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STATUS OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN IN THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This paper examines the status of University Librarians in the administrative structure of academic libraries, considering their tenure, the influence they wield in University management, and their academic status within the University system. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Thirty universities were surveyed. Questionnaire and interview were used as data collection tools to gather information from University librarians of Private, State and Federal universities in Nigeria. The qualitative data was analysed thematically after transcription, while quantitative data was analysed using percentages and mean. It was found that over the years, the status of University Librarians seems to diminish as their position is gradually eroded in the University system. The librarians are not treated fairly like other academics who are full time teachers. The service-oriented bias of professional librarians in academic libraries causes them to be relegated, more often than not, to the background in the university. Recommendations are made as to restructuring the university libraries to making the tenure and job specifications more inclusive of teaching, research and productivity oriented. University librarians should have more training in developing management skills and ideally, should be properly positioned within the governance structure of the university system.

Keywords: University Librarians, University Libraries, Governance, University Administration, Nigeria

Introduction

Over the years, it has been observed that internal governance of Nigerian University libraries revolves around the University Librarian who is the principal officer responsible for the day-to-day running of the library, and for formulation of library policies. Library Committees exist in Nigerian universities with the Vice-Chancellor or his nominee, usually the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as Chairman (Agboola, 2000:282). Lots of responsibility falls on the University Librarian. Being the library think-tank in one area, coordinating administrative activities throughout the library is another. The funding of University libraries is also an area where university libraries put responsibility on their University Librarians. There is a 10% of University Recurrent Expenditure earmarked as library development fund (LDF) deductible directly from the recurring allocations of Federal Universities and remitted separately to the federal universities for the sole purpose of library maintenance. This became possible after a prolonged struggle of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). University librarians are signatories to this account while the National Universities Commission (NUC) reserves right to withhold subsequent library development fund if the previously released funds are not accounted for by universities (Ola, 2011). The questions are, are the University Librarians really given the

powers? As higher level managers are they accorded the appropriate status due to Principal Officers?

As at 1948 when the first Nigerian University was established (the University College Ibadan), there were no indigenous librarians but from 1962 when the Institute of Librarianship at the University of Ibadan was set up, local training of librarians commenced and generated manpower for Nigerian libraries. At the core of such activities was the commitment of John Harris to elevating the status of libraries and librarians. Ade-Ajayi (1988) remembered that

“it was central to his whole career that a university library must be not just a book store or book club incidental to the academic development of the university but the very heart of that development. And to achieve this, each university librarian must be fully integrated into that development, learned in a branch of knowledge, and participating fully alongside academic staff in the faculty boards and senate” (1988; p. v).

No better evidence of success in advancing the status of librarians could be given than the appointment of Harris, in 1964, to be Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) of the university. Such a post had been perceived as the exclusive preserve of the professorial members of the university. It was through the efforts of John Harris that university librarians in Nigeria become recognized as academic staff on an equal footing with teaching staff (Tamuno and Toye, 1988).

University Librarian Job Requirements

University Librarians are the most senior staff in the University library environment. They are academic staff who engage in library management, teaching and learning activities. On a general level, the University Librarian reports to the Vice-Chancellor, or Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Programmes. The University Librarian is a member of the University Management team (often referred to as Principal Officers of the University, in Nigeria). The advert for University Librarian for Lincoln University, New Zealand (2016) refers to the role of the University Librarian as having “six complementary parts thus: Provide professional leadership in current national and international services that support the learning, teaching and research activities of the University; Provide guidance and direction as the University Librarian in the current international trends that underpin a modern research library in the Higher Education/tertiary sector; Ability to lead a professional community of practice in support of learning, teaching and research and library and information science across the University; Contribute to the Senior Leadership as the University Librarian through the Executive Leadership Committees; and Management of Library, Teaching and Learning departments, financial, HR (Human Resources), professional development and planning processes”. These abilities and qualities are supported by the librarianship profession as necessary requirements.

Similarly, Associate [Deputy] University Librarians have to possess similar qualities as evidenced in the advert for Associate University Librarian in Pittsburgh University, which states that: “The University Library System at the University of Pittsburgh seeks an imaginative, innovative, flexible, forward-looking, and collaborative individual to serve as the Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning. The incumbent provides strategic direction, leadership, and coordination in developing, assessing and sustaining the library's services and spaces to support and partner in teaching, research and scholarship activities of the University's faculty, students, and staff.” (University of Pittsburgh University Library System, 2018)

The advert for University Librarian for one of the private universities in Nigeria stipulated quite elaborately the requirements and responsibilities for the candidate as follows:

“The Librarian must be capable of articulating a strategic vision for the role of the university library system in supporting the mission and objectives of the institution, and should serve as advocate for the Libraries within the university and larger community.

