International Library and Information Science Practice

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND MENTORSHIP

A Festschrift in Honour of
Dr. Helena Asamoah-Hassan

Edited by
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An Assessment of Leadership Requirements for Building Strong Libraries, Strong Library Associations and Strong Societies

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ABSTRACT

The chapter assesses leadership requirements for building strong libraries, library associations and societies in Nigeria, considering leadership traits, styles, leadership expectations of associations and what constitutes strong societies. A survey research design was adopted for the study in which university librarians were surveyed. Questionnaire was used to gather data. The data was analyzed using percentages and mean. It was found that preferred leadership traits and style for strong libraries, associations and societies are creativity, integrity, communication, passion, and vision that could be applied to transformational leadership. Library association leaders should demonstrate exemplary leadership with some elements of empathy, which translates to strong libraries and by extension strong societies where members possessing high literacy are empowered to contribute to the actualization of the mission and vision of the society. Recommendations are made on approach to development of the requisite leadership traits and styles necessary to build strong libraries, library associations and, ultimately, strong societies globally.

Keywords: Leadership; Library associations; Libraries and society; University librarians

Introduction

The hallmark of a strong library can be found in the collection and the relevance of the mandate that sets the library up. By the same token, the strength of the library lies in the strength of the human resources that drive the library. A library is as strong as the leaders managing it. The strength of library leaders could also lie in the library associations they belong to. How strong library associations

are, and what impact they have on their members, reflect in the type of leadership they offer in their workplaces. There is the possibility, therefore, of having strong libraries that will ultimately translate to strong societies.

Leadership is a frontline issue in libraries of today. Murtaza *et al.* (2018) listed some common leadership attributes, including flexibility, adaptability, and a willingness to accept and manage change; having good vision, ability to make strategic plans, and resource management; cultural competence; advocacy; ability to set priorities, manage time, and multi-task; innovation and collaboration; self-awareness, self-knowledge, and emotional intelligence; decision-making and problem-solving ability; understanding of library trends; and influence. These are the attributes leaders in libraries should possess. They could be the answer to the questions: Who leads? What kind of leaders do the library have? What are the requirements for leading a library? What does it take to make a library strong? and what effect do strong associations have on building strong societies? The outcome of leading is what makes libraries strong and expressive of libraries' value.

Strong libraries are libraries that meet the information needs of their user communities, while strong societies consist of informed citizens who actively participate in the life of their community and society (Sipila, 2015). Strong libraries are built around the activities of people who are determined to provide services that will keep the people informed, and people who are ready to be proactive and participate in building a strong society. Libraries are learning hubs for the community in which they exist, and are ones that have strong collections (Hamoush & Mathosh, 2021) relevant to their clientele's needs. They are spaces that provide refuge for learners, readers, researchers, the young and old and, in some cases, the homeless or displaced, (Inklebarger, 2014; Davis, 2018), depending on the mandates of each of the different types of libraries.

The strength of libraries could also be in their human resources – the quality of the staff, their skillsets, and the leadership qualities of such staff. The requirements for library leadership are germane to the building of strong libraries. Though different types of leadership styles have been found to result in various types of emergent strong libraries, there are advantages and disadvantages of one over another.

For the postulation of this article, the contention is that a society that has good library leaders is likely to have good library associations, and good library association leadership will translate into a strong society.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that some libraries are not well managed due to lack of good leadership. The day to day running of the libraries is very poor, and some libraries lose patrons while some are closed down totally or partially. Barring closure due to lack of funds, it is observed that some libraries turn out strong when some particular leaders are in charge, and when these leaders are no longer in charge, there is a downturn, with the quality of service delivery no longer being as good as it was before. An assessment of leadership requirements for strong libraries, library associations, and societies is therefore carried out in this study.

