

## **Evaluating Quality Assurance in North-West University Libraries in Nigeria: Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria Minimum Standard and Guidelines in Perspective**

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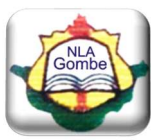
### **Abstracts**

*Quality assurance is a must for effective and efficient library services, hence, the need for standard. It is this need that necessitated the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to issue a draft Minimum Standard and Guidelines (MS & G) for academic libraries in Nigeria in 2014. The purpose of the study therefore, was to evaluate quality assurance in university libraries in the light of the LRCN Minimum Standard and Guidelines. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the fourteen public university librarians in Northwestern region of Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to enable the fourteen universities to be studied because it is convenient for the researchers. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data from the respondents. Fourteen (14) questionnaires were administered on the respondents while ten (10) were returned and used for this study. Data collected were analysed using simple frequencies and percentages and presented in tables. One of the findings shows that the LRCN MS & G on staffing were not met by the libraries. The Finding also discovered that Nigerian Universities Commission do not cover all the LRCN MS & G for academic libraries during their programme accreditation. Among the recommendations made was that the libraries should make effort to have the right combination of staff in quantity and quality as this will enable them to have the right staff mix as demanded by LRCN (2014) so that they can be able to deliver effective and efficient service and fulfill their objectives.*

**Keywords:** Quality Assurance, University Libraries, Academic Libraries, Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), National Universities Commission (NUC).

### **Introduction**

University library is part of academic library. Academic libraries are libraries established by tertiary institutions to support teaching, learning and research. These libraries are established to provide information resources for the education of both middle and high level skilled manpower for the society's advancement. However, this study was carried out on university libraries a sub-set of academic library. The place of university library in the university system has made scholars to variously refer to it as the brain and the centre point of intellectual activities, Eyiolorunshe and Eluwole, 2017), as the heart and blood of the university system (Okunu, Akalumhe, and Monu 2011 in Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe, 2014). These are right descriptions, hence, it can also be said to be the rallying point of academic and research



activities in the university. In furtherance of its role, university library collect, organize/process, preserve/store and disseminate human knowledge recorded in various information-carrying formats, like prints (books, journals etc), non-prints (audio, audio visual, microfilm etc) and e-resources (ICT enhanced materials /digital objects – e-journals, DVD or CD-ROM etc).

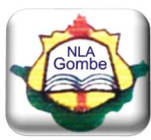
Therefore, quality assurance is a must for effective and efficient library services, hence, the need for standard. It is this need that necessitated the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to issue a draft Minimum Standard and Guidelines (MS & G) for academic libraries in Nigeria. The following areas were covered: infrastructure, document management processes, ICT, administration/governance, staffing among others (LRCN, 2014). For convenience sake, this study is narrowed to three aspects of the MS & G, namely staffing, ICT, and administration and governance.

The place of staffing in any organization including university libraries cannot be overemphasized. The MS & G on staffing is to ensure that the university library has the right caliber of staff needed to deliver its objectives effectively. Staffing is the soul of any organization, as it is human beings that will run the organization towards achieving its goals and objectives. This is in line with the position of Issa, Idowu, Amusan, Ojokuku, Adedeji, and Oguntayo, (2016) that the objectives of setting up an organization will amount to nothing without human resources. Therefore, it follows that it is only with the right combination of staff that the university library will be able to deliver on its mandates (Onifada and Onifade 2011 in Issa, Idowu, Amusan, Ojokuku, Adedeji, & Oguntayo, 2016). Anything contrary to this gives room for poor service delivery.

On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology has since its adoption in library services proved to be a necessary tool for effective and efficient service delivery. ICT is needed in all library operations, from selection and acquisition to processing, preserving and accessing/disseminating of the library resources. ICT brings with it speed and massive storage capacity, and access to a large variety and current information resources across the globe, which is just what university libraries need to meet its ever evolving and increasing users' demand.

Furthermore, administration of the university library is very important. University library is a top component of the university system, hence, the head is a principal officer of the university and member of the university senate, management team as well as other high level committees. This according to the authors makes it mandatory for the head of the university library (University librarian, as it is generally called in Nigeria) to be a high ranking professional librarian with the rank of Professor. This height will enable him participate actively in various positions and assignments that he is involved in.

Quality assurance in university libraries enhances and guarantees value as it provides indicators for assessment of the individual libraries based on the parameters given. The assessment should be regular for continuous improvement. The National Universities Commission (NUC) conducts accreditation exercises as a means of ensuring quality but, it does not seem to have a detailed benchmark for university library like that of the LRCN. The NUC benchmark is embedded in Self Study Form of academic departments and they are open ended questions rather than set criteria. For example, there is no provision for staffing in the study guides. In order to ensure compliance with the set minimum standards and guidelines, provisions are to be made for monitoring and evaluation both by the individual libraries/universities to ensure that the right staff, resources, services, etc, are appropriate for



external bodies such as NUC who conduct accreditation exercises in the universities to ensure their compliance to minimum academic standards and other requirements. For university libraries to meet LRCN Minimum standards and guidelines as well as satisfy stakeholders, an internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism both from the university and the library itself must be properly engaged.