The Librarian is the chief administrator for the University Libraries, and is responsible for the successful administration of the Libraries in accordance with authorized policies and procedures of the University”.

As stated in the advert, the responsibilities of the University Librarian include the following:

- i. Facilitates the continuing transformation of the University Libraries into a knowledge common that integrates diverse resources, seeks new opportunities, engages with the community, collaborates with university units, and sustains a vibrant research and learning community.
- ii. Creates an environment that facilitates research and scholarly activity with an understanding of innovative and traditional methods of information dissemination.
- iii. Establishes a shared vision that promotes the University's and the University Libraries' mission.
- iv. Implements a clear and concise strategic plan to advance that vision.
- v. Supports a culture of collegial governance.
- vi. Fosters an organizational and educational climate that promotes and celebrates diversity.
- vii. Communicates internally and externally regarding the University Libraries.
- viii. Develops strong relationships with Deans of other units, the Provost, Vice Chancellor and other University administrators.
- ix. Delegates authority to others for specific administrative tasks.
- x. Recruits, retains, and leads high-quality staff.
- xi. Creates an environment which supports professional advancement.
- xii. Acts as an advocate for the libraries and its staff.
- xiii. Fosters professionalism, diversity and a positive work/learning environment in the University Libraries,
- xiv. Enforces policies and regulations adopted by the University Council, the offices of the Vice Chancellor and University Provost, the Faculty Senate.
- xv. Cultivates external relations and fundraising opportunities with public and private sectors in support of the University Library's programs.
- xvi. Represents and promotes the University Libraries formally and informally to the University community and the world.
- xvii. Participates actively in local, state, national, and international library organizations.
- xviii. Develops and maintains good relationships with students, faculty, staff and community.
- xix. Promotes and advocates for library programs that address the needs of students, staff, faculty, and the community.
- xx. Works with library and department heads, as well as external sources, to identify evaluate and implement programs that improve services and facilities enhance the quality of resources and increase operational efficiency within the libraries.
- xxi. Functions as fiscal officer for the library system and provides clear communication about its budget. (University Librarian, 2017).

The following statements also capture part of the advert in 2016 for University Librarian for the University of Ibadan, Nigeria:

“The candidate for the University Librarian position must possess good honours degree(s) in any discipline and a Masters degree in Library Information Studies from recognized

universities. The possession of a Ph.D degree in similar areas will be an added advantage. In addition to the academic/professional qualifications, the candidate must possess evidence of membership of library professional bodies and registration with the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), which is the regulatory agency for the practice of librarianship in Nigeria. Of equal importance is that the candidate must possess sufficient evidence of continual scholarship and contribution to knowledge through publications in reputable peer reviewed outlets both within and outside the country. Above all, the candidate must possess good managerial skills and competences including a clear understanding of the nature and dynamics of the intricacies in deploying information technologies as tools for the management of information collections in line with global best practices in contemporary university libraries (University of Ibadan, 2016)."

While some adverts are very specific as afore quoted, some are rather vague in the specifications as pointed below:

The University Librarian is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day to day administration of the University Library and the co-ordination of the Library Services in the University. He is also responsible for the short, medium and long term planning, administration and expansion of collections and services of the Library and their maintenance at a level to meet the teaching, research and all programmes of the University.

The University Librarian in any case, is expected to establish effective working relationships with the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, members of the University's Executive Leadership Team, Deans, Directors and other persons connected with the academic community. This is a role that cannot be overlooked, though studies have shown that librarians in general have issues concerning their status in the academic community (Jacobs, 2013). Library profession is service-oriented, which makes it easy to class library professionals as administrative support staff forgetting their role in teaching, learning and research activities. This seems to have effect on the way University Librarians are perceived by others in the management team of the university, especially in Africa and, indeed, among academic staff of tertiary institutions. For promotion to university librarian (which is the equivalent of Professor), sixteen publications, with 10% percent of the publications appearing in foreign journals is the ideal (Balarabe, 2004).

In a discourse on the role of librarians in the knowledge economy, Wijetunge (2012) asserted that "many major universities including Universities of Illinois, Mississippi, Nebraska the Librarian Post is considered as that of a Professor and in most American universities Library faculty is headed by the Library Dean. Some American universities also grant emeritus status to university librarians". This status, in those climes tend to make the status of University librarian an enviable one at par with other academics in the University system. However, Wijetunge concluded that they "have a greater responsibility in becoming more assertive of their role in the university education and being alert to the changes in the global professional environment so as to adopt to change rapidly" (Wijetunge, 2012).