Leadership and Leadership Styles

Library leaders are noted to have traits that reflect the environment in which they function. Chow & Rich (2013) surveyed academic, public, school media, and special library administrators in North Carolina to find out their core set of leadership traits. They sought to define effective practices of leadership and management across the different types of libraries, practices that were visible through the primary tasks of each administrator. Soft skills, like empathy and vision, were found to be the major traits required of library administrators.

Apart from leadership traits that could be best used by library leaders, libraries need leadership abilities that can bring change and the ability to adapt to various crises, such as health and social issues.

> Librarians believe that the library, in the future, is an institution that can face and benefit greatly from crisis of any size. Thus, the ability of leadership to create a system in the library will bring adaptation forces and even have the flexibility to determine a policy, assertiveness in attitude, and agility of leaders in providing solutions to what is faced by the library. Agusta & Nurdin (2021)

Enthusiasm of the library leader is a trait that could be explored in building a strong future for their library.

> One of the most important aspects of creating a vision that will advance individual and organizational success is a leader's enthusiasm and belief that a better tomorrow can be created today. Leadership is essential in this process in helping people think beyond their immediate constraints without falling into overly rosy or negative scenarios. Schlak (2020)

Lamptey & Corteley (2011) provided a brief overview of the general role of the Ghana Library Association and how continuing professional development (CPD) could help build strong libraries and library associations in Ghana. Since libraries are uniquely positioned to serve as community centres that enable people of all ages to keep learning throughout their lives, either face-to-face or virtually, libraries connect even the smallest communities with the whole world of ideas and information (ALA, 2011). The provision of mentoring through professional development for library leaders is, therefore, sine qua non.

The strength of libraries lies in the social roles they play in many instances. Public libraries often are put in the role of literacy educators for the homeless and less privileged. It is also considered a safe space for homeless persons. Thus, a public library in Abuja, Nigeria has a programme for Almajiris (homeless children roaming the streets begging) wherein they visit the library to learn how to read, and express their creativity in painting, drawing, and other crafts (Osuigwe, 2017). The strong library programmes developed there ultimately help in making the society better, as those benefitting from the work of the library are given a new lease on life.

Crotty & Strover (2021) reported on the activities of libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic. One example was of the Manvel library, an affiliate of the Brazoria County Library System, which provides a "Safe Place" for youth in crisis. The library works with local social services to provide assistance. They are supported by the University of Texas. This demonstrates what strong local ties can do for libraries as "their strong county and city ties meant that the library was able to obtain personal protective equipment (PPE) quickly and easily when the pandemic first hit." The participative leadership style

used here is yielding results.

Le (2021) averred that many professional organizations, including the American Library Association (ALA) and the Academic Research Libraries (ARL), have assisted in opening up library leadership paths for many women by establishing a number of high-level leadership development programmes. Starting in the early 2000s, a number of such programmes have been instituted to prepare librarians to become leaders in their profession. For example, programmes, such as the Leading Change Institute (previously known as the Frye Leadership Institute), the ARL's Research Leadership Fellows Programme, UCLA's Senior Fellows Programme, and the ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians have produced a number of library directors, including the ones holding the library directorship at these globally ranked U.S. universities.

Agusta & Nurdin (2021) discussed integrative library leadership in Indonesia in their study of librarians and library leaders in Muhammadiyah University library of North Sumatera. According to them, integrative leadership is a leadership approach that seeks to encourage a collective action that is open and crosses various boundaries as a strategy to achieve the common good. They used a descriptive-qualitative method with a constructivist and critical interpretive paradigm on the phenomena of library leadership in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Data was collected through observation and interview techniques, with nine informants, including the head of the library and librarians. It was found that integrative leadership style (which employed democratic and transformative patterns), provided a solution for the head of the library and librarians in dealing with service turbulence during the pandemic. This leadership style is one that shows an ability to adapt to new conditions, and also has strategic opportunities in empowering subordinates because they do not feel a compulsion from their leader.

