
An Exploration of Policy Strategies for Sustainable EIRs in Academic Libraries Nigeria

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Abstract: The adoption and use of Electronic Information Systems (EIRs) requires strategic policy implementation for sustainable and effective EIRs utilisation in academic libraries. Sustainability is a critical factor to consider when formulating policy strategies for the implementation of EIRs in academic libraries around the world. A good policy without sustainability is futile, discouraging, and even unattractive. This study is an exploration of policy strategies for the implementation and sustainability of EIRs in academic libraries in North-Central, Nigeria. This study employs a qualitative methodology to highlight factors that may influence the implementation of policy strategies that can be sustainable for the use of EIRs by academic libraries in Nigeria. Findings revealed that there were adequate policies to impact EIR services, data indicated that strategic planning and policy are impactful for sustainable EIR services among other things. Surprisingly, the strategic policy for sustainable EIRs in academic libraries in Nigeria is lacking, and there were no indications of clear policies to sustain the provision of EIRs services. All of these require adequate planning and strategic policy attention, to ensure the implementation of policies that will support sustainable EIRs services in Nigerian university libraries.

Keywords: Policies, Strategies, Strategic Policies, Implementation, Sustainability, EIRs, Academic Libraries

1. Introduction

Strategic policy usually is a conceptualised document to fuel and guide business actions such as decision making process and formulation of policies. It simply fosters calculated planned actions and provides principles for academic operations leading to the execution of academic and business objectives. "Policies are operating rules' that described the way to maintain order and provide security and consistency while realizing or furthering a goal or mission (Jose, Mohammad & Irani [50]). More so, it provides the principal framework, which indicates how academic members or business owners and their activities should be coordinated in an organizational structure to enhance effectiveness and productive returns (Jose, Mohammad & Irani [50]). According to Rahimi and Noruzi [33]. in management that is policy-based, "the staff members of the

organization concerned do, in any challenging situation, fall back on the policy rather than taking instant decisions". This policy framework is a legislative document that provides the rules and regulations aimed at maintaining order and indicating how organizational members coordinate to realize organizational goals (Denison and Spreitzer [10]). Indeed, in academic environment, information providers must be aware of this kind of policy to guide their role of information delivery services.

Around the globe, numerous Information Acts (IAs) have been observed to support library development and information services. For example, the American Department for Education's office for civil rights decreed in section 504 and section 508 that academic libraries both private and the public must provide access to e-resources and related facilities (Providenti and Zai [32]). In contrast, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria has no regulatory framework with regards to Information Services (IS). Rather

the National Library Act and Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, and related agencies under the Federal Ministry of Education such as the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria; designed policies to guide information and communication within Nigeria. According to Salman, Mostert, and Mugwisi [36], the National Library act of 1964 provides the basis for all public library activity in Nigeria as amended in 1970. The amended act was limited in scope and lacked the legal support for the digital collection. This legislative gap brought about the National ICT policy of 2012 initiated by the Federal Ministry of Communication Technology in Nigeria to address policy and regulatory framework issues in the ICT sector (Salman, Mostert and Mugwisi [36]).

The Canadian Copyright Act (copyright act, access copyright, and license agreements), had significant inadequacies which did not adequately cater for the emergence of information technology. This impacted negatively library services in Canada in general and caused challenges on the EIRs interlibrary loan services (Tiessen [39]). In order to address the issues, Canadian libraries, archives, and museums adopted three strands of the 1997 amendment to the copyright act CanLII [7]:

- 1) Section 30.1 allowed libraries under the particular condition to enact entire copies of copyrighted works for preservation purpose,
- 2) Section 30.2 allowed libraries to act on behalf of their users for fair dealing,
- 3) Section 30.3 confirmed the right of educational institutions, libraries, archives, and museums to have self-serve photocopiers, but they were required to have a license from a copyright collective.