From the foregoing discussion, it is discoverable that placing librarians on academic status in universities is a universal phenomenon. It started in the United States in the 1940s and spread to Britain and Canada through the 1980s, after a struggle by librarians in those countries (Onohwakpor and Tiemo, 2006). This has created many unanticipated developments and new problems needing solutions. A body of literature emerged and is still growing as the ramifications of the status have continued to be investigated. The literature of the past reveals a different perspective on the issues of academic status, ranging from implementation, attitudes of teaching faculty, publications and higher degrees opportunities (gains), and

responsibilities and problems (pains) (Onohwakpor and Tiemo, 2006; Farooq, Ullah, Iqbal and Hussain, 2016).

The attitudes of other academics is of concern as librarians tend to be treated with apathy in the academia. In Nigerian universities, subject/course departments and lecturers are seen as the 'major stakeholders' in the University community while the roles of libraries and librarians as well as other non-teaching units/staff are considered as supportive. Because of this notion, the university management tends to pay more attention to and allocates more resources to these 'stakeholders' while libraries and other non-teaching units are relegated to the background (Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020). As Ifijeh & Yusuf (2020) pointed out, in spite of librarians "being accorded 'academic status', they have to prove and constantly remind their fellow colleagues and/or heads of institutions of their eligibility to be treated equally as other teaching faculty members. There are inequalities and discriminations in nomenclature, appointments into University Committees and other privileges. Libraries are relegated to the background; they only become relevant during accreditations by regulatory bodies." Sadly, this situation is seemingly transferred to the University Librarian as head of the library.

In the light of the above, senior management staff in organizations need skills and knowledge that will help them cope with rapid changes in the information and communication industry (Abban, 2018). These skills can only be fully utilized where the executive status is accorded and the necessary powers wielded. Namuleme (2015) conducted a study to find out the status of University librarians in Uganda, It was found that though the respondents of the study indicated that the status was well recognized and their perception of satisfaction with financial management issues involving the library had a mean greater than 4, observation gave a contrary view. There were indications that although librarians are signatories to the library accounts, they are constrained, in that their budget requests are not given priority; the funds released to them are not equivalent to the magnitude of the needs; and, in case of financial crisis in the university the library funds are easily diverted. Thus, university administrators were urged to ensure that these issues were addressed and more recognition given to the University Librarian because such affected their performance.

Statement of the Problem

The position of the University Librarian in the governance structure of the university in Nigeria is that of a principal officer like the Vice Chancellor (VC), Deputy Vice Chancellor(s) (DVCs), Registrar and University Bursar. However, unlike the Registrar and the University Bursar, the University Librarian is an academic position alongside the VC and DVC(s). In most Nigerian universities, the line-up of principal officers of the University is such that the VC comes first, followed by the DVC(s), then, the Registrar and the University Bursar while the University Librarian is at the base of the rung. The position of the University Librarian as an academic seems to be inconsequential and he is usually relegated as far as the university protocol is concerned.

In the governance structure, the University Librarian robes after the Registrar (who is also the Secretary to the University Council) in some universities, while he is listed as the lowest in most universities. The University Librarian's place among the principal officers of the university is not standardized in Nigeria. On fiscal matters, the University Librarian seems to be able to do as much as he is allowed to do by the VC and, at times, the University Bursar regardless of statutory provisions. This paper examines the position of the University Librarian in the governance structure of Nigerian universities with the aim of finding out how he is placed and recommends ways of standardizing his status, roles and placement.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the status of University Librarian in the governance structure of their institution. More specifically, the objectives were:

1. To find out how well placed the University Librarian is in the statutory bodies of the university.
2. To identify the place of the University Librarian in fiscal management of the library he manages.
3. To identify the placement of the University Librarian in the ceremonial procession of the university.
4. To find out how the university librarians perceive their placement in the ceremonial procession of the university.
5. To find out the tenure of the University Librarian in the university.
6. To determine the responsibilities of the University Librarian in the university.
7. To proffer solutions to the problem of status of the University Librarian in the governance structure.

Research Questions

More specifically, the following research questions were asked:

1. Is the University Librarian a member of statutory bodies in the university?
2. Does the University Library have a separate account?
3. Who are the signatories to the account?
4. What is the order of the ceremonial University procession?
5. What would be the preferred order of ceremonial procession?
6. What are the responsibilities of the University Librarian in the university?
7. What are suggestions for improvement of the status of University Librarian?

Methodology

The survey method of research was used for this study. A phenomenological approach was also given to the research. This is an approach of qualitative research that focuses on the communality of a live experience within a particular group. Basically, this approach is meant for the researcher to arrive at a description of the nature of a particular phenomenon by conducting interviews with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience (Cresswell, 2013). Questionnaire method was the major instrument used to gather information. Documents available were perused to collect information on the year of establishment of the library, size of their collection, and staff strength concerning academic and paraprofessional staff. This was to have a general knowledge of the libraries under the survey. The interviews were used to triangulate some of the findings. Universities were selected by snowballing (every sixth university from the NUC list for the Federal and State university libraries and every 10th for the Private university libraries, because of their number). Thirty (30) universities were thus selected. The respondents were University Librarians from the selected libraries. The questionnaire was sent online to the University Librarians using addresses provided in the Association of University Librarians (AULNU) Handbook (2017). Respondents were reminded by telephone calls to fill in the questionnaires intermittently. It took over 3 weeks to gather the data.