Regrettably however, all of the accreditation exercises do not have librarians as members of the teams. LRCN does not carry out monitoring and evaluation work by way of accreditation or certification of academic libraries, rather they certify and register practitioners, and charge the officers in-charge of the academic libraries to do the job. But this cannot yield good result as it amounts to the university librarians judging themselves. All these lead to poor state of libraries.

Poor state of libraries and its services would result to poor usage which would also lead to poor students' academic performance, poor information literacy skills for lifelong learning, the hallmark is the university library not being able to meet up with its objectives. This study, therefore, sought to assess the level of compliance of university libraries in North-West Nigeria to the LRCN set standards and guidelines as well as the coverage of the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) during library accreditation.

### **Statement of Problem**

The concept of quality assurance is much more felt in higher education than other levels of education. This is because the society looks up to them for individual and societal advancement. The universities depend on their libraries to fulfill these societal expectations. Hence, Okunu, Akalumhe and Monu 2011 (in Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe (2014) described the university library as the heart and blood of the university. This means that universities libraries are rallying point of all research and academic activities in the universities by collecting, processing, preserving and dissemination of various information holding materials in all formats relevant to the course of studies in the university. In realizing this, the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria in 2014 produced a document prescribing expected standards and minimum guidelines to be met by academic libraries which include staffing, ICT and administration/governance for effective and efficient service delivery. This study was therefore designed to examine the compliance of university libraries in North-West Nigeria with the LRCN set standards and guidelines.

### **Brief Background of the North-West Nigeria**

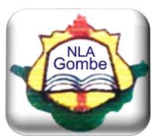
North-West Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones in the country and it is made up of seven (7) states namely Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. The zone has about 18 universities, both public and private NUC (2019). See appendix. This zone is home to the two major tribes of Northern Nigeria, Hausa and Fulani Wiki (2021) as well as other minority tribes, with Islam as the predominant religion followed by Christianity as well as native religion. The occupation of the zone is predominantly farming, cattle rearing, fishing, etc.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the compliance of university libraries in North-West Nigeria with the LRCN (2014) Minimum Standards & Guidelines.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the North-West Nigerian Universities compliance to LRCN's MS & G on Staffing.
2. Assess the North-West Nigerian Universities compliance to LRCN's MS & G on ICT.



3. Examine the North-West Nigerian Universities compliance to LRCN's MS & G on Governance/Administration.
4. Ascertain NUC level of coverage in university libraries
5. Determine whether there is an internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism
6. Ascertain the factors inhibiting university libraries compliance to the LRCN M.S.& G.

### **Research questions**

1. Are universities libraries in Northwest, Nigeria complying with the LRCN MS & G on Staffing?
2. Are universities libraries in Northwest complying with the LRCN MS & G on ICT?
3. Are universities libraries in Northwest, Nigeria complying with the LRCN MS & G on Governance/Administration?
4. What is NUC's level of coverage during accreditation in Universities Libraries?
5. Do Universities have an internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism?
6. What are the factors inhibiting Universities libraries from complying with LRCN MS & G?

### **Review of Literature**

The literature review was done under three sub-headings: staffing in academic library, ICT in academic library and administration/governance in academic library:

#### **Concept of Quality Assurance**

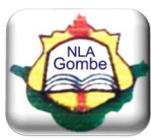
The National Universities Commission NUC defines quality assurance as the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of, education, scholarship and infrastructure are constantly maintained.(Men & Israel, 2017).

#### **LRCN Minimum Standards and Guidelines**

LRCN was established by Act of 1995 with the mandate to develop libraries in Nigeria through regulatory policies, guidelines and standards. In pursuance to this mandate, the Council developed Draft Minimum Standards and Guidelines for academic library (LRCN 2014) and available at [www.lrcn.ng.gov](http://www.lrcn.ng.gov).

Staffing is a must in any organization, including the university library. No matter how well established in terms of equipment and facilities without human resource of different categories in quantity and quality, that organization may never achieve its goals. No wonder, Shehu (2012) states that LRCN has given a clear and unequivocal definition of different staff categories in librarianship and the level of training appropriate for each of the categories. This level of training has helped academic libraries designate duties to staff appropriately.

Issa, Idowu, Amusan, Ojokuku, Adedeji and Oguntayo (2016) studied staffing implications of the four university libraries in Ilorin, Kwara State and revealed that with the exception of Landmark University Library the other three, University of Ilorin Library, Al-Hakim Library and Kwara State University Library, have inadequate staff in relation to their total collection, as well as in relation to their user population. Furthermore, Al-Hakim, Kwara State University Library also has challenges of inadequate mix and number of staff. University of Ilorin Library has a bottom heavy staffing situation with shortage of both middle and upper levels of both academic and paraprofessionals. In another study at the Federal University of Technology Minna Library, Men and Israel (2017) revealed that 19(29%) of the respondents are professional staff, 18(28%) are para-professional while 28 (43%) of the respondents are non-professional staff. The result therefore showed that the library has higher number of non-professional staff.



