



MANAGING PROJECTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: CASE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AKURE LIBRARY RESOURCES RELOCATION PROJECT

MICHAEL OLORUNFEMI
ayobamferanmi@yahoo.com

&

DEBORAH ADEOLA IPADEOLA
adeola.ipadeola@yahoo.com
Federal University of Technology, Akure, Library, Akure,
Ondo State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study examines project management in academic libraries. Specific purposes includes; success factors of the project; challenges encountered during relocation of library resources; completion of the project in time and within the budget provision. Relevant literatures were reviewed. Survey research design was adopted for the research; the population of this study comprise of all 93 staff of university library of Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA). Random sampling was used to select 58 staff out of 93 staff, 50 out of the questionnaire distributed were returned. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies, and simple percentages. The finding shows that the project was successful; completed within the stated time and within the budget provision. Success factors in library resources relocation project in FUTA library were university management's support of the project from the outset; scope, objectives, and goals of the project understood by the stakeholders; appropriate and clear communications; timely release of fund for the project; good monitoring and controlling of the project by library management. Major challenges encountered during the project were inadequate provision for hazard management and inadequate manpower.

Keywords: *Academic library, Library resources, Project management, Relocation project*

Introduction

A university library occupies the central and primary place in teaching and research, for any library to continue to meet the diverse and growing needs of educational programme at the undergraduate, post-graduate and research levels there is need for expansion of facilities, improvement of services and modern resources. Level of services and resources provided by the university library will greatly determine the extent the universities achieve their goals. In lieu of this, project management has to be part of everyday work of librarians. They have to be up and doing in monitoring and controlling throughout the project life cycle. Allan (2004) defines project management as a process of using a range of management skills and techniques to successfully carry out a project. The types of activities involved in project management according to Allan includes: thinking ahead, carrying out research, planning what happens where and when, managing the people and resources, monitoring the project, changing the plan, communicating with people, evaluating the project. According American Academy of Project Management (2017) a project is a one-time activity that produces a specific output and/or outcome. Projects are complex works subjected to significant time, budget and quality constraints.



Project management includes developing a project plan, which involves defining and confirming the project goals and objectives, how they will be achieved, identifying tasks and quantifying the resources needed, and determining budgets and timelines for completion. It also includes managing the implementation of the project plan, along with operating regular controls to ensure that there is accurate and objective information on performance relative to the plan, and the mechanisms to implement recovery actions where necessary. Projects often follow major phases or stages, for example: feasibility, definition, planning, implementation, evaluation and realization. Given the abundance of projects resulting from operational planning in libraries and other information services, project management is an appropriate tool that makes it possible for these cultural institutions to reach their objectives.

Making a project succeed is no simple task. The difficulties manifest themselves in (extreme) delays, (extreme) budget over-runs, inadequate results, dissatisfied customers, high stress among the project team and other undesirable outcomes. Projects are becoming increasingly common. Project-based working methods have also found their way into non-profit organisations, including libraries of all sorts; rules of the game for projects in non-profit organisations differ from those in commercial organisations. Political factors play a particularly important role in non-profit organisations. This makes it even more difficult for projects to succeed, compared to projects in which commercial aspects play a part. Despite the fact that libraries are undertaking projects to accomplish their goals and objectives, there is little information in the library literature about how libraries, large and small, are managing their projects. While organizations in both the public and private sector have embraced formal project management (PM) methodologies such as those espoused by the Project Management Institute, there is little evidence that libraries are using formal or standardized approaches. It is based on this that this research attempts to find the most important reasons for success of library resources relocation project from the perspectives of the staff of FUTA Library.

Background Information of Federal University of Technology, Akure, Library

Federal University of Technology, Akure, library was established in 1981 along with the University under a drive by the government of Nigeria to create universities that specialise in producing graduates with practical as well as theoretical knowledge of technologies. It is located in Akure, Ondo State. It is established with the objectives of serving the information needs of the university community by supporting all academic programmes offered in the institution. The building is made up of three floors. The Reading areas and offices are evenly distributed within the building complex. The Library presently has over 68,000 volumes of books and above 3,000 journal titles. The Library has been able to actively subscribe to a large array of e-journals and online databases including Science Direct, and TEEAL.

In her over 3 decades of service to the university community and her environs; the Library has grown in size, scope of operation and social responsibility. It has branch libraries located in all the eight schools. The library is strategically located at the centre of the campus to ease accessibility from every direction of the campus. The library moved to the second phase of the ultra-modern building in May, 2016, which covers a floor space area of 1,614.74sq.m and can sit 4,500 readers at a time. The building is a two storey building of imposing size designed to accommodate the variety of resources, facilities and services the library has to offer to her user community.

Statement of the Problem

With so many tasks going on simultaneously during a project's lifecycle, picking, packing and moving library materials can be very time consuming and expensive. While it is given that certain tasks would certainly leverage others to come to fruition while other tasks are also necessary for the overall execution of the project; it can be quite overwhelming getting team members to focus on the key result areas in a project. This study therefore, seeks to investigate success factors in project management and how library managers are able to cope with the challenges involved in relocation of library resources.



Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to find out:

1. Success factors of the project.
2. The factors that led to timely completion of the project.
3. The factors that made the project fall within the budget provision.
4. Challenges encountered during library relocation project.

Research Questions

In order to have a clear understanding of the project, some question needed to be asked:

1. What are the factors that led to successful completion of the project?
2. What are the factors that led to timely completion of the project?
3. What are factors that made the project to fall within the budget provision?
4. What are the challenges encountered during library relocation project?

Significance of the Study

The findings of a study such as this would help the FUTA library managers to have an insight into stages of implementing physical relocation of library resources in a faster and more cost efficient way. The findings of the study would enable Library and Information Science instructors at various LIS schools to see the need for inclusion of project management as courses in library and information science studies. The findings will serve as a reference material to library managers and other library staff who intend to carry out research on a related issue.

Review of Related Literature

The growth of projects in libraries is pervasive Horwath, (2012). Some of the reasons for this trend are the proliferation of technology-related work in libraries, the recent increase in library building and facility projects, a need to collaborate with partners outside the library due to the complexity of the work and declining financial support, as well as the frequency of introducing new services Burich et al. (2006). According to Kinkus not only does the progression of technology seem to be introducing more opportunities for project-based work in libraries, but the increased complexity caused by a project's need for expertise from multiple departments leads to an increased need for project management skills in modern librarian jobs. Wamsley (2009) notes that librarians are frequently implementing new services, upgrading systems and spaces, building partnerships with other groups and organizations within our communities, developing new policies, procedures and training for staff and volunteers, and that “all of these activities involve project work and the need for library staff to have PM knowledge and skills.

Relocation of Library Materials

According to Flood brothers (2016) relocation of library materials includes shifting, merging, or segregating of information materials, planning, tagging, moving, and internal shifting, collection segregation, collection integration, assistance with move planning, scheduling and move sequencing, coordination of new furniture and shelving installations, original floor plan layouts, vacuuming/cleaning of floor and books, hand wiping for fragile materials, sorting and shelving, interfiling of materials from shelving backlogs, sorting and shelving of opening day collections for new or renovated libraries.

Serrano and Aviles (2016) analyzed the discipline of project management in LIS from a professional perspective. They employed quantitative and qualitative methodology based on a questionnaire of 17 items sent to academic librarians. The questions dealt with the geographic origin and institutional affiliation of the respondents, the education of the librarians, their professional experience,



and the library projects in which they have been involved. The survey also asked about the presence of project management as courses in library and information science studies.

Skills and Training Needed by Librarians for Project Success

Marill (2009) uses the acronym PLINC to describe the duties of a project manager: problem solving, leading, influencing, negotiating and communicating. A great introduction for the novice project manager, the article also includes an overview of risk planning, the work breakdown structure (a way to organize and assign work) and team management. Revels also emphasize the importance of communication in PM. In her overview of PM, she states that regular communication is paramount to maintaining control over a project. The author provides a broad overview of the five phases of PM (initiation, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing) and notes that a project is the road map that guides how resources are put into use over a specific period of time.

Burress and Rowell (2016) stated that librarians are increasingly embracing project management to guide their work outside of routine library operations. They argued that some humanities scholars, too, especially within the digital humanities community, are bringing project management techniques to bear on scholarly digital projects. The authors conclude that librarians and their diverse collaborators can apply project management practices to a broad range of research, teaching, and learning projects with collaborators beyond the library. Two case studies illustrate this argument, one from each author's experience: creating a community biodiversity wiki for West-Central Florida and redesigning an interdisciplinary first-year seminar around creating 3-D models of historic Venetian buildings.

Currier, Mirza and Downing (2017) explored how to develop the holistic project management planning (PMP) mindset in different parts of the library when undertaking projects management. They stated that PMP skills do exist within libraries and librarians, but organizational alignment typically does not allow for the most effective applications of librarians' PMP skills to projects management. This article explore how the skills of public services librarians, technical services librarians and administrative librarians align with the PMP phases and the challenges that each kind of librarian has to overcome in completing projects successfully. Wamsley (2009) noted that librarians are frequently implementing new services, upgrading systems and spaces, building partnerships with other groups and organizations within our communities, developing new policies, procedures and training for staff and volunteers, and that all of these activities involve project work and the need for library staff to have Project Management knowledge and skills. Choi and Rasmussen (2007) observed the need for Project Management skills among librarians, particularly those librarians working on digital projects.

Fahad, Mohammed and Mahran (n.d.) in their study on Success and Failure of IT Projects attempts to find the most important reasons for the failure of IT projects in Saudi Arabia. It also investigates the critical success factors (CSFs) of such projects and which ones are most important. In addition, it questions about the definition of project success, and which components are seen by project managers who worked in Saudi Arabia to be the most important ones. Finally, an approximate failure rate of IT projects in Saudi Arabia is presented. According to the findings of this research, the most frequently used definition for a project to be successful is-a project is successful if it is completed on time and to budget, with all features and functions as initially specified. However, this study is a general study that is not targeted to the university setting.