Data Collection

The questionnaires administered were retrieved from the Survey monkey app and the analyzed data assessed thematically drawing out inferences from the results. The interviews were conducted by telephone after consent to record the telephone conversation was sought by the researchers from the respondents. Assurances of their anonymity being maintained

was given. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically to triangulate the study.

Findings of the Study

Questionnaire

Nineteen of the 30 University Librarians (UL) responded, completing the 10-item SurveyMonkey questionnaire giving a 63.3% response rate. One University Librarian refused to participate for personal reasons. Only 8 (42%) of them indicated that they were willing to be interviewed if necessary after filling the questionnaire. Seven (37%) were UL of Federal universities, Four (21%) headed State university libraries and eight (42%) headed Private university libraries. Majority (51-60 years, 42%; and 61-70years, 42%) of the respondents were 51 years and above in age. 10.5% were between 41 and 50 years old and only 1 (5.3%) was between 31 and 40 years age bracket.

Membership of Statutory Bodies

Information gathered from the questionnaire pointed to the fact that in over half of the universities under study, the University Librarian is not a member of the University Council (12; 63.2%). Only 9 (47.4%) had their University Librarians as members or members in attendance. All of them however (100%), are members of Senate of their universities, and all have full academic status.

Library Accounts in the Universities

Eighteen (84.2%) of the respondents indicated that their university library did not have a dedicated account while 3 (15.8%) indicated that the library had. Of this number, these researchers could only ascertain that 3 (15.8%) were signatories to the library account, in addition to the Vice-Chancellor and the Bursar, and in one case the Vice-Chancellor and the Council Chairman of the university were signatories. Out of the 15 respondents that indicated not being signatories, to the question of who was signatory to the library account, the following responses emerged (Table 1):

Table 1. Signatories to Library Account

VC	Registrar	Bursar	DVC	Council Chairman	Remark	Freq.	%
		√				3	16.7
	√	√				1	5.6
√	√	√				2	11.1
√						1	5.6
√		√	√			1	5.6
√	√	√	√			1	5.6
√		√				2	11.1
√				√		1	5.6
					No Response	3	16.7
					Treasury Single Account	3	16.7

Six of the Universities have the Vice-Chancellor, Bursar and Registrar or Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as the case may be, as signatory leaving the University Librarian out totally. The issue is that, for an arm of the university which is the core, should the University Librarian not have a greater say in how the finances of the library are disbursed?

The order in which university processions are conducted also tells a story of how far the erosion of the status of University Librarian has progressed (Table 2).

Table 2. Placement in University Procession (Academic and Ceremonial)

S/ N	What Obtains	Respondent's Wish
1.	VC, DVC, DVC2, BURS, REG, UL #	VC, DVC, DVC2, BURS, REG, UL (<i>wishes same</i>)
2.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, UL, BURS	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
3.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
4.	VC, DVC, REG, BURS, UL, DVC2 [^]	VC, DVC, UL, REG, BURS, DVC2 *
5.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2/ UL, REG, BURS
6.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
7.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, UL, BURS	All should be ranked 1 st (??) **
8.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
9.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
10.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, The rest ranked 2 nd ***
11.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, UL, REG, BURS, DVC2 *
12.	VC, DVC, REG, BURS, UL, DVC2 [^]	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
13.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL (<i>wishes same</i>)
14.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
15.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
16.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, BURS, UL	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS
17.	VC, DVC, DVC2, REG, UL, BURS	VC, DVC, DVC2, UL, REG, BURS

Key: VC (Vice-Chancellor); DVC (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); DVC2 (Second Deputy Vice-Chancellor); REG (Registrar); BURS (Bursar); UL (University Librarian).

Seventeen of the respondents gave answer to how processions were ordered and their wish for the ordering of the procession. None of the 17 University librarians was placed in procession close to the Vice Chancellor. Rather, they tended to be placed last and after the Bursar. Only in three of the universities did the University Librarian come before the Bursar.

The Table also presents respondents expression of how they wished the procession should be. Two (11.8%) respondents wished that the arrangement existing now should remain. In both instances, they came last in the procession of principal officers. However, the others who wished for variations mainly wished that in the procession, they should come before the Registrar and the Bursar.