According to Adebayo (2009) ICT has been widely discussed in all spheres of life, including the library. The importance of ICT to library development is crucial. ICT help libraries provide e-resources to augment its physical materials holding. This corroborate the position of Uzoagba and Okiche (2018) that libraries use online search to search for useful websites and articles because it is not possible for any one library to acquire all needed materials, hence, most Nigerian libraries rely on online resources to complement their collection. This underscores the importance of ICT in academic library, hence the need for implementable ICT policies both by the institution and the library. However, Ekong 2005 (in Adebayo, 2009) noted that the current ICT infrastructure in Nigeria cannot enable Nigerians or Nigerian universities to participate fully in the global information society. However, the narrative seems to have been changing, though gradually.

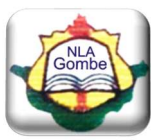
This is evident in some studies, for example, Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) discovered that there is high availability of ICT facilities/components in Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL), Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The study by Madumere, Uwakwe and Mbajiorgu (2015) reported high availability of ICT-based facilities in University of Nigeria library. The findings have shown that Nigerian university libraries are embracing ICT, though slowly, perhaps due to paucity of fund. This is corroborated by the finding of Ekere, Ugwu and Ekere (2014) that poor funding is one of the problems of ICT development in university library.

The study of Umeozor & Emasealu (2016) indicated that of all the nine criteria they listed for assessing quality assurance performance in academic libraries, leadership was the most important. The result of their findings showed that University of Ibadan scored 16 (100%), University of Lagos 15 (100%) and Obafemi Awolowo University 8 (100%). The result is an indication that leadership plays a very important role in quality assurance performance.

Experience has shown that during accreditation exercises in university libraries, NUC do not ask or go through library staff file so as to ascertain staff appropriateness. This is because it does not have any set criteria, unlike what obtains in academic department where they scrutinize staff lists and files to make sure there is adherence to their benchmark. In line with this, Sali and Abubakar (2012) say that there were hardly any serious assessments made on the quantity and quality of the library staff manning the collection. They argue that effectiveness and adequacy of the libraries' equipment as it relates to the aims and objectives for which they were established hardly receive the attention of the accreditation panels.

However, Men and Israel (2017) reported that the library criteria provided in NUC self study form only seek to get few information about the universities main libraries during accreditation: Name of highest officer in-charge of the main library, designation, Salary Grade Level, useable floor area in m<sup>2</sup>, population of students served, sitting capacity, library opening and closing hours, lending policy (both for academic staff and students), list of all books (which include journals and related facilities). They also seek the acquisition policy and professional services offered by the library (description of the services offered including deliberate efforts made to ensure maximum use of the library by both staff and students). Also services rendered to new students to be able to use the library effectively and to enable them to obtain materials from other libraries in the environment and within Nigeria.

On the application of quality assurance mechanism for effective library services in academic libraries in Nigeria, Sali and Abubakar (2012) discovered that it is only the general methods of programme accreditation and benchmarking of library systems that were used with each scoring 70%. Other mechanisms that were listed like Managerial Models - TOM, ISO (9000) Series and LIBQUAL Standards measures, establishment of internal quality assurance



division/section in the libraries, establishment of taskforce on quality assurance and engagement of consultants/specialists with response scores between 10 and 70 % showed they were not commonly adopted by the university libraries. Their findings, they report, is in line with that of Hayward (2006), Winkworth (2001), Ayoo (2001), Natarajan (2000) which identified programme accreditation as the main method used in University Libraries especially in Africa as quality assurance mechanism and strategy.

Osinulu and Amusa (2010) posit that there are minimum standards for academic libraries as prescribed by the American Library Association, (ALA), Nigerian Library Association (NLA), National Universities Commission (NUC) Nigeria Committee of University Librarians of Nigerian Universities (CULNU), and others. But on the contrary, a later study by Sali and Abubakar (2012) affirm that there are no established uniform standards for the evaluation of the university libraries, hence, the difficulty in determining which library was more qualitative than the other. Thus they found a great need to establish uniform standards for the evaluation of university libraries in Nigeria. Corroborating their report, Umeozor and Emasealu (2016) recommended in their later study that standards and guidelines should be developed to assess the activities of academic libraries in order to ensure excellent service delivery. However, the last two studies negates the provisions of Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (2014) particularly that of Umeozor and Emasealu (2016) which was carried out two years after the presentation of the LRCN draft.