This amendment to the Act gave Canadian libraries the liberty to legally justify practices and internal copying services as well as inter-library loan for EIRs (Tiessen [39]). The result brought a positive impact on information services delivery within Canada. However, efforts establish similar Acts in Nigeria faced herculean challenge that hitherto gave birth to the establishment of LRCN to address the issues of protecting digital content (Masango [23]). More so, different nations have equally enacted various but similar legislations regarding how to address parallel issues. For example the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) of the United States in 1998, the Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act of 2000 in Australia, and the Nigeria National Library Act of 1964 was last amended in 1970.

Lahore [20] asserted that these acts made provision for "fair dealing exception," in the traditional information system and argued that the same should apply to EIRs services. On the contrary, the fair dealing exception act in the EIRs environment poses a limitation to users regarding information access and services (Masango [23]). Therefore, with publishers' restrictions on ownership of copyrighted resources, Masango [23] contended that libraries were restrained by the licensing agreements for performing their functions or any regulatory activities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study is basically an exploratory study. It deployed the quantitative method for the gathering of data. The population of the study consist of professional librarians and support staff drawn from UniMinna, UniAbuja, UniJos and Unillorin. A total of 126 were selected for inclusion in the study. The main instrument used in the collection of data for this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to 126 library staff, out of which, 98 were duly filled and considered useful in the study.

2.1.1. Statement of the Problem

Arising from the none-existent of strategic policies on information and communication, copyright, and related fields, this study seeks to address the strategy issues surrounding EIRs sustainability in university libraries of NCN in Nigeria with a view to closing the existing gap. It is envisaged that the outcomes of the study can inform the EIRs policy development – formulation and improvement – and spur sustainability studies on university libraries.

2.1.2. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the policy strategies for the implementation and sustainability of EIRs in academic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

2.1.3. Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: what are the policy strategies for the implementation and sustainability of EIRs in academic libraries in North-Central Nigeria?

2.1.4. Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument for the study was subjected to face and content validation. Under face and content validation of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were given to selected experts in the field of library and information science at the University of Abuja. They ensured that only relevant items related to the research topic were included in the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used. 15 copies of the instrument were first administered to librarians in Kogi state university library. All administered copies of the instrument were duly completed and retrieved and subjected to reliability test. The copies of the instrument were again re-administered two weeks later and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.68 was realised, indicating a high rate of consistency in the instrument.

2.1.5. Data Collection

Data were collected through the use of questionnaire, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher through the aid of research assistants in each of the university libraries within the scope of the study.

2.1.6. Data Analysis

SPSS was used to analyse the generated quantitative data

which were presented in tables using frequencies and percentages.

2.2. Literature Review

Scholars around the world have argued that the problem with EIR or Information Acts is that most nations like the United Kingdom, South Africa, the United States of America, and Australia, have failed to provide a fair dealing or criteria for exemption for library information digital collections (Prescott [49: 754]). Furthermore, Masango [23] noted that the "fair dealing act continues to hinder scholars from accessing digital information". Other initiatives and commitments by the legislative agencies on the development of library services policy for increased access to library resources, including the EIRs have discussed in the literature by various authors (Beagrie [4]; Given and McTavish [14]; Watts [43]; McLelland [24]). Hence, it is necessary to critically examine the legal framework regarding information use within the library and by the library users.

2.2.1. Legislative Framework for Libraries

The legislation guiding the establishment of a library gives a legal permission to such a library as a legal entity for particular, national, or academic purposes (Jasion [16]). The library legislative framework consist of laws established by the local, state, or federal government for the development and management of any type of library aimed at enhancing the provision of information services (Mutula and Mostert [27]). Globally, legislation fosters a significant or considerable role in library services. Library legislation can be traced back to 1850 when Anglo- American societies and the United Kingdom established the first library law (Krolak [19]). Gardner (1971) noted that "in the 19th century, the United States of America formed a free public library under a number of permissive legislation, after which other states adopted a similar practice". In the same vein, it was observed that most libraries around the world took similar steps to develop and operate information services in ULs and all other libraries (Zulu, Ngoepe, and Saurombe [46]). The information revolution has contributed to the improvement in the information legislation system for better services (Saltman [34]). Vitiello [47] stated that "access to information means the empowerment of all citizens in exerting their responsibilities in the on-going process of societal change," which led the European Commission to enact various policies and legislation can enhance information services delivery within the region. This is primarily due to the fact that the legislation adopted in the American Communication Decency Act of 1996 enhances policy formulation (Vitiello [47]).