Table 3. Tenure of the University Librarian

Length of Tenure	Freq	%
5 years, one term	11	57.9
5 years	1	5.3
5 years, one term + 1 year extension	3	15.8
4 years, renewable once. Total 8 years	1	5.3
10 years	1	5.3
Acting Capacity	2	10.5
Total	19	100

Findings on the tenure of the University Librarians revealed that majority of them (57.9%) have a five-years-one term tenure (Table 3). From experience of the researchers however, it was discovered that some universities do not adhere to the NUC regulation that stipulates the tenure of university librarians to be five years one off term plus one additional year at the discretion of the University Council. The Universities that do not follow this are mostly private universities. Some respondents in this study also fell in that category as one each had 10 years, 4 years renewable once, and 5 years tenure only respectively.

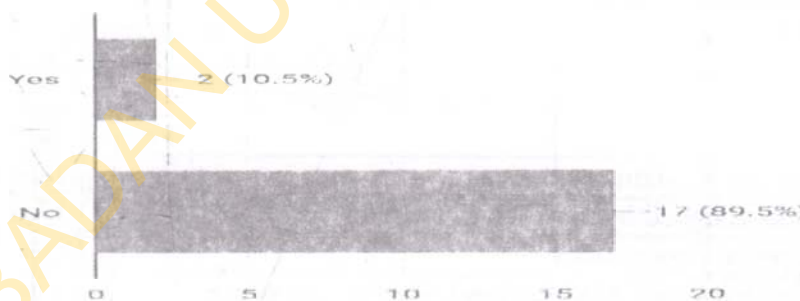
Responsibilities of the University Librarian

One of the responsibilities of the University Librarian is to work on the directives of the Vice Chancellor.

Figure 1. Representation of the Vice Chancellor

Do you represent the Vice Chancellor in the event of absence, in the University?

19 responses



In the event of the Vice Chancellor (VC) being away from the university, does the University Librarian represent the VC? Only 2 respondents (10.5%) affirmed this. Others (89.5%) had never taken such a responsibility (Fig.1).

Table 4: Committees University Librarians Belong

S/N	University Council	University Senate	Development Committee	Committee of Provosts & Deans	Housing Committee	Welfare Committee	Others
1.	√	√	√	√	x	x	√
2.	√	√	x	√	x	x	Xx
3.	√	√	√	x	x	√	√
4.	√	√	x	√	x	x	Xx
5.	x	√	√	x	x	x	√
6.	√	√	√	√	x	x	Xx
7.	√	√	√	x	x	x	√
8.	x	√	√	x	x	x	Xx
9.	√	√	√	√	x	x	√
10.	√	√	√	x	√	√	√
11.	x	√	√	x	x	√	Xx
12.	x	√	√	√	x	x	x
13.	√	√	√	√	x	x	x
14.	√	√	√	x	x	x	x
15.	√	√	x	x	x	x	x
16.	√	√	x	√	x	x	x
17.	x	√	x	x	x	x	√

Respondents were asked to indicate University Committees they functioned in (Table 4). Only 17 responded to this question. All seventeen of them were in the Senate Committee but with almost half (8; 47%) serving in the Committee of Provosts and Deans, and in the Welfare Committee, only 4 (23.5%). Only a few (5; 29.4%) were also not involved in the Development Committee of their university.

Other duties performed

Respondents also indicated their other duties in University governance as a whole by stating responsibilities in the University apart from functioning as University Librarian and head of library administration. Three of them indicated that they perform only statutory duties and as assigned by the Vice Chancellor while others named duties ranging from teaching and supervision of undergraduate students, to being Managing Editor of the University Journal (See Table 5 below).

Table 5. Other Responsibilities of University Librarians

SN	Response	Freq.	%
1.	None, apart from my statutory duties	3	17.6
2.	Other duties as assigned by the Vice Chancellor	3	17.6
3.	Chairman, Special Committees	1	5.9
4.	I am part of Convocation Ceremonies Committee and any other business that involves library and research matters	1	5.9
5.	Member, Senate Business Committee	1	5.9
6.	I teach and supervise undergraduate students	1	5.9
7.	Finance	1	5.9
8.	Member, Disciplinary Committee	1	5.9
9.	Member, TetFund and Development Committee	1	5.9
10.	Management team	1	5.9
11.	No comments	1	5.9

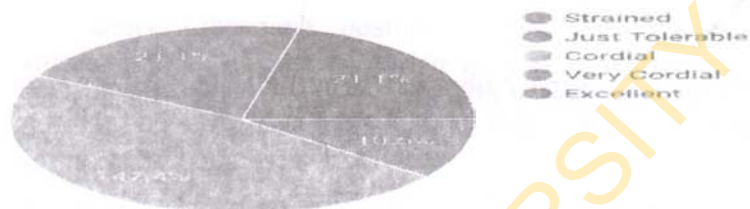
12.	University Committees	1	5.9
13.	Managing Editor of University Journal; Chairman of Publications Committee	1	5.9
14.	Any Advisory duty related to library information and ICT components	1	5.9
15.	Appraisals and Promotions	1	5.9
16.	Procurement and Tenders Board Meeting; Management meetings	1	5.9
17.	I participate at Principal Officers Meetings	1	5.9

In performing all their duties, the University librarians have to work with others in the Management team and their relationship with those others matters in University governance hence they were asked what their relationship was with others in the team (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Relationship with other Principal Officers

How would you describe your relationship with other Principal Officers of your University?

