Jewel Journal of Librarianship
ISSN: 2141-3908 (Print); ISSN: 2736-0881 (Online): ttps://www.jeweljournals.com
Volume 19, Issue 4; Published: December, 2024

Organizational Culture and knowledge organization among Librarians in Tertiary Institutions, Borno State

Talatu Rabassa

Department of Library and Information Science,
University of Maiduguri,
Borno State-Nigeria || talaturabasa1@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of organizational culture and knowledge organization practices among librarians in tertiary institutions in Borno State, Nigeria. A qualitative research design was employed to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of librarians. The population included librarians from federal and private universities, as well as polytechnic, and college of education in Borno State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four librarians as the sample, ensuring participants met the criteria of having at least five years of experience and direct involvement in knowledge organization. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide developed from a review of relevant literature. The interviews, lasting 45-60 minutes, were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis followed thematic analysis, involving coding, theme development, and interpretation. Findings revealed that organizational culture significantly shapes knowledge organization practices, with federal institutions prioritizing compliance, private universities favouring agility, polytechnics focusing on industry relevance, and colleges of education emphasizing pedagogy. It is also found that bureaucratic delays, limited digital infrastructure, and resistance to change were eminent. The study concludes that a balanced approach integrating structured policies and innovation is essential for effective library management. Recommendations include streamlining bureaucratic processes and adopting digital tools for knowledge organization to enhance service delivery and resource accessibility.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Knowledge Organization, Librarians in Tertiary Institutions, Borno State

Introduction/Background

Organizational culture and knowledge organization practices are critical factors that influence the management and service delivery in academic libraries. Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the behaviuor and interactions of individuals within an organization. In the library setting, this culture significantly influences how staff collaborate, engage with patrons, and adapt to changing societal needs. Understanding organizational culture in libraries is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to innovation and effective service delivery.

Libraries are increasingly required to adapt to the evolving information environments characterized by rapid technological advancements (Yunus & Ismail, 2024; Din, S. & All, 2024). Those with adaptive cultures—emphasizing openness, continuous learning, and cross-functional collaboration—are better positioned to integrate innovative practices. This adaptability is crucial for libraries to remain relevant and effective in serving their communities. For instance, institutions that encourage experimentation successfully pilot new

Jewel Journal of Librarianship
ISSN: 2141-3908 (Print); ISSN: 2736-0881 (Online): ttps://www.jeweljournals.com
Volume 19, Issue 4; Published: December, 2024

However, this vision seems far from the reality in Nigerian academic libraries. A close look at the operations of many Nigerian academic libraries reveals several challenges relating to organizational culture and knowledge organization practices. Many institutions struggle with rigid organizational structures that centralize authority, limiting input from frontline librarians who directly interact with users and understand their evolving information needs. Bureaucratic delays, inadequate technological infrastructure, and inconsistent knowledge organization practices seem to be some of the factors contributing to inefficient library operations. Federal universities often maintain standardized classification systems and hierarchical cultures that could slow processes, while private institutions prioritize agility but may lack long-term sustainability in knowledge management. Polytechnic and college of education libraries, which should focus on industry-aligned and pedagogy-driven knowledge organization, respectively, often may not have the institutional support and struggle with outdated systems.

These structural inefficiencies translate into practical challenges for both librarians and users. Librarians face increasing pressure to bridge the gap between outdated workflows and the growing demand for digital access, often resulting in burnout and reduced service quality. Users—including students, researchers, and faculty—encounter barriers such as inadequate classification systems, fragmented digital repositories, and restricted access to essential resources. While some institutions have attempted to address these issues through professional development initiatives and policy adjustments, such efforts are often isolated and fail to tackle the root causes of inefficiencies. Collaborative models, which could improve knowledge organization strategies, remain underutilized due to entrenched cultural norms and resistance to change.