The transformational leadership model, on which the exploratory study of Paul *et al.* (2017) on leadership, democratization, and good governance in Nigeria was hinged, was described as one that has a dual focus on who a leader is as well as what a leader does, merging both the personal, characteristic, and behavioural theories of leadership. The major aim of the transformational model is to transform human element's vision and mission in organizational

management. This concerns itself with conversion of the mindset and perception of the individual in the organization to achievement of set aims and objectives, with the "conduct that must match with beliefs, principles, or values, and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum-building."

Okere & Olorunfemi (2018), in their study of academic library managers in South-South Nigeria, found that the managers portrayed mostly a mix of transformational and transactional leadership styles, and the library budget, equipment, and acquisition were most affected by recession. Transformational leadership style, though effective in encouraging growth, employee commitment, adoption of change, and increased productivity, recommendations were more in favour of the need for a change in leadership patterns to a more flexible and visionary leadership style due to recent developments in technology, economy, and user-expectations.

It was Ashiq et al. (2021), after a systematic review of literature, that found that rapid change as a result of rapid technological innovation, continued to present a fundamental challenge for the profession, and that library leaders needed to be visionary and innovative with effective communication and social skills to encourage a collaborative and agile culture in academic institutions. They also found that, especially for junior and mid-career library professionals, the development of library leadership skills has been a comparatively neglected area.

Visionary leadership entails having a clear idea of how the future should look and setting out concrete steps to bring a vision to life, and leading a team of people in that direction. Visionary leadership builds on participation, communication, and goal setting; however, a visionary leader can lose short-term focus, since all efforts are focused on the vision. Taylor et al. (2014) found that visionary leadership has a positive effect of perceived organizational effectiveness in the non-profit setting, and that this is consistent with previous research findings on the issue. They reiterated that communication of the vision is what empowers people to act, and this is the advantage visionary leaders have to exploit so as not to fail. In the same vein, Martin (2018) conducted a study on what academic librarians value in a leader. The findings, apart from identifying six leadership themes as people first, visionary, change agent, experienced librarian, role

model, and communicator attributes that future library leaders should have, also recognized that transformational leaders used the "Four I-s" — idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation – to achieve organizational success and facilitate long-lasting change. These were the same Four I-s that Lo *et al.* (2020) identified as elements of transformational leadership, which could lead to building strong libraries. Using a qualitative interview approach, their study investigated the perceptions, professional experiences, practices, and challenges of successful transformational leadership within a select group of top level academic library directors, and found that leadership affects an academic library's organizational effectiveness, its role in the university community, and its adaptability to new services, functions, and initiatives.

Bans-Akutey & Tiimub (2021) assessed the leadership dynamics of groups or teams. In spite of various motivation theories, four types of leadership styles were described as styles that influence the dynamics of a group. They were weak leadership, excessive deference to authority, blocking, and evaluation apprehension leadership styles. The advantages and disadvantages of each were discussed, and conclusions reached that all the leadership styles can either positively or negatively impact on a group, depending on what motivates individuals in the group.

These leadership styles can be observed in libraries, and have the different effects. This study, therefore, set out to assess the leadership requirements for building strong libraries, with particular focus on academic libraries, library associations, and societies.

Objectives

1. To establish leadership traits preferred in libraries in Nigeria.
2. To find out the leadership styles preferred in academic libraries in Nigeria.
3. To determine the leadership requirements of libraries in Nigeria.
4. To ascertain the leadership expectations of library associations.
5. To determine the attributes of strong societies.

Research Questions

1. What leadership traits do library leaders prefer in academic libraries in Nigeria?
2. What leadership styles are preferred in academic libraries in Nigeria?
3. What are the leadership requirements for leaders of academic libraries in Nigeria?
4. What are the leadership expectations of library associations?
5. What are the attributes of strong societies?