19 responses



All respondents made their stand known on this question. On the average, relationships were cordial with other principal officers. Only one respondent indicated that the relationship was 'just tolerable'.

General Comments on the Study

To get a rounded view on the status of university librarian in university governance, respondents were required to comment generally on the study. Five of the 19 respondents did not make any general comments on the subject of the study, but the rest did and some of the comments went thus:

Table 6. Comments on the Study

SN	Response	Freq.	%
1.	The study is good.	1	7.1
2.	At XYZ [changed to anonymize], all principal officers are jointly involved in the governance and policy making in the administration of the university under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor and Chancellor.	1	7.1
3.	The place of the University Librarian in the governance is not well specified especially in academic gatherings, among the principal officers, the University Librarian should come after the VC and DVC. The UL should be in all the statutory committees like Finance, Development etc. The library as an academic arm of the university	1	7.1

	should be given priority in budgeting and resource allocation. The UL should be given opportunity to act in the absence of the VC.		
4.	The University statutes do not clearly state the ranking of principal officers.	2	14.2
5.	The study is unique.	1	7.1
6.	It is worth it.	1	7.1
7.	I believe that the outcome of the study would go a long way in helping NLA and AULNU appreciate in reality the place of library and librarians in the governance of our higher institutions particularly our Universities.	1	7.1
8.	The subject of study is a vast area to study and compare with Federal and State universities.	1	7.1
9.	No comment	5	35.7

One of the University Librarians commented verbally that the study seemed biased and skewed to finding lapses in the position of the University Librarian which was okay. This was noted by the researchers, the implication being that some University librarians do not feel that their status is being eroded.

Interviews

The interviews conducted with eight university librarians who indicated that they would be willing to discuss further and who gave their phone contacts, revealed a bit more on governance in the university system. Unstructured interviews were conducted on telephone. Questions asked were directed at getting a bit more information on the perception of the University Librarian on their status in the governance structure of their university, and getting suggestions on solutions. Each interview lasted from 12 minutes to 29 minutes. Average mean time for the interviews was 17 minutes 27 seconds. The UL were given codes to represent them in the thematic analysis – FUL (Federal University Librarian), SUL (State University Librarian) and PUL (Private University Librarian).

Academic Placement

The information garnered indicated strongly that there seems to be a gradual erosion of the power of the University Librarian as s/he is the only principal officer that is supposedly subsumed under another principal officer - the Deputy Vice-Chancellor - because of the academic status of the University Librarian. One respondent stated:

"The office of UL is the only one under another principal officer, the Deputy Vice Chancellor. As Chairman of Library Committee, Deputy Vice-Chancellors sometimes become overzealous and try to exercise powers they don't have over us. They seem to misinterpret their role as Chairman of the Library Committee. This situation is worrisome considering that Provosts of Colleges in the university, who are not even principal officers, enjoy some levels of autonomy that we as UL don't have" (FUL2).

Finance

Evidentially, University Librarians curry the goodwill of University Bursars in some cases to get the much needed funds to run library affairs. Connivance between the Vice-Chancellor and the Bursar may leave the library in a very precarious financial situation. Some of the findings on financial management are:

"The pyramidal structure in the library gives the impression or notion that the University Librarian controls or presides over an empire" (FUL3; SUL2).

"Almost all university staff - academic and non-academic - believe that the University Librarian is the all-in-all in the library. This structure conveys a wrong notion" (SUL1).

"There is also the presumption that the library has a lot of funds at its disposal without concomitant responsibilities that the library carries" (FUL3, FUL4).

This presumption makes other university functionaries envious of the University Librarian claiming that s/he controls a BIG budget. This makes the University Librarian to face some challenges.

"We face very unsympathetic postures from university management and other organs when there are proposals emanating from the library for increased funding to improve library services" (FUL1, SUL2, PUL1).

This posture is without objective considerations as to whether or not there are justifications for such proposals because of entrenched and prejudiced positions already taken by these functionaries. The prejudices are such that,

"It seems the only time, in most cases, when faculty colleagues give proper recognition to the place of the library in the university is when their programmes are up for accreditation. They become very friendly during this period because they want the library component that helps them with accreditation" (FUL1).