### **Methodology**

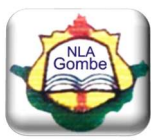
The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The targets of this study are the university librarians. The population was 14 universities' librarians in the federal and state universities in North-West Nigeria. Purposive sampling was adopted, that allows for the study of the whole population because it is convenient for the researchers to do so. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire which was designed to give the respondents opportunity to supply additional information. Respondents were given time to complete and return the questionnaire. Therefore, 14 questionnaires were distributed and 10 were completed and returned giving a response rate of 71.4%. The data was analysed using frequency and percentages and presented in tables.

### **Presentation of Results**

**Table 1:** Demographic data of Respondents

S/N	DESCRIPTION	No
1	Years of Experience as Principal/Deputy University Librarian	
	1-5	5(50%)
	6-10	4(40%)
2	Years of Experience as University Librarian	
	1-2	3(30%)
	2-5	5(50%)

Table 1 above shows the demographic data of the respondents as regards, their years of experience as a Principal or Deputy University Librarian as well as their years of experience as the University Librarian. From the result 5(50%) spent 1-5 yrs and 4 (40%) spent 6-10 years as Principal/Deputy University Librarian respectively. While those who have spent 1-2 years as University Librarians were 3(30%) and those between 2-5 years were 5(50%).



**Table 2:** Response on staff strength

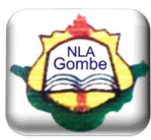
S/N	Description	Staff Strength	Professional	Para-professional	Support staff	Staff-Collection Ratio	Staff-User Ratio
1.	Maitama Sule University Library, Kano	79	34 (43%)	21(26.5%)	14(18%)	-	-
2.	Federal University Birnni Library, Birnni Kebbi	36	8(22%)	5(14%)	23(64%)	1:436	1:125
3.	Kebbi State University Library, Aliero	77	9(12%)	37(48%)	31(40%)	-	-
4.	Federal University Gusau Library, Gusau	64	5(8%)	5(8%)	54(84%)	-	-
5.	Sokoto State University Library, Sokoto	25	8(32%)	5(20%)	12(45%)	-	-
6.	Umaru Musa Ya'Adua University Library, Katsina	39	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Kaduna State University Library, Kaduna	81	24(30%)	36(44%)	21(26%)	-	-
8.	Bayero University Library, Kano	158	73(46%)	52(32%)	24(15%)	-	1:124
9.	Federal University Library Dutsima,	66	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Federal University Library Dutse,	72	20(28%)	32(44%)	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>181 (26%)</b>	<b>193 (28%)</b>	<b>179 (26%)</b>		

The above table shows the total number of staff of the libraries. The result revealed a total of 697 staff in the 10 libraries. Para-professionals have the highest number 193(28%), followed by Professionals 181(25.1%) and the support staff the least with 179(26%). According to the result, Bayero University Library has the highest number of staff 158 with 73(46%) professional staff, 52(32%) para-professional staff and 24(15%) support staff. Sokoto State University has the lowest staff population 25, with 8(32%) professional, 5(20%) para-professional and 12 (45%) support staff respectively. This same library has the closest percentage to the LRCN MS & G with 32% professional and 65% para-professionals and support staff 65%. On staff collection and user population ratios, only Federal University Birnni Kebbi library and Bayero University, Kano responded as 1:436 and 1:125 and 1:124 respectively.

**Research Question 1:** Are universities' libraries in North-West, Nigeria complying with the NLRC standard & guidelines on staffing?

**Table 3:** Percentage rate of compliance with LRCN MS & G on staffing

S/N	Items	Yes	No
1.	Professional staff that constitutes 35% of total staff strength and others 65% as recommended by LRCN	6(60%)	4(40%)
2.	Professional librarians with first degree in LIS	10(100%)	0(0%)



3.	Professional librarians with first degree in another discipline and Masters in library and Information Science	5(50%)	5(50%)
4.	Professional staff with evidence of publications in scholarly works	4(40%)	6(60%)
5.	Professional staff that have ICT competencies and literacy skills	8(80%)	2(20%)
6.	Para-professionals that have OND/Diploma in Library and Information Science	8(80%)	2(20%)
7.	Professional librarians registered with the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN)	10(100%)	0(0%)
8.	Written policy that clearly establishes staff status, rights, and responsibilities consistent with sound personnel management	6(60%)	4(40%)
9.	Involvement in the recruitment, screening and selection of library staff	9(90%)	1(10%)
10.	Library being under-staffed	8(80%)	1(10%)
11.	Library being under-staffed	1(10%)	9(90%)
12.	Professional staff that have the needed skills, and academic training to meet the academic needs of the institution, and to provide management support	8(80%)	2(20%)
13.	Regular participation of staff in continuing formal and informal education	10(100%)	0(0%)

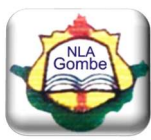
Table 3 above shows response to university libraries compliance with NLRC MS & G on Staffing and it shows that 6(60%) said Yes that their professional staff constituted 35% of total staff strength and others 65%. While 1(10%) agreed to having Professional librarians with BLIS degree. The result also showed that they have equal response 5 (50%) each for Yes and No on Professional librarians with first degree in another discipline and Masters in library and Information Science. However, 6 (60%) said No to professional staff having evidence of publication of scholarly works.