Methodology

Survey research design was used for the study. Respondents were drawn from a list of 323 librarians who attended a Library Association Conference in Nigeria. A random sample of 60 female and 60 male librarians in leadership posts was taken from the list. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were sent out, using research assistants in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Only 73 questionnaires were recovered in a state to be analyzed, after two weeks in which the survey was carried out. The respondents comprised 44 males and 29 females. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, which was used to get information from the respondents. The questionnaire was in four main parts. Part A was designed to obtain demographic information. In Part B, questions were asked to get information about the leadership traits (integrity, passion, empathy, creativity, vision, flexibility, communication, and delegation traits) and styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and facilitative leadership) of the library managers. Part C focused on building strong library associations and what constituted strong associations. Part D sought data on preferred strategies for libraries and building strong societies. The research variables for this section were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale – Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (U), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Open ended general comments were also sought on the topic from the respondents.

Findings of the Study

Seventy-three respondents returned the questionnaire fully answered, giving a 60.8% response rate (See Table 16.1).

Table 16.1. Respondents' Institutions

S/N	Library	Zone	Type	No.	%
1.	Anonymous	N. A.	Not stated	15	20.5
2.	Federal University, Wukari	North-East	University	1	1.4
3.	Federal University, Gashua	North-East	University	2	2.7
4.	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	North-West	University	1	1.4
5.	North-West University, Kano	North-West	"	1	1.4
6.	Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto	North-West	"	2	2.7
7.	Bayero University, Kano	North-West	"	1	1.4
8.	Federal University, Birnin Kebbi	North-West	"	1	1.4
	Federal Polytechnic, Offa	North-West	Polytechnic	2	2.7
10.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	North-Central	University	4	5.5
11.	Nassarawa State University	North-Central	"	1	1.4
12.	Kwara State University, Malete	North-Central	"	1	1.4
13.	University of Abuja, Abuja	North-Central	"	1	1.4
14.	University of Agriculture, Makurdi	North-Central	"	1	1.4
15.	University of Jos, Jos	North-Central	"	1	1.4
16.	Federal University, Lafia	North-Central	"	1	1.4
17.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	South-East	University	1	1.4
18.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	South-East	"	1	1.4
19.	AkanuIbiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana	South-East	"	1	1.4

S/N	Library	Zone	Type	No.	%
	Table 16.1. Respondents' Institutions (*contd.*)				
20.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	South-East	"	1	1.4
21.	National Archives	South-East	Archives	1	1.4
22.	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba	South-West	University	1	1.4
23.	Bowen University, Iwo	South-West	"	2	2.7
24.	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	South-West	"	2	2.7
25.	Ladoke Akintola Univ. of Technology, Ogbomoso	South-West	"	1	1.4
26.	Babcock University, Ilisan Remo.	South-West	"	1	1.4
27.	Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti	South-West	"	1	1.4
28.	Dept. of Library and Archival Studies, Univ. of Ibadan	South-West	"	4	5.5
29.	Crawford University, Igbesa	South-West	University	1	1.4
30.	University of Lagos, Lagos	South-West	University	1	1.4
31.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	South-West	University	5	6.8
32.	Redeemers University, Ede	South-West	University	1	1.4
33.	Igbinedion University, Okada	South-West	University	4	5.5
34.	Federal College of Education, Abeokuta	South-West	Academic	1	1.4
35.	Nigerian Army School of Finance and Administration, Apapa	South-West	Special	1	1.4
36.	UI Chapel Library, University of Ibadan	South-West	Special	1	1.4
37.	Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade	South-West	Polytechnic	1	1.4
38.	Federal Polytechnic, Ede	South-West	Polytechnic	1	1.4
39.	Oyo State College of Agric., Igboora	South-West	Research	1	1.4
40.	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Efunrun	South-South	University	1	1.4
41.	Ignatus Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt.	South-South	University	1	1.4
	Total			73	100

The target of the survey was any librarian occupying a leadership position in the library. Respondents came from 40 different institutions in the country. The age bracket of the respondents was mostly between 46 to 55 years (49.7%). Majority had postgraduate degrees, including 49.3% who had Master's Degree as their highest qualification and 37% who had PhD, while the designation of the respondents ranged from Assistant Librarian to University Librarian, though majority were in the positions of University and Deputy University Librarians. (Table 16.2).