A critical gap in existing research is the lack of focus on how organizational culture directly influences knowledge organization practices in Nigerian academic libraries. While studies explore organizational culture and knowledge management separately, few examine the systemic relationship between these factors. For example, how does a rigid, risk-averse culture impede the adoption of more effective knowledge organization frameworks? Conversely, how do collaborative cultures enhance knowledge organization strategies, leading to improved resource accessibility and user satisfaction? Without a deeper understanding of these dynamics, Nigerian academic libraries risk remaining in cycles of inefficiency, where knowledge organization is reactive rather than strategic.

Objectives of the Study

1. Ascertain the organisational culture among librarians in academic tertiary institutions, Borno State.
2. Identify the knowledge organisation practices among librarians in academic tertiary institutions, Borno State.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design to investigate the impact of organizational culture and knowledge organization practices among librarians in tertiary institutions in Borno State. Qualitative research is particularly suited for this study as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and the contextual factors influencing their professional practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The design is exploratory in nature, aiming to generate rich, descriptive data that can inform future research and practice in library and information science.

Jewel Journal of Librarianship
ISSN: 2141-3908 (Print); ISSN: 2736-0881 (Online): ttps://www.jeweljournals.com
Volume 19, Issue 4; Published: December, 2024

science, particularly in the context of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Despite providing valuable insights, this study has limitations: the small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings, telephone interviews may lack the richness of face-to-face interactions, and the focus on librarians in tertiary institutions in Borno State may limit the applicability of the findings to other regions or types of libraries.

Results, Interpretation, and Discussion

Table 2: Organizational Culture in Tertiary Institutions

Themes	Cataloguer (University of Maiduguri)	Cataloguer (Borno State University)	Cataloguer (Ramat Polytechnic)	Cataloguer Federal Science and Technical College
Workplace Collaboration	Structured teamwork through committees. Can be bureaucratic and slow.	Open communication and digital collaboration. May lack formal processes.	Hands-on teamwork with students. Informal approach can be unstructured.	Close-knit teamwork. Less reliance on formal procedures.
Leadership	Leadership ensures compliance with regulations.	Direct access to leadership for quick innovation.	Focus on industry-related knowledge.	Strong emphasis on pedagogy and research.
Institutional Values	Decisions align with national policies and accreditation.	User satisfaction drives decision-making.	Industry relevance in resource selection.	Prioritizes accessibility for teacher training.
	Less flexibility for change.	Fast decisions may overlook long-term impact.	Limited access to emerging technologies.	Slow response to emerging trends.

The findings reveal that organizational culture varies significantly across different types of tertiary institutions in Borno State. In federal universities, such as the University of Maiduguri, the culture is highly structured and hierarchical, with a strong emphasis on compliance with national policies and accreditation standards. While this ensures stability and adherence to regulations, it also introduces bureaucratic bottlenecks that slow down processes and limit flexibility for innovation. For example, decision-making is often centralized, requiring approval from higher authorities, which can delay the implementation of new initiatives.

In contrast, private universities like Borno State University exhibit a more agile and user-centric organizational culture. Open communication and digital collaboration are prioritized, allowing for quicker adaptation to emerging user needs. However, the lack of formal processes can sometimes lead to inconsistencies in policies and practices. The leadership in private institutions is more accessible, enabling rapid innovation, but this agility may come at the cost of long-term strategic planning.

Polytechnic libraries focus on practical, industry-aligned collaboration, ensuring that knowledge organization and resource selection are relevant to technical and vocational education. However, the informal nature of teamwork and limited access to emerging technologies can hinder the systematic planning of collaborative initiatives. Institutional support for knowledge organization is often weak, which limits the adoption of advanced digital tools.

resources is sometimes restricted by government regulations, limiting the flexibility of knowledge-sharing practices.

Private universities demonstrate a more dynamic approach to knowledge organization, integrating digital repositories and metadata-driven classification methods. This allows for greater flexibility in organizing digital resources, but the balance between traditional and digital methods can pose implementation challenges. Private institutions prioritize digital access, with strong leadership support for online repositories and electronic databases. However, the heavy reliance on digital platforms may limit physical collections, affecting users who prefer print resources.