**Research Question 2:** Are universities' libraries in North-West complying with the NLRC standard and guidelines on ICT?

**Table 4:** Percentage rating of compliance to NLRC ms&gon Information and Communication Technology

S/N	ICT facilities in the library for services and operations	Yes	No
14.	Library has space for installation of computers for users	10(10%)	0 (0%)
15.	There are established ICT policies to guide adoption and maintenance of ICT gadgets	5(50%)	5(50%)
16.	There are ICT hardware and software provided to adequately facilitate the information management needs of the library	7(70%)	3(30%)
17.	There are library systems installed to support data exchange using standard protocols and formats	4(40%)	6(60%)
18.	There are ICT infrastructure and systems that integrate with the university-wide ICT environment	8(80%)	2(20%)
19.	There is adequate ICT personnel for computer maintenance	8(80%)	2(20%)
20.	Information resources are digitized	5(50%)	5(50%)
21.	Immediate plan to digitize	5(50%)	50(50%)
22.	Dedicated web page for the users to access library electronic resources any time anywhere	6(60%)	4(40%)
23.	Library is automated	3(30%)	7(70%)
24.	Immediate plan to automate	6(60%)	40%
25.	ICT facilities available		
	i. Bar code printer	3(30%)	7(70%)
	ii. Bar code readers	3(30%)	7(70%)
	iii. Close Circuit TV camera	2(20%)	8(80%)
	iv. Combodrive	2(20%)	8(80%)
	v. Digital/web cameras	3(30%)	7(70%)
	vi. Fax	0(0%)	10(100%)
	vii. LCD projector	8(80%)	2(20%)
	viii. Microphones	6(60%)	4(40%)
	ix. Microfiche reader	1(10%)	9(90%)
	x. Microfilm reader	1(10%)	9(90%)
	xi. OHPFilm projector	1(10%)	9(90%)
	xii. Photocopy machine	10(100%)	0(0%)





xiii. Rewritable/Writable DVDs	10(100%)	0(0%)
xiv. Speakers	7(70%)	3(30%)
xv. Telephone	4(40%)	6(60%)
xvi. Television	7(70%)	3(30%)
xvii. Telex	0(0%)	10(100%)
xviii. Video Cassette Recorder/ Video Cassette Player	3(30%)	7(70%)
xix. Scanners	10(100%)	0(0%)
xx. Radio	1(10%)	9(90%)

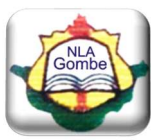
Table 4 above shows the university librarians’ response on the minimum standards and guidelines on ICT facilities in their universities. All of them 10 (100%) agreed that they have space for installation of computers for users. The librarians that agree that there are ICT infrastructure and systems that integrate with the university-wide ICT environment and adequate personnel for computer maintenance, 8(80%). It was a fifty-fifty response on ICT policies to guide adoption and maintenance of ICT gadgets. There is a high response, of agreement, 5 (50%) and disagreement 6 (60%) on immediate plan to digitize and automate respectively.

**Research Question 3:** Are universities’ libraries in North-West, Nigeria, complying with the NLRC standard and guidelines on Governance/Administration?

**Table 5:** Percentage rate of compliance to NLRC MS & G on Governance /Administration

S/N	Librarian’s involvement in governance and administration	Yes	No
27.	Full time Librarian with requisite higher degree in Library and information Science and the desirable managerial administrative skills and experience	9(90%)	1(10%)
28.	Have academic status and interact with faculty members on curricular and instructional matters and research activities	10(100%)	0(0%)
29.	The library is established with the act that established the university	10(100%)	0(0%)
30.	The vision, mission, goals and objectives of the university library is clearly reflected and implemented in the annual plans of the library	9(90%)	1(10%)
31.	The vision and mission of the library in line with the wider vision and mission of the parent institution	10(100%)	0(0%)
32.	There is a library organogram indicating hierarchy and relationship of the component parts of the library	9(90%)	1(10%)
33.	The supervision and control of the academic library is clearly defined within the organizational structure of the parent institution	10(100%)	0(10%)
34.	A Senate member of the university	10(100%)	0(10%)
35.	Have a clearly written authority and responsibility as the head of the library	10(100%)	0(10%)
36.	Library Advisory/Development Committee headed by the Vice Chancellor or the Deputy Vice Chancellor	10(100%)	0(10%)
37.	Library Advisory/Development Committee is properly constituted (comprising representatives of student body, faculty and institution’s administration)	8(80%)	2(20%)
38.	Submission of a written annual report to inform the management and the university community of the library’s activities, accomplishment, problems and needs for development	9(90%)	1(10%)
39.	Plans for continuous development and improvement of library resources and services	9(90%)	1(10%)

The table above presents results on governance and administration. It revealed that 10 (100%) respondents who are all universities librarians responded positively to items 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36 of their involvement in various issues in management and administration of the universities’ libraries. However, filling the provision for additional information, one of the librarians complained not being part of decisions for acquisition of library facilities. According to the officer, the library vote is not spent by the librarian and that TETFUND interventions are always handled by the Vice Chancellor’s office.