Table 16.2. Demographics of Respondents

Age Bracket	No.	Percent
25-30	6	8.2
31-34	7	9.6
35-40	6	8.2
41-45	7	9.6
46-50	16	21.9
51-55	13	17.8
56-60	11	15.1
61-65	7	9.6
Highest Educational Qualification		
First Degree	10	13.7
Master's Degree	36	49.3
PhD	27	37.0
Designation and level		
University Librarian	38	52.1
Deputy University Librarian	3	4.1
Principal Librarian	2	2.7
Senior Librarian	1	1.4
Librarian1	26	35.6
Assistant Librarian	3	4.1
Total	**73**	**100.0**

When questioned on leadership traits perceived as necessary for library leaders to build strong libraries, the respondents majorly favoured creativity (75.3%), integrity (72.6%), communication (72,6%), vision (71.2%), and passion (61.6%) in ranked order. Empathy was the least favoured trait (57.5%), though the frequency was still relatively high. (Table 16.3).

Table 16.3. Perceived Leadership Traits Needed in Academic Libraries

Leadership Trait	No.	Percent
Integrity		
Yes	53	72.6
No	20	27.4
Passion		
Yes	45	61.6
No	28	38.4
Empathy		
Yes	42	57.5
No	31	42.5
Creativity		
Yes	55	75.3
No	18	24.7
Vision		
Yes	52	71.2
No	21	28.8
Flexibility		
Yes	44	60.3
No	29	39.7
Communication		
Yes	53	72.6
No	20	27.4
Delegation		
Yes	44	60.3
No	29	39.7
Total	73	100.0

The leadership style mostly considered as the best for building strong libraries was the transformational leadership style while the transactional leadership was the least favoured leadership style (See Table 16.4).

Table 16.4. Leadership Styles for Building Strong Libraries

Leadership Styles	No.	%
Transformational		
Yes	48	65.8
No	25	34.2
Transactional		
Yes	13	17.8
No	60	82.2
Laissez-fair		
Yes	19	26.0
No	54	74.0
Facilitative		
Yes	18	24.7
No	55	75.3
Total	73	100.0

Respondents were asked to list the library associations, apart from the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), that they belonged to. Their responses showed that not many of them belonged to other associations. Seventy-five percent of them did not respond. Of the few that responded, 6.8% belonged to African Libraries Institutions and Associations (AfLIA) and the least – (1.4%) – belonged to South African Library Association (SALA) and ASSIS & T (Table 4). Only 13 responded to the question about which of them they considered to be the strongest library association. For the few that responded, the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) were considered the strongest library associations.

Table 16.5. Library Associations to which Respondents Belonged.

Library Associations	No.	%
No answer	55	75.3
American Library Association (ALA)	3	4.1
South African Library Association (SALA)	1	1.4
International Association of Law Libraries (IALL)	2	2.7
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)	3	4.1
African Library & Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA)	5	6.8
International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST)	3	4.1
Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)	1	1.4
Those Considered the Strongest Library Associations		
No answer	60	82.2
American Library Association (ALA)	4	5.5
South African Library Association (SALA)	1	1.4
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)	4	5.5
Chartered Institute of Library Institutions and Professions (CILIP)	2	2.7
International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST)	2	2.7
Total	73	100

Expected Leadership Qualities from Library Associations

Leadership qualities expected from library association leaders by the respondents were mainly leadership by example (71.2%) and visionary leadership while autocratic leadership (8.2%) was the least expected leadership quality. Participative leadership quality also ranked fairly high in their expectation (Table 16.6).