"Presently, academic freedom is considered a basic human right in universities across the globe and is consequently enshrined in many national constitutions and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Karran [17]). The enactment of library policy and legislation became more complicated with the emergence of telecommunication, audio-visual, and digital industries (Vitiello [47]). Besides,

the haste for technological innovation requires review and amendment of oral or/and traditional systems and legislation, to accommodate the new system of Information services.

In Nigeria, it was observed that she has a legislative framework that functions as a legal foundation for libraries. Olden [30] reported that the joint efforts of professional librarians and concerned government led to the enactment of library legislation and the establishment of the library board. The National Library of Nigeria was established in 1975, with the legislative mandate to develop state libraries (Olden [30]), to facilitate library growth. Although, the legal practice in Nigeria lacks clarity regarding ULs on the provision of EIRs, the UNESCO (1984) in Olden [30] pointed that there is "no country which has had successful, effective and nationwide public library services without foundational and legislative underpinnings". The first library board law was established in 1955 and presented the benchmarks for library development in Nigeria (Olden [30]). Furthermore, Oderinde (1978), cited in Olden [30], also argued that "it is a well-known fact that states with library legislation have a positive impact on library services than those without." A close examination from Salman, *et al* [36] also revealed that libraries depend on the government for decisions and funding. Hence, the challenges to the sustainable information services were reported to be inadequate funding, stakeholder's low participation in library management, and inadequate library legislation (Salman *et al.* [36]).

The Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) was established as an agency of the Federal Ministry of Education by Act 12 of 1995 professional Librarian skills for librarianship in Nigeria (Okojie and Omotoso [29]). The pursuit of sustainable information services delivery in all teaching and learning places, strategically assigned the agency with the responsibility of capacity development in information services field such as, "pursuing the attainment of professional excellence by determining librarians training; the standard of knowledge and skills required for registration and practice; guidelines for accreditation and minimum standards for librarians, as well as maintenance of professional discipline among librarians in Nigeria" (Okojie and Omotoso [29]). The success of this initiative was linked to government interest in the standardization of professional ethics, as it aimed at ensuring professionalism for information delivery services. On this note, LRCN, in collaboration with the National University Commission (NUC), set a minimum standard for accreditation of LIS programs in the university and continuous professional development (Okojie and Omotoso [29]) with the aim to improving the capacity of librarians, enhancing and upgrading the LIS curriculum, and professional services.

More so, in order to guarantee homogeneity of library services in Nigeria, a collaborative effort involving the National Library of Nigeria (NLN), National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the National University Commission (NUC) and LRCN was initiated with the help of UNESCO, United States Mission, Emerald Publishing UK (Okojie and Omotocho [29]) was

established. Notwithstanding, the impact of this collaboration has not become operational. Besides, there is the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) an agency responsible for government financial supports and grants for capital projects in institutions of higher learning in the country. TETFund equally provides interventions for library development within Nigeria. TETFund interventions include the acquisition of books and journals, including online electronic information resources, development of ICT resources or support for the development of ICT infrastructure, procurement of library equipment, and training and retraining of library staff. Other bodies that have positively impacted library services in university libraries in Nigeria include: The international library framework, the Nigeria Librarians Association (NLA) affiliated to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and Africa Federation of Library and Institutions Association (AFLIA).

