulant to availability and accessibility of information resources in the library. The role of co-ordination as a vital tool in the achievement of any organizational goals cannot be overemphasized in any organizational setting, be it private or public. Co-ordination, which is usually carried out by a superior (head of division or unit) is a form of control during which a superior assigns task to the subordinates, monitors and checks to determine adherence to ; and to ascertain how progress is made towards the attainment of set objectives and goals. It helps in identifying where the need arises to ensure that there are no deviations (Nkang & Usen, 2005). In the library, it is the place of the supervisor to co-ordinate, oversee and direct activities of the staff (subordinates) under him/her by giving instructions on set tasks bordering on information resources availability and accessibility. Without adequate co-ordination of the available information resources there will be no accessibility, hence information service delivery will be highly hampered.

## **ASSUMPTION**

The study assumes that the management variable of co-ordination is so indispensable that nothing tangible can be achieved without it, especially in terms of making information resources available and accessible to users.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To assess the influence of co-ordination on the availability of information sources in Nigerian university libraries.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

Co-ordination has no significant influence on the availability of information sources in University libraries.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Co-ordination is the process of achieving unity of action among interdependent activities. It is required when two or more interdependent individuals, groups or departments work together to achieve common goal as in the case of the library. It provides the means of ensuring that all the sub-units, divisions, faculties and departmental libraries work compatibly with one another. Co-ordinating activities are those which bind together all individual efforts and direct them towards a common objective of the library or any organization. Moreover, Stuart and Moran (1993) commented extensively on the importance of coordination as a means of enhancing availability of information sources since the entire staff of the library will be working hand in hand with the management.

According to Usoro (2005), co-ordination enhances the management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading and funding to achieve unity of action among interdependent activities. Without coordinating these management variables, the overall objectives of the library will not be achieved in terms of availability and accessibility of information resources. For instance, staff must be well co-ordinate according to Nwachukwu (1990) to operate, direct and manage other resources towards the achievement of the desired objectives of the library.

Weihrich, Cannice & Koontz (2008) and Dressler (1998) opined that co-ordination might be done in a number of ways. It may be through;

- a. **The Hierarchy:** The hierarchy of authority entails the process of providing a well defined, understood in advance means of handling organizational problems or disagreement. With well defined co-ordinating process; authority, power and accountability system is made possible in the library or any organization.
- b. **Planning Technique:** Co-ordination may be done in libraries through policies, procedures and rules. This is because libraries have their routine, recurring activities, in which the details are specified ahead of time, in relationship with what course of action each subordinate should take if a particular situation arises. As a result of these agree-upon guidelines, with the help of co-ordination, library staff are more likely to perform in a manner that is consistent with overall goals/objectives which in turn enhances availability of information resources.
- c. **Staff position:** Co-ordination encourages knowledgeable specialist staff to provide advice and assistance to the overall head (the University Librarian or Manager) and the entire management staff of the organization.
- d. **Communication:** Co-ordination allows formal and informal communications to be streamlined for effective management towards goal attainments.
- e. **Committee:** Co-ordination helps in bringing committee members together thereby enhancing a total workforce. These total workforces motivate or stimulate staff to a greater productivity which in turn aids availability and accessibility of information resources.

Usoro (2008) & Usoro (2012) maintained that if library activities together with staff are not closely or well organized and co-ordinated, the huge sum of money invested in stocking the place will be a waste. Therefore, the head of acquisition unit must coordinate the activities of his/her unit together with the staff to ensure that the newly acquired information resources are checked, stamped, accessioned, assigned barcode at stipulated time. The information resources are afterwards sent to the processing unit; the head of the processing unit must also coordinate the activities of his/her unit together with the staff to ensure that the information resources are processed. The catalogue cards prepared are filed in the catalogue cabinet accordingly. Once the resources are sent to the circulation or other open units where they are supposed to be kept for retrieval and utilization, the supervisors of such units coordinates the activities of the units by ensuring that the information resources are shelved and the shelves are read to enhance availability and accessibility of the information resources in the library. Without adequate co-ordination of the library activities together with the staff therefore, the objectives of the library cannot be achieved in terms of availability and accessibility of information resources which will further enhance quality teaching and learning in the University.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts ex-post-facto design. The study was carried out in Federal University libraries located in the South-South Zone of Nigeria namely: University of Uyo, University of Calabar, University of Port Harcourt and University of Benin. The population comprised all academic librarians in the four university libraries under study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 46 practicing librarians to form the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire tagged Management Variable of Co-ordination and Information Source Availability (MVCISA). The questionnaire used a four point rating scale with responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree and asked respondents to tick the response that is applicable to the statement.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected from the questionnaire which was administered were analysed using simple percentages and the hypothesis formulated was tested using Chi-square statistical tool. Moreover, contingency correlation coefficient was used to test the strength of the influence. Data on management variable of co-ordination as it enhances the availability of information sources in the university libraries are presented on the table below:

**TABLE 1:** Academic Librarians Response to Coordination Item

s/no		SA(%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)
1	Adequate co-ordination of the planning function enhances availability of information sources	23 (50.00)	22 (47.83)	1 (2.17)	0 (0)
2	Adequate co-ordination of the organizing function enhances availability of information sources	22 (47.83)	22 (47.83)	2 (4.35)	0 (0)
3	Adequate co-ordination of the staff enhances availability of information sources	22 (47.83)	24 (52.17)	0 (0)	0 (0)
4	Information sources are available because of effective co-ordination between leadership and subordinates	14 (30.43)	25 (54.35)	3 (6.52)	4 (8.70)
5	Adequate co-ordination ensures efficient utilization of funds which enhances availability of information sources in different subjects	10 (21.74)	30 (65.22)	5 (10.87)	1 (2.17)

**N/B The number in bracket indicates the percentage**

The data on table (1) represents the opinions of the respondents to the management variable of co-ordination. From the table, it could be seen that all the respondents claimed that co-ordination is essential to achieve availability of information sources in the university libraries. This is in line with Dressler's (1998) discussion, which he reported that coordination is the process of achieving unity of action among interdependent activities.

Closer look at the table show that adequate co-ordination of the planning function enhances availability of information sources. This is confirmed by the responses to this statement on which 45 (97.83%) agreed consisting of strongly agreed and agreed. While only 1 (2.17%) disagreed consisting of disagreed and strongly disagreed. On the statement that "adequate co-ordination of the organizing function enhances availability of information sources" only 2 (4.35%) of the respondents disagreed and 44 (95.65%) agreed. The number of respondents that agreed constitutes the majority, meaning that most of them were aware of the co-ordination of the organizing function as a means of enhancing availability of information sources in the library. All the respondents 46 (100.00%) attested to the statement that "adequate co-ordination of the staff enhances availability of information sources". This is so because staff are the human resources who operate, direct and manage other resources towards the achievement of the desired objectives of the library (Nwachukwu, 1990).

On the statement that "information sources are available because of effective co-ordination between leadership and subordinates" 39 (84.78%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 7(15.22%) did not. This implies that there are some libraries which librarians did not co-ordinate their subordinates effectively, which consequently affected the availability of information sources in such libraries. 6(13.04%) disagreed with the statement "adequate co-ordination ensures efficient utilization of funds which enhances availability of information sources in different subjects" while 40(86.96%) agreed with it. It may be stated that adequate co-ordination enhances availability of information sources since the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement; there were only few respondents who disagreed. This confirms the fact that without adequate co-ordination of the entire management variables especially funding for the procurement of information sources, information sources will not be available in the university libraries. This finding is supported by Dressler (1998) who opined that co-ordination is the process of achieving unity of action among interdependent activities.

The data was further analyzed to ascertain the major findings with regard to the hypothesis stated earlier.

**H<sub>0</sub>: Co-ordination has no significant influence on the availability information sources in university libraries**

**Table II:** Influence of Coordination on the Availability of Information Sources in the University libraries

N	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>cal</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>cri</sub>	Df	Decision at P<0.05	C
46	173.82	9.49	4	H <sub>0</sub> rejected	0.99

From the result, it can be observed that the calculated chi-square value of 173.82 is greater than the table or critical value of 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance so, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be deduced that coordination has significant influence on the availability of information sources in the university libraries. To

test the strength of the influence, the contingency correlation coefficient was calculated to be 0.99. This contingency correlation coefficient (C) is very close to one, which indicates that the influence is strong. The result supports Stuart and Moran (1993) who commented extensively on the importance of coordination as a means of enhancing availability of information sources since the entire staff of the library will be working hand in hand with the management.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The quest for the achievement of the goals/objectives of academic libraries in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the effective co-ordination of the available resources thereby making them accessible to the users. Without adequate co-ordination therefore, the objectives of the library cannot be achieved in terms of availability and accessibility of information sources which in turn will improve the quality of teaching and learning in the university.

Following the findings made during the study, it has been recommended that the head of different divisions and supervisors of different units of the library should be:

1. Co-ordinating the different activities of each unit and the staff supervised to ensure that all assigned duties are done at the stipulated time thereby enhancing the achievement of the overall objectives/goals of the library. This will enhance availability and accessibility of information resources.
2. Staff should be co-ordinated to shelve, re-shelve and shelf-read at least thrice daily to ensure proper placement of information resources on the shelves.
3. All the activities entailed for each management variable should be well co-ordinated to ensure availability and accessibility of information resources.

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