Library Association Leadership

Respondents were questioned on their status as library association leaders. Only about 25% (18) were, while 75% (55) were not. Further

asked if they would wish to be library association leaders, 45.2%
answered in the affirmative while 54.8% (40) declined such a desire.
Those who declined gave reasons that ranged from the fact that they
wanted younger ones to participate, to having busy schedules, while
those who indicated wanting to be association leaders gave reasons,
ranging from wanting to impact society through the association, to
wishing to provide focused and productive leadership (Table 16.7).
Notably though, 30 (41.1%) respondents did not respond to this
question, and only 20 (27.4%) showed interest in leading library
associations.

Table 16.6. Expected Leadership Qualities in Library Associations

Leadership Qualities Expected	No.	%
Empathy		
Yes	31	42.5
No	42	57.5
Leadership by Example		
Yes	52	71.2
No	21	28.8
Visionary		
Yes	50	68.5
No	23	31.5
Autocratic		
Yes	6	8.2
No	67	91.8
Participative		
Yes	44	60.3
No	29	39.7
Total	73	100

Table 16.7. Reasons for Wanting to Lead Library Associations or Not

Reasons Given	No.	%
No answer	30	41.1
Not wanting to lead		
Busy Schedule	9	12.3
On my way out as an office holder in the association	6	8.2
I have been there once, let younger ones participate too	3	4.1
Not interested	2	2.7
About to retire		2.7
To allow for everyone to participate		1.4
Wanting to lead		
To influence the association itself	15	20.5
To impact the society through the association	4	5.5
To provide focused and productive leadership	1	1.4
Total	73	100.0

Libraries and Building Strong Societies

The respondents described strong societies according to their perceptions. Fifteen (20.5%) did not give any description while of the 52.5% that responded, many described strong societies as "societies that have "equal contribution opportunities for members," societies that "empower members," "meet its vision and mission," and have "high literacy level of members," "Societies that have strong economy," have "freedom of expression," has "leadership by example," and is "sustainable" (Table 16.8). Respondents also rated their level of agreement to statements concerning libraries and society. Aggregating their responses, "Agreed" and "Strongly Agreed" showed that majority accepted the facts that libraries are essential in building strong societies, effective leadership in society is dependent on acquired knowledge, and strong libraries in society ensure sustainable development.

Further revealed in the study is the fact that strong libraries are very essential to achieving 17 sustainable development goals. A society without strong libraries is a weak one, and the leadership in

society has a duty to build strong libraries. Responses averaged 59% to 61% agreement (Table 16.9).

Table 16.8. Ranked Description of a Strong Society

A Strong Society is one which has /is…	No.	%
No Answer	15	20.5
Equal contribution opportunity for members	12	16.4
Empowers members	9	12.3
Meets its vision and mission	7	9.6
High literacy level of members	7	9.6
High level of its development	5	6.8
Strong economy	4	5.5
Viable	3	4.1
Freedom of expression	2	2.7
Information sharing easily accessible	2	2.7
One that commands respect	2	2.7
Distinctiveness	1	1.4
Leadership by example	1	1.4
Active members	1	1.4
Its contribution to the society	1	1.4
Sustainable	1	1.4
Its contribution to the society	1	1.4
Total	**73**	**100**

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study as presented indicates that strong libraries are dependent on the leaders of the libraries, who are expected to possess creativity, integrity, communication skills, passion and vision with some elements of empathy as characteristics; thus, corroborating the findings of Ashiq *et al.* (2018) that leadership skills expected of librarian, especially in the academic environment were communication, vision, social interaction, team building, organizational understanding, and knowledge-sharing.