2.2.2. Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual property rights otherwise known as copyright law, is "a universal concept and a form of protection for ideas created, which is provided by the laws of any sovereign state" (Uzuegbu [40]). Chattopadhyay's view [9] refers to intellectual property as the owner of something intangible. Copyright issue has been a challenge to the development of sustainable services (Fabunmi [11]). However, EIR's provision is an indispensable genuine pathway to the advancement of education, and national development which must be protected (Uzuegbu [40]). Hence, copyright law requires a supportive policy approach for the provision of information services within libraries. According to Beagrie [4], the right to reproduce an intellectual work and the right to avail it to users are the two fundamental rights accorded to the copyright holder. More to this, the intellectual property or copyright law cannot be disregarded regarding the sustainability of EIR's, as intellectual products are integral components of EIRs. The copyright law is aimed at rewarding and encouraging the creation of intellectual property rights (Moorthy and Ramaiah [26]). To this effect, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) established in 1996 legal decisions to protect EIRs' intellectual rights. One of the decrees is that contracting parties have to provide effective legal protection and adequate legal remedies for the adopted technological practices that are used by customers, in line with the legal right.

In compliance with the aforementioned laws, Europe and America implemented a similar digital copyright law (Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and European Union (EU) Copyright Directive) for protecting the EIRs copyright (Lucchi [22]). Following this, "the US government sponsored a consortium for Open Access publishing (OAP) in physics, with the role of negotiating with journals, publishers, institutions, and countries that publish papers in the field of high-energy physics" (Lucchi [22]). Consequently, this initiative became essential for library services as a part of

their order in making available the required knowledge to facilitated cataloguing in the library with OAP. As a result of the US OAP copyright law, all the funded research by the government-mandated institutions are to be made freely available six months after its publication (Lucchi [22]). In the same way, research councils in the UK reviewed their rules for research funding from April 2013. As a result, all studies funded by the council must be published in journals that make the research reports available for free access (Research Councils UK [34]). In the same way, the India government amended her copyright law in 2012 to accommodate digital collections, which mandated her higher institutions to develop a well-defined Access Management Policy and Copyright Management Policy to promote scientific and scholarly knowledge dissemination (Moorthy and Ramaiah [28]; Newton et al. [28]). In contrast Africa suffers legal backing in its copyright jurisprudence (Andrew [48]). Notwithstanding, many African countries are yet to reform or review their copyright law to recognize the trendy information technology (Koorhof [18]).

Again, in South Africa, the current copyright amendment bill was passed, and the final version released in November 2018 (Libguides [21]). Prominent among the issues deliberated on was that of the bill seeking to introduce the Digital Rights Management (DRM), which emanated from the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) Articles 11 Copyright Treaty (WIPO, [45]). WIPO is an exclusive agreement under the Berne Convention that deals with the digital environment and protection of authors' work (WIPO, [45]). The law permits countries that have signed the treaty to adopt and implement technological security for copyrighted EIRs (Sheik [38]). The legislative and copyright laws guiding the EIRs adoption and services in ULs of Nigeria has not gained traction from the policymakers (Anthony, Eze, & Anthony, [2]). This has a severe negative impact on sustaining EIRs services in Nigeria ULs. Anthony et al [2] assert that in Nigeria though the copyright law comprehensively addresses individual creativity due attention was not given to intellectual property rights issues until the year 2000, basically because the policymakers focused more on oil economy neglecting the Knowledge economy (Andrew [48]).

The aggressive attention from the Nollywood industry over the loss of \$2 billion within a year to piracy as a result of weak copyright law in Nigeria, led to the copyright reform (Andrew [48]). Anthony *et al.* [2] argued that, through the leadership of the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC), there had been improved efforts for the protection of intellectual property and copyright through collaborative measures to control piracy of intellectual property. These measures were only felt by the creative industry (Nollywood) as the professional librarians have not taken their stand on the copyright issues. However, the development and dissemination of information must enjoy copyright protection, given that it is of considerable importance and, if not adequately managed, may affect the availability and sustainability of information services (Okeke & Uzor, [51]),

especially the EIRs services. Faga and Ole [11] noted that technological shortcoming makes it possible for abusers of digital innovations to do so with impunity and to prevent the copyright act from being enforced. This leads to unsatisfactory service delivery and hinders the sustainability of EIRs services in ULs (Salman, Mostert, & Muqwi, [36]). The authors contended, however, that when intellectual property rights are fully implemented, the information services are enhanced.