Ceremonials:

The ceremonial protocol, academic procession and management placement show that the University Librarian's position is gradually being relegated. In some university committees, the University Librarian is "just in attendance". Three of the UL interviewed alluded to this fact (FUL3, SUL 2; PUL2). Being just in attendance and not having much of a voice, seems perhaps to be reflected in the placement ceremonially when the university procession is conducted.

Solutions:

Two respondents proffered solutions to the status issue of University Librarians:

"It is now becoming pertinent that the upper flank of the library academic structure should be opened-up such that the academic career progression of librarians can take them to the highest echelon in the academic cadre, which is the professorship level" (SUL1).

"In any university, it would be best if the posts of academic librarians are arranged such that librarians aspire to become full professors and not just to the professional grade of Deputy University Librarians and just one University Librarian. It should be possible for academic librarians to attain the position of Professor. Then, the University Librarian position can be democratized and rotated among the Professors in the library" (FUL3).

Their contention is that this will enhance the academic status of librarians generally; make the administration of the library more dynamic, elastic and flexible; and give more recognition to the University Librarian among faculty colleagues and within the governance structure of the university.

Discussion of Findings

The position of the University Librarian within the governance structure of universities in Nigeria is enviable. From the findings, it was observed that the University Librarian is, in fact, a member of all statutory committees in the university. This reinforces the status of the University Librarian as a principal officer. Aside this, the Vice-Chancellor assigns certain important duties to the University Librarian from time to time as s/he deems fit.

These responsibilities make the position of University Librarian a very significant one. However, it is one thing to be accorded this recognition; it is another for the recognition to be given the necessary backing by the instrumentality of the statutes. Otherwise such recognition

would be left at the behest or whims and caprices of the Vice-Chancellor. In other words, a Vice-Chancellor that is not in concord with a University Librarian may decide to deny some of the rights and refuse to accord the necessary recognition that the office requires.

Even though some of the university committees are mere creations of administrative convenience and not of statues, vital decisions that affect university governance are taken especially concerning the academic agenda of the university. From responses to the questionnaire on committees in the University to which the University Librarian belongs to, Table 4 shows that they are involved in several important committees at the university level. It is however instructive that less than 50% of the respondents belong to the Committee of Provosts and Deans; and nominally, only one (1; 5.9%) and four (4; 23.5%) of the respondents are members of Housing and Welfare Committees respectively. Considering the importance of these committees, it is expected that the University Librarians would belong to the committees where very serious decisions that affect the management of the university are usually taken. Decisions reached in these committees are often taken to the University Senate and/or to the Council for consideration and final ratification. Also, there seems to be no consensus among the University Librarians on the position they wish to occupy within the university governance structure as evident in Table 2. The studies of Onohwakpor and Tiemo (2006) and Farooq, Ullah, Iqbal and Hussain (2016) are corroborated. There are challenges that need to be overcome to get the University Librarians to where they ought to be in the university structure.

Regarding the relationship with other principal officers of the university, the University Librarian seems to be well-positioned. Responses provided to the question as to how they would describe their relationships with other principal officers, indicated that the relationships are excellent (47.4%); very cordial (21.1%); cordial (21.1%). Only 10.5% have their relationships with other principal officers 'just tolerable' while none has 'strained' relationship. This is quite notable because it shows that the University Librarians function in convivial and friendly environment. The finding negates that of James (2013) which found that librarians generally have problems with other faculties in the university.

In a converse situation though, the relationship of the University Librarian with members of Faculty generally was found to be somewhat limited especially to periods when accreditation of programmes was on-going. Only during such periods were the Faculty members extra friendly as indicated in the interviews, because of the gains for their programme that the library would provide. This probably is one of the issues James (2013) was alluding to, which is not too good a development because the University Librarian and indeed all librarians ought to be relevant as a matter of course and not just periodically. During interview, two University Librarians alluded to the fact that "the pyramidal structure in the library gives the impression or notion that the University Librarian controls or presides over an empire". Almost all university staff (academic and non-academic) believe that the University Librarian is the all-in-all in the library, yet this structure conveys a "wrong notion". The University Librarian is not even a signatory to the library account! What an empire to govern! The reality is that the powers do not exist. The study of Namuleme (2015) on the situation in Uganda is corroborated in this study. There is also indication that the university management may misuse some of the library privileges as indicated by some university librarians in this study, referring to the Library Committee and the role of the Chairman of the Committee. From this we can garner that the University Library is categorized somewhat with the University Registry and Bursary thus eroding the academic status of the library. This in itself is a challenge in the governance structure of universities. University Librarians were found not to be signatories to the library account. This finding is not in tandem with Ola (2011) declaration that the University Librarian should be one of the signatories to the library account and have a say in financial matters of the library. In actual

fact, the situation is more like that found by Namuleme (2015) where “library budget requests are not given priority; the funds released to them are not equivalent to the magnitude of the needs; and, in case of financial crisis in the university the library funds are easily diverted”. This study also found that one of the requirements advertised for University Librarian (University Librarian, 2017) that clearly states: “...functions as fiscal officer for the library system and provides clear communication about its budget” does not obtain from the results. University Librarians are relegated in fiscal matters and this diminishes their status.