Table 16.9. Libraries and Society

S/N	Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	Libraries are essential in building strong societies	8 (11.0)	3 (4.1)	1 (1.4)	22 (30.1)	39 (53.4)
2.	Effective leadership in society is dependent on acquired knowledge	5 (6.8)	5 (6.8)	2 (2.7)	32 (43.8)	29 (39.7)
3.	Strong libraries in society ensure sustainable development	7 (9.6)	4 (5.5)	2 (2.7)	28 (38.4)	32 (43.8)
4.	Strong libraries are foundation for lifelong learning	7 (9.6)	4 (5.5)	2 (2.7)	30 (41.1)	30 (41.1)
5.	Strong libraries are very essential in 17 sustainable development goals	7 (9.6)	3 (4.1)	3 (4.1)	33 (45.2)	27 (37.0)
6.	A society without strong libraries is a weak one	8 (11.0)	4 (5.5)	2 (2.7)	40 (54.8)	19 (26.0)
7.	The leadership in society has a duty to build strong libraries	8 (11.0)	3 (4.1)	3 (4.1)	30 (41.1)	29 (39.7)

Transformational leadership style was favoured over other leadership styles while the facilitating and laissez-fair approach were not among the styles encouraged by the respondents. The response is in line with developments in global communities where transformational leadership is impacting positively the development of academic libraries and by extension societies; hence, the findings of Lo *et al.* (2020) that the four major elements of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized actions) stand it out in building strong libraries through the enhancement of inner communication as well as building mutual trust, and respect within library organizations.

Leaders of libraries, who are supposed to propel strong libraries and societies are required to lead by example well above other qualities. This implies that the leader who desires a strong library and society should be focused on the activities and elements that are aimed at achieving them. They are also expected to be visionary

leaders, who can carry the vision of the library, and work towards attaining the goals. The study of Okere & Olorunfemi (2018) is thus built on the need for visionary and flexible leaders in organizations. Through the transformational style, other professional members could key into such visionary and exemplary leadership directions.

The position of majority of the respondents that they are least interested in leadership of library associations due to either their busy schedule, they had led before, or that the younger ones should lead, shows signs of lack of support and mentoring engagement by senior members of the profession. Such attitude may likely affect the quality of the association's leadership, which could reflect on the support libraries provide in building strong a Nigerian society, as well as the actualization of the sustainable development goals.

The low response to what constitutes strong societies is a reflection of the fact that the respondents are not in the know of what strong societies are, or they are indifferent to their responsibility towards contributing to strong societies. Consequently, poor understanding of the system or lack of interest amounts to little or no contribution towards strengthening the system. On the other hand, responses by few on the role of libraries in building strong society is cheery, as it coveys their understanding and belief that knowledgeable leadership drives strong libraries for strong societies; hence, corroborating Kwan (2013) that knowledge is an important factor in developing leaders that will impact on libraries.

All their positive responses corroborate Sipilä's (2015) assertion that "strong libraries are those that have adequate capacity to meet the information needs of their user communities. Strong societies consist of informed citizens who actively participate in the life of their community and society." Therefore, it would be stating the obvious that libraries have an important place in the development and actualization of a strong society. However, the strength of a library is derived from the strength of its leadership, and the leadership in society has a duty to build strong libraries also.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study on the leadership traits, styles, and qualities of leaders in Nigeria, with particular reference to academic libraries as well

as institutional leaders' commitment to leadership of library associations, was essential in view of the expected and implied importance of leadership in the actualization of the mission and desires of an organization. As a test case of the role library leadership plays in building strong libraries for strong societies, the following inferences were drawn: the preferred leadership traits for strong libraries, associations and societies are majorly creativity, integrity, communication, passion, and vision, which will be applied to transformational leadership style typified in exemplary and visionary leadership. However, lack of commitment to library association membership and leadership due to reasons ranging from busy schedule, withdrawal as a result of age, or retirement issues provides a reason to conclude that the trait of passion, vision, and exemplary leadership may be lacking among library leaders despite the expression and appreciation of the importance of library leadership in building strong societies by a few professionals.

In view of the research outcome, the following recommendations were made: There should be a rethink on the part of library leaders to address any inadequacy in their leadership style and qualities. In addition, there is a need for leadership training for professionals in leadership positions for a better understanding that the strength of libraries and societal development lies in their ability, and in the strength of their leadership.

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