**Research Question 4:** What is NUC’s level of coverage during accreditation in university libraries?

**Table 6:** NUC’s library coverage during programme accreditations

S/N	Items	Yes	No
40.	Quantity of Information Resources (vols. & titles)	10(100%)	0(10%)
41.	Currency of information resources	10(100%)	0(10%)
42.	Seating capacity	10(100%)	0(10%)
43.	Size of the usable floor areas in m <sup>2</sup> for reading	8(80%)	2(20%)
44.	Size of the usable floor areas in m <sup>2</sup> for shelves	8(80%)	2(20%)
45.	Size of the usable floor areas in m <sup>2</sup> for offices	3(30%)	7(70%)
46.	Adequacy/comfortability of office accommodation	6(60%)	4(40%)
47.	Adequacy of office furniture and equipment	4(40%)	6(60%)
48.	Total number of staff	8(80%)	2(20%)
49.	Staff ratios (to students, collections and among the various staff categories) as required by LRCN	2(20%)	8(80%)
50.	Staff qualification and competency	7(70%)	3(30%)
51.	Staff files	4(40%)	6(60%)
52.	Library policy documents (collection development, ICT, staff development, recruitment, user education, quality assurance, lending etc)	5(50%)	5(50%)
53.	E-library facilities and resources	10(10%)	0(10%)
54.	Opening hours	10(100%)	0(10%)
55.	Library book-student ratio	8(80%)	2(20%)
56.	Evidence of the university Librarians involvement in university management tasks and decision making	5(50%)	5(50%)
57.	University library faculty collaborations in the areas of instructions, instructional materials curriculum development etc.	4(40%)	6(60%)
58.	University libraries, vision, mission, philosophy, core values as well as goals and objectives to see if they are in line with that of the university	5(50%)	5(50%)
59.	Library’s administrative structure	7(70%)	3(30%)
60.	Evidence of Library Advisory Committee/Library Development Committee	5(50%)	4(40%)
61.	Evidence of the library involvement in its budget	5(50%)	5(50%)

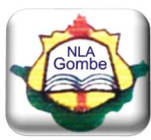
Table 6 above shows NUC’s library coverage during programme accreditations. Five of the items scored 10 (100%) response on whether the NUC ask for the Quantity of Information Resources (vols. & titles) that the library has, Currency of information resources, the Seating capacity, e-library facilities and resources, as well as library opening hours. The findings further showed a negative response of 8 (80%) on whether the NUC ask for staff ratios (to students, collections and among the various staff categories) as required by LRCN.

**Research Question 5:** Does the university have an internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism?

**Table 7:** Percentage rating of internal quality assurance mechanisms available

S/N	QA Mechanism	Yes	No
62.	There is established taskforce/accreditation committee for the library	8(80%)	2(20%)
63.	Has Internal quality assurance division/section in the library	3(30%)	7(70%)
64.	Apply managerial models like TQM, ISO 9000 series and LIB-QUAL standards measures	1(10%)	9(90%)

The above table presents the result on internal quality assurance mechanisms available in the universities libraries in North-West, Nigeria. It shows that almost all the libraries, 8 (80%) established taskforce/accreditation committee for the library. 70%do not have quality assurance division, section or unit, while only 3 (30%) claimed to have such office. One librarian claimed to be applying managerial models like TQM, ISO 9000 series and LIB-QUAL standards measures.



In addition, one of the librarians claimed that he used to hold senior staff meeting at the end of every semester to review their performance.

**Research Question 6:** What are the factors inhibiting University libraries from complying with LRCN Standard & Guideline?

**Table 8:** Percentage rating of factors inhibiting the universities libraries in compliance with the LRCN, MS & G

S/N	Factors	Yes	No
64.	Poor funding	8(80%)	2(20%)
65.	Non co-operation of the university management	3(30%)	7(70%)
66.	Non-involvement of LRCN in library accreditation	7(70%)	3(70%)
67.	Ignorant of some academic librarians of the existence and provisions of the LRCN standards and guidelines	6(60%)	4(40%)
68.	Lack of synergy between NUC and LRCN	6(60%)	4(30%)
69.	NUC's non coverage of all the LRCN requirements	4(40%)	6(60%)
70.	Lack of internal quality assurance mechanism in the university libraries	5(50%)	5(50%)
71.	Poor working relationship between the Vice Chancellors and the University Librarians	5(50%)	5(50%)

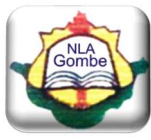
The above table indicates that poor funding, 8 (80%) was the highest factor inhibiting university libraries from complying with the LRCN MS & G. followed by non-involvement of LRCN in NUC library accreditations. On item 65, 7(70%) respondents disagreed while 3(30%) agreed. lack of synergy between NUC and LRCN, 6 (60%) responded in affirmative while items 70 and 71 had equal response rate of 50 (50%) of positive and negative respectively.