The findings on the responsibilities of the University Librarian in representing the Vice Chancellor is corroborated in the literature (Tamuno and Toye, 1988). John Harris, University Librarian, did hold position as Acting Vice Chancellor in the University's early years. Notable among the other responsibilities carried out by the University Librarian, as revealed in this study is the comment by a respondent (FUL4) thus:

“The place of the University Librarian in the governance is not well specified especially in academic gatherings, among the Principal Officers, the University Librarian should come after the VC and DVC. The UL should be in all the statutory committees like Finance, Development etc. The library as an academic arm of the University should be given priority in budgeting and resource allocation. The UL should be given opportunity to act in the absence of the VC.”

The idea muted here is that the University Librarian should be allowed to take on responsibilities that are befitting of the academic position statutorily. If they are in charge of managing their library and also taking part in governance in the university, their powers need to be increased. Their placement, prioritizing fiscal duties and respect accorded should reflect in all ramifications. The position that University Librarian held in the days of John Harris can well be replicated in terms of responsibilities assigned and the status accorded.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that the position of the University Librarian has progressively been relegated and there is no indication that the process of relegation will be abated anytime soon. The academic status that John Harris and generations of academic librarians struggled to achieve for librarians is gradually being undermined and eroded by forces within the university system. The rights and privileges of university librarians are being called to question and are gradually losing grounds of authority under pressure. Library funding is considered as privileged gestures and not statutory obligations. This trend would continue unabated except the librarians stand up to redefine their roles within the university governance structure such that they start taking the front and not the back role.

It is therefore recommended that university librarians ought to be prominently accorded their appropriate status in the governance structure of universities. They are academics with high level status and should thus be paced more strategically in ceremonial processions and in the highest decision-making committees in the university. They should be allowed the rightful place in fiscal management of the library. Indeed, they ought to be signatories to the library account and also take decisions on financial matters of the library. Library budgets should be prioritized and the funds for such not diverted for other purposes in the university.

It is also recommended that there be more synergy between the University Librarian and other Faculty members in the university to achieve best results. Accreditation exercises should not be the only time the University Librarians' responsibilities reflect on the Faculty members. The cordial relationship between the University Librarian and other principal officers should also be maintained within the governance structure of the university.

It is suggested that the Nigerian government should empower the National Universities Commission (NUC) to spell out uniform qualifications and procedures regarding the

appointment of University Librarians, and see that Vice-Chancellors enforce them. The high visibility and professional importance of the University Librarian position makes it essential that only the best qualified persons should be appointed to them.

Finally, the Association of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities (AULNU) should come out strongly in collaboration with the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and Nigerian Library Association (NLA) on the statutory position and roles of the University Librarian. There is the need to streamline and harmonize the laws establishing the position such that there will be uniformity in all the universities – private and public. There should be clear statements regarding the position of University Librarian in the governance structure of the universities.

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APPENDIX

Characteristics of the Universities

University	Type	Year	Bks/Journals	Acad/ParaProf. Staff
UNN, Nsukka	Federal	1960		NA
UDU, Sokoto	"	1975	28000 / 25000	12 / 89
Univ. of Agric., Markurdi	"	1974	33089 / 3997	10 / 58
Univ. of Port Harcourt	"	1975	89000 / 11000	20 / 15
Univ. of Ilorin	"	1976	N/A	18 / NA
Lagos State University, Ojo	State	1983	N/A	9 / 62
OOU, Ago Iwoye	State	1982	75,000	25 / 22
University of Lagos, Lagos	Federal	1968	450,000	12 / NA
LAUTECH	State	1990	27,000/930 titles	7 / 33
Federal Univ. of Tech., Akure	Federal	1982	56,428 / 16,307	10 / 47
Univ. of Uyo	"	1983	48,000 / 10,000	10 / 19
University of Benin, Benin City	"	1970	223,441 / 3,700	17 / 130
Lead City University, Ibadan	Private	2006	1000	2 / 1
Babcock University, Ilishan	Private	1959	52,000 / 400	7 / 50
Eastern Palm University, Imo State	Private	2016	N/A	NA
TASUED	State	2004	16,039 / 2,019	5 / 18
Kano State Univ. of Technology	Federal	2001	6,500 / 3,120	5 / 20
Gombe State University	State	2005	3,700/300 titles	5 / 10
Bauchi State Univ., Markurdi	State	1992	50,000/ 10,000	10 / 8