2.2.3. The Implementation of Strategic Planning and Policy on EIRs

The strategic planning details the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threat (SWOT) analysis facing the library operations, with the long term goals, annual objectives, action plans and other policies that might encompass the libraries strategic planning and policy of the specific institutions (Bringezu & Bleischwitz, [6]). Every institution and organisation has its own objective and mission statement which describes the required future position of a business. According to Wadas [42], “a vision statement is an internal organizational framework for strategic planning. Most libraries draw their planning from the set-out mission statement of the institution”. For example, Vukanović *et al.* [41] explored the mission and vision goals of the National Library of Serbia, of which the responsibilities include the integration and coordination of works of the Consortium and Libraries for Joint Acquisition of Foreign Periodicals in Print and Electronic Form (CLJAFPEF). The implementation of

the vision for the Serbian national library resulted in the establishment of the Serbian Library Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition (SLCCA) through which the majority of Serbian public libraries access information resources.

The general library mission on the other hand serves as a framework for the library's activities, including services provided to users (America Library Association, [1]). Wharton [44] explored the library's strategic planning initiative and its implementation for future library services at Florida State University. The study applied a qualitative approach and finding revealed that the assessment of project implementation enhances the strategic plans of the academic library (Wharton [44]). McNicol [25], using document analysis on the other hand, examined the academic library strategic planning in the UK. The study revealed the following key issues in strategic planning: external communication on library aim, the involvement of library staff in planning, high inclusions of the library to institution and faculty planning, goal setting, and involvement in income generation.

Hahn [15]; Baumgartner [3]; Richter [35]; Fonseca [13] and Carstens [8] all concluded that vision and mission statements promote the sustainability of organizational services. Therefore, exploring the library mission statement and in-depth analysis of its policy might provide insights into the strategies being employed by the library to ensure sustainable EIRs provision.

Table 1. Strategies planning and policy for sustaining EIRs and services (n=98).

| Strategies | SA | | A | | D | | SD | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|-----|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| The library have adequately designed policy to impact EIRs services | 39 | 39.8 | 42 | 42.9 | 15 | 15.3 | 2 | 2.0 |
| Policy framework is adequately implemented in provision of EIRs services | 27 | 27.6 | 49 | 50.0 | 21 | 21.4 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Provision of EIRs services are guided by the strategic planning | 35 | 35.7 | 48 | 49.0 | 13 | 13.3 | 1 | 1.0 |
| The strategic planning implementation are adequately monitored and evaluated | 30 | 30.6 | 45 | 45.9 | 21 | 21.4 | 1 | 1.0 |
| Staff performance are measured by Strategic planning of the UL | 30 | 30.6 | 58 | 59.2 | 7 | 7.1 | 3 | 3.1 |
| Strategic planning and policy are impactful for sustaining EIRs services in the UL | 37 | 37.8 | 52 | 53.1 | 8 | 8.2 | 1 | 1.0 |

3. Results

As part of strategies and policy for sustaining EIRs and services, 39 representing 39.8% of the population sampled strongly agree that the library have adequately designed policy to impact EIR services, while 42 (42.9%) agree to the statement, 15 and 2 represent those who disagree and strongly disagree with 15.3% and 2.0%, respectively. Those who agree that policy framework is adequately implemented in provision of EIR services were 49 representing 50.0% as those who strongly agree were 27 (27.6%) and 21 and 1 disagree and strongly disagree making up 21.4% and 1.0% respectively. Regarding the provision of EIR services guided by the strategic plan, a total of 48 representing 49.0% who strongly agree and those who agree were 35 representing 35.7%, while those

who disagree and strongly disagree were 13 (13.3%) and 1 representing 1.0% respectively. Whether the strategic planning implementation was adequately monitored and evaluated, a total of 45 (45.9%) and 30 representing 30.6% strongly agree and agree respectively, while those who disagree and strongly disagree were 21 and 1 representing 21.4% and 1.0% respectively. To determine if the staff performance are measured by strategic planning objectives of the UL, a total of 58 representing 59.2% agreed to this statement as 30 (30.6%) strongly agreed; those who disagree and strongly disagree were 7 (7.1%) and 3 (3.1%) respectively. Strategic planning and policy are impactful for sustaining EIR services in the UL with 52 (53.1%) and 37 (37.8%) stating agreed and strongly agreed respectively, while those who disagree and strongly disagree were 8 and 1 representing 8.2% and 1.0%, respectively.