### Discussion of major findings

One of the major findings from the study is that the libraries have fairly enough staff for their various sizes and ages but none of them met the LRCN (2014) MS & G on staffing strength (ratio) which requires a good combination of the library staff; professional 35% and the other two (para-professional and support staff) 65%. Both on individual and aggregate, the ratio was not met. It is either they are over or below the percentage. The closest was Sokoto State University library. These findings therefore are not entirely in line with LRCN (2014) MS & G. The findings are an indication of either shortage or over staffed situation. This is line with the findings of Men and Israel (2017) which discovered higher number of Non-professional staff and Issa et al. (2016) who reported inadequate staff in relation to total collection, as well as in relation to their user population.

The place of human resources in a library is paramount, because without adequate personnel (right qualification, number, and highly motivated), libraries cannot perform their duties and render services to its users effectively and efficiently. In a situation of under staffing, it leads to a situation where a staff has to take up more workloads than would have been the case, and if over staffed, creates redundancy, crowded offices, truancy and even confusion, thereby affecting productivity. This, obviously, puts user satisfaction and fulfillment of the library objectives to doubt.

Another findings of this study revealed that the libraries compliance with LRCN ms&g on ICT was not complete. Half of them do not have clearly written ICT policies. Without a written ICT policy and any other policy at that, programme implementation would be very difficult as things will tend to be done haphazardly. This study is similar to that of Okeke *et al* (2010) who revealed that ICT facilities are available in university libraries in South East

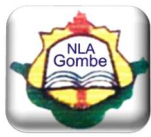


Nigeria in what can be said to be a reasonable level. However, the study of Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) reported high availability of ICT facilities in Kashim Ibrahim Library (KIL), Ahmadu Bello University. The finding shows that Nigerian universities libraries are embracing ICT, though not as rapid and fully as it is expected of them. The idea of the world being a global village driven by ICT is a reality and requires full participation to be able to benefit from the high flow of information for the benefit of the university research community.

Another finding of the study indicated that university librarians participated actively in managing their libraries as well as on issues concerning their universities. This is in consonance with the LRCN ms&g on administration /governance of universities libraries. This is similar to the findings of Umeozor & Emasealu (2016) which indicated that of all the nine criteria they listed for assessing quality assurance performance in academic libraries, leadership was the most important. The result is an indication that leadership plays a very important role in quality assurance performance and that the universities librarians participate in the governance of the universities and their libraries. However, one of the librarians was courageous enough to claim not to be part of decisions for acquisition of library facilities, spending of library votes as well as Tetfund interventions. This is not a good development, if the librarians are getting their appropriated budgetary allocations and be allowed as user departments to take decisions on their needs, most of their financial challenges would have been met. Some of acquisitions and purchases done on behalf of the library ended up being things that are not in their priority list, sub-standard or outdated.

The study revealed that the NUC accreditation team covers only the quantity of information resources (vols. & titles), currency of information resources, the seating capacity, e-library facilities and resources, library opening hours and few others. This is in agreement with the submission of Men and Israel (2017) that National Universities Commission (NUC) seeks to get information on useable floor area in m<sup>2</sup>, sitting capacity, library opening and closing hours, among others. It was also shown that NUC does not ask for all ratios (to users, collections and among the various staff categories) as required by LRCN. This finding is contrary to the demand of the LRCN (2014) on this and is also in line with the position of Sali and Abubakar (2012) that the NUC accreditation exercises seem to neglect the user/library staff ratio among other things. The finding shows that NUC panel do not check staff matters, library furniture and accommodation for staff, and that majority of the demands of LRCN (2014) are not adequately covered, unlike the academic programme departments, hence possible poor provision of needed library staff and furniture, which in turn affects the performance of the libraries during accreditation and service delivery. This non compliance could be as a result of poor synergy between LRCN and NUC such that NUC use only what they have in their Self Study Form (as it concerns library) for the academic programme undergoing accreditation.

The findings on internal quality assurance mechanism indicated preference for taskforce and/or accreditation committee. This could be ad-hoc, particularly with regard to taskforce. That is to say that, it is only during accreditation exercise that universities libraries remember to assess and prepare themselves and make efforts to provide needed materials, hence, things are done haphazardly with the aim of “pass and pass out”. This corroborates the discovery of Sali and Abubakar (2012) in their study of application of quality assurance mechanism for effective library services in academic libraries in Nigeria, that it is only the general methods of programme accreditation and benchmarking of library systems that were used. Their finding they said is in line with that of Hayward (2006), Winkworth (2001), Ayoo (2001),



Natarajan (2000) all of which identified programme accreditation as the main method used in universities libraries especially in Africa as quality assurance mechanism. There is therefore need for adoption of more quality assurance mechanism which will help the library evaluate itself regularly along laid down ms&g before accreditation as well as be more proactive for effective service delivery in the present day ever demanding library environment.