Polytechnic libraries prioritize practical knowledge organization, focusing on structuring technical and vocational resources to support industry-related training. However, limitations in digital cataloguing infrastructure and weak institutional support for knowledge organization hinder the efficiency of information retrieval. The focus on industry-relevant knowledge retrieval ensures that students and faculty can easily find materials related to technical education, but integrating emerging technologies for advanced retrieval remains a challenge.

Colleges of education adopt well-structured classification systems tailored to pedagogy and curriculum development. While this ensures that educational resources support teacher training, the reliance on traditional classification methods and limited funding for digital knowledge organization slow down the transition to modern information management systems. The slower adoption of AI-based retrieval systems restricts their ability to offer advanced search functionalities, which could enhance curriculum planning and resource accessibility.

Interpretation of the Analysis

The findings reveal that organizational culture and knowledge organization practices are deeply intertwined, shaping how libraries manage information and serve their communities. In federal universities, the hierarchical and bureaucratic culture ensures compliance with national standards but limits flexibility and innovation. This is reflected in their knowledge organization practices, where standardized classification systems are maintained but updates are slow due to bureaucratic processes.

Private universities, with their agile and user-centric cultures, are better positioned to adopt modern knowledge organization practices, such as digital repositories and metadata-driven classification. However, the lack of formal processes and heavy reliance on digital tools may lead to inconsistencies and challenges in balancing digital and traditional methods.

Polytechnic libraries focus on practical, industry-aligned knowledge organization, ensuring that resources are relevant to technical and vocational education. However, weak institutional support and limited access to emerging technologies hinder their ability to adopt advanced digital tools for knowledge organization and retrieval.

Colleges of education emphasize pedagogy-focused knowledge organization, ensuring that resources support teacher training and curriculum development. However, the slow adoption of digital tools and limited funding for digital knowledge organization restrict their ability to integrate modern information management systems.

Recommendations

1. Academic libraries should foster a culture of collaboration and innovation by breaking down hierarchical barriers and encouraging cross-departmental teamwork. Federal universities should streamline bureaucratic processes to allow for more dynamic collaboration, while private universities should establish formal frameworks to ensure consistency in teamwork. Polytechnic and College of Education libraries should promote informal yet structured collaboration to enhance practical, hands-on knowledge organization.
2. Libraries should modernize their knowledge organization systems by adopting digital and AI-driven tools to enhance accessibility and efficiency. Federal universities should invest in automated metadata management solutions, private universities should balance digital and physical collections, polytechnics should prioritize industry-relevant digital repositories, and colleges of education should allocate funding for digital classification tools to support teacher training.

References

Baldoni, E., & Joudrey, D. N. (2025). Cataloging. In Encyclopedia of Libraries, Librarianship, and Information Science, 469-486. Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-323-95689-5.00104-8

Belantara, A., & Drabinski, E. (2022). Working Knowledge. In KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies (Vol. 6, Issue 3, pp. 1-10). University of Victoria Libraries. https://doi.org/10.18357/kula.233

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Is thematic analysis used well in health psychology? A critical review of published research, with recommendations for quality practice and reporting. Health Psychology Review, 17(4), 695-718.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. The journal of positive psychology, 12(3), 297-298.

Farnel, S., & Shiri, A. (2020). Indigenous Community Driven Knowledge Organization at the Interface: The Case of the Inuvialuit Digital Library. In Knowledge Organization at the Interface, 123–132. Ergon – ein Verlag in der Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft. https://doi.org/10.5771/9783956507762-123

Feldvari, K., Petr Balog, K., & Bosnjak, B. (2024). Importance of Organisational Culture for Effective Knowledge Management in Libraries: Example of The City Library of Požega . Vallis Aurea, 10(2), 18–33. https://doi.org/10.62598/IVA.10.2.2.7

Hendrawan, M. R., Ariyani, L. P. S., & Bafadhal, A. S. (2024). The Library and Information Science Perspective on Knowledge Management. In Advances in Information Quality and Management, 308–324. IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0472-3.ch016

Igbinovia, M. O. (2022). Improving Library Service Delivery by the Instrumentality of Knowledge Management Practices: A Critical Review. In Folia Toruniensia (Vol. 22,