Table 2. Implementation of strategic planning and policy in performance expectancy.

| Items | Unillorin | FUTMinna | UniAbuja | UniJos |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clearly defined working policy for EIR is in place. | Partially | Partially | It is being developed | A clearly defined working policy for EIRs is in place |
| Clearly articulated EIR strategic plan with commensurate implementation timeframe is in place. | Partially | not sure | yes available but not implemented | yes available |
| The e-librarians serve adequately within the strategic plan timeframe. | Yes | Yes | Partially | Yes |
| Librarians' job expectancy is measured using the strategic plan framework. | Yes | Not sure | Partially | partially |
| The library's strategic planning is monitored and evaluated at regular intervals | Yes | annually | Yes | Yes |
| Do your library adequately implements the strategic planning and policy for sustainable EIRs | Not adequate | Not adequate | Not sure | Not sure |
| EIR services are prioritized in the main strategic planning framework of the library | the team all accepted that EIRs services are prioritized in the library strategic planning | Yes accepted | Yes it is | Yes EIRs are given priority in the strategic planning of the library |

The responses by the participants on how the library applied strategic planning and policy as is expected that strategic planning is a useful library management tool that might promote libraries ability to sustain their EIRs. The findings revealed that, only UniJos has a clearly defined policy for EIRs, and with FUTMinna, it does appear that EIRs strategic plan is available in few libraries, but its implementation was the problem with regards to the examined libraries. Thirdly, the findings of the study revealed that all the libraries are providing EIRs services with the strategic plan except UniAbuja. Fourthly, the whole team agreed that librarians' job expectancy is measured with the strategic planning framework except the UniAbuja. Finally, all the participants agreed that library's strategic planning is monitored and evaluated at regular intervals and that EIRs are given priority in the library strategic planning framework.

4. Discussion

Findings revealed that academic libraries have adequately designed policies to impact library services as expected with the development of LRCN (Okojie and Omotoso [29]), strategic planning and policy are impactful for sustaining library services in UL, and Staff performance are measured by strategic planning of the UL, which was drawn from the continuous professional development by the LRCN (Okojie and Omotoso [29]). However, the study found that clearly defined working policy for EIR is in place, but implementation of the policy was lacking in all the ULs, more to this, a clearly articulated EIR strategic plan with commensurate implementation timeframe is in place but not adequately applied. The finding from this study is quite different from a similar study on Serbia national library, which showed that huge success was achieved adopting consortium library acquisition policies (Vukanović *et al.* [41]). Therefore there is need for additional effort on policy implementation to upgrade the system and maintain sustainability statuesque. Furthermore, the study was able to uncover these facts: the e-librarians serve adequately within

the strategic plan timeframe, librarians' job expectancy is measured using the strategic plan framework and that the libraries strategic planning were monitored and evaluated at regular intervals in all the ULs. This concurs to the conclusion of Baumgartner [3], Fabunmi [11] and others, that strategic planning and policy implementation promotes the sustainability of organizational services. That includes EIRs services in academic libraries, which must be guarded by adequate implementation policy. Finally, the responses given by the respondents' indicated that EIR services are prioritized in the main strategic planning framework of the library.

5. Conclusion

The study therefore concluded that since policy strategies are impactful and have been adequately designed for use by the various ULs for the implementation of EIR services, such policies need to be enforced and equally create a timeframe for their implementation. The effective implementation of such policies will lead to enhanced sustainable EIR services that will hitherto leapfrog ULs information provision within North-Central and transcend to other parts of the country.

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