The study also revealed poor funding as the highest factor inhibiting universities libraries from complying with the LRCN MS & G. It is rather worrisome that university libraries, despite Tetfund interventions are yet to come out from the woods. However, the reason for this could be as a result of little or no participation of the user department/university librarian in the decision of library needs, and also, non-remittance of statutory library votes meant for the annual development of the university library to the library. This position is supported by the claim of one of the respondents in this study, that library vote is not spent for the library and that even the Tetfund library intervention is largely handled by the Vice Chancellor's office. This means that the library is at the mercy of the chief executive, where it will take his/her commitment and will-power to see that the library is developed. Another finding worth mentioning is then on involvement of LRCN in NUC library accreditations. Other professional bodies are fully involved in the accreditation of their professional programmes in the universities. Why the LRCN is not fully involved directly or indirectly is worrisome situation.

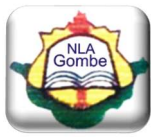
### **Conclusion**

The study looked at how university libraries in Northwest Nigeria comply with the LRCN, ms&g. The ms&g were provided to help the libraries be on a good footing to serve their users effectively and efficiently. Findings from the study showed that the libraries have fairly enough staff for their various sizes and ages but none of them met the LRCN (2014) ms&g on staffing strength (ratio). Also, the libraries compliance with LRCN ms&g on ICT was found not to be complete. Another finding of the study is that University Librarians participated actively in managing their libraries as well as in university issues, which is in compliance with the LRCN ms&g. Further findings showed that NUC accreditation teams do not cover all the requirements of LRCN ms&g and more preference for taskforce and or accreditation committee was revealed for internal quality assurance mechanism. Poor funding was revealed as the highest factor inhibiting university libraries from complying with the LRCN ms&g.

The fore going shows that university libraries in the Northwest did not comply wholly with the LRCN, ms&g on staffing, ICT but to a large extent complied with administration/governance requirement. This narrative need to change for good so that the libraries can be fully equipped to render world class library and information services expected of them in this information age characterized by information explosion.

### **Recommendations**

1. University libraries should make effort to have the right categories of staff in quality and quantity as this will enable them to have the right ratio to students, collection and staff as demanded by LRCN (2014). To enable them to deliver effective and efficient service and fulfill their objectives.
2. University librarians, on the other hand, should endeavour to fully comply with the LRCN ms&g on ICT by drafting a workable ICT policy documents and ensure the adherence and implementation of the policy to the letter to ensure coordinated and resourceful ICT environment that will enable their community participate

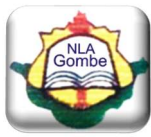


actively in today's global village driven by ICT. Also they should ensure the provision of necessary ICT facilities to augment what government provided. They should establish linkages/collaborations with donor individuals and agencies.

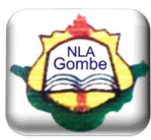
3. There should be a synergy between the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian Libraries Association (NLA) and Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) so that NUC can adopt the LRCN Draft Document and enrich their benchmark.
4. University Librarians should adopt more internal quality assurance mechanisms so as to always make sure that required standards are reached and always maintained ahead of accreditation visits, not engaging in fire brigade approach.
5. Universities Chief Executives should allow Librarians to participate actively as user department in all tetfund library interventions as well as ensure release of library votes for library projects so as to meet up with the LRCN requirements.

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### APPENDIX

**Table 8:** List of the seven States with location of the Eighteen Universities in North West Nigeria

S/N	North West States	NAME OF UNIVERSITIES	STATUS
1	Jigawa State	1. Federal University Dutse 2. Jigawa State University Kafin Hausa	Federal State
2	Kano State	1. Bayero University Kano (BUK) 2. Police Academy, Wudil 3. Maitam Sulet University Kano 4. Kano State University of Science and Technology Wudil 5. Skyline University, Nigeria, Kano State	Federal Federal State State Private
3	Kaduna State	1. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (ABU) 2. Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna 3. Kaduna State University, Kaduna	Federal Federal State
4	Katsina State	1. Federal University Dutse-ma 2. Katsina State University 3. Al Q'uaran University Katsina	Federal State Private
5	Zamfara State	1. Federal University Gusau (FUGUS)	Federal
6	Sokoto State	1. Usmanu Danfodyio University Sokoto (UDUS) 2. Sokoto State University Sokoto	Federal State
7	Kebbi State	1. Federal University BininKebbi 2. Kebbi State University of Science and Technology	Federal State

Sources: NUC Bulletin (2020)