Importance of Communication in Project Management

Revels emphasize the importance of communication in PM. In her overview of PM, she states that regular communication is paramount to maintaining control over a project. The author provides a broad overview of the five phases of PM (initiation, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing) and notes that a project is the road map that guides how resources are put into use over a specific



period of time. Winston and Hoffman conducted a study of course content in ALA-accredited MLIS programs in the U.S. and Canada to determine the amount of content related to the study of PM. Through their analysis of the curricula of MLIS programs, they found that project management courses are included in the curricula of only 3.7% of the LIS programs they studied. They conclude that in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources and the completion of projects that contribute to overall organizational performance, it is necessary to provide appropriate support for those who have project management responsibilities and that it is necessary for professional development and training programs to address issues of project management. Kinkus (2007) echoed this call for PM skills for librarians in her study that entails a literature review and a content analysis of librarian position announcements from College & Research Libraries News from 1993-2004.

Saisi, Ngahu and Kailo (2015) sought to establish the financial factors that affect successful completion of construction projects in public universities. The study sought to determine the influence of access to infrastructure capital on success completion of the aforesaid projects. It was conducted in Egerton University, which is one of the pioneer public universities in Kenya. Descriptive survey was employed. The study targeted staff member attached to the management/administration, project management, accounting/finance, and Auditing Department of Egerton University. Stratified random sampling method was adopted to draw respondents from the target population.

Methodology

This research study was of the survey research design. The target population for the study comprised all 93 staff of university library of Federal University of Technology, Akure. Random sampling was used to select 58 staff out of 93 staff making 53.8%, 50 out of the questionnaire distributed were returned and valid for this research. The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers and it has five main sections, namely; section A-asked questions on respondents' bio data, B-sought information on project Success factors, C-gathered data on completion of project on time, D-solicited data on completion of project within budget provision, E-sought information on challenges encountered on library resources relocation project. The validity of instrument is ascertained by giving the questionnaires to experts in the field of project management and practicing professionals in some academic libraries to scrutinise. A pretext is also carried out by giving the samples of the questionnaires to some staff of the library to fill; this helps the researchers to discover area of weaknesses and strength thereby helping researchers to restructure the questionnaire appropriately. Data collected through the distributed questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, comprising frequency counts, and simple percentage.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demography	No.	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	30	60.0
Female	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0
Age Range		
31-40 Years	13	26.0
41-50 Years	26	52.0
51-60 Years	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0



Educational Qualification		
PhD, MLIS	9	18.0
BLIS / HND	24	48.0
NCE / ND	11	22.0
Others	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

As shown in the table, out of 50 respondents, 30 were males while 20 were females, representing 60% and 40%, respectively. There is also the age range of respondents, 26% of respondents fall between ages 31-40, 52% were between 41-50 years, while 22% were between 51-60 years. Also, overwhelming majority of respondents are holders of either first degree or higher national diploma with 48%, follow by NCE holders with 22%, 18% holds PhD and MLIS while only 12% have other certificates

Research Question 1: What are the factors that led to successful completion of the project?

Table 2: Project Success Factors

S/N	ITEMS	NO.	SA=4	A=3	D=2	SD=1	MEAN
1	Right people were included in the project team	50	20 (40%)	18(36%)	7 (14%)	5 (10%)	3.06
2	Library management ensures that I understand the scope, objectives, and goals of the project	50	17 (34%)	20 (40%)	11 (22%)	2(4%)	3.04
3	The project increased library space	50	19 (38%)	17 (34%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	3.02
4	Management expressed satisfaction with the outcome	50	19 (38%)	17 (34%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	2.98
5	Library management shepherd the project as expected	50	17 (34%)	19 (38%)	8(16%)	6(12%)	2.94
6	Management was supportive of the project from the outset	50	17 (34%)	18 (36%)	9 (18%)	6 (12%)	2.92
7	The project was successful	50	16 (32%)	18 (36%)	9(18%)	7 (14%)	2.86
8	Library management respond to questions or comments related to the project	50	14 (28%)	19 (38%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	2.80
9	There was a clearly defined mission for the project	50	10 (20%)	24 (48%)	10(20%)	6 (12%)	2.76
10	Project roles and responsibilities were clear	50	14 (28%)	15 (30%)	13(26%)	8 (16%)	2.70
11	There was a project plan that detailed goals, timelines, budget and staff	50	11 (22%)	20 (40%)	10 (20%)	9(18%)	2.66
12	The project increased patronage	50	10 (20%)	21 (44%)	11 (22%)	8 (16%)	2.66
13	There was adequate staffing for the project in terms of skilled and unskilled labour involved with the project	50	8 (16%)	11 (22%)	13 (26%)	18(36%)	2.18
Average Mean							2.81
Criterion Mean							2.5

Criteria for drawing inferences from the mean score were established as follows;

3.50 < MIS < 4.00 Strongly Agree

2.50 < MIS < 3.49 Agree

1.50 < MIS < 2.49 Disagree

0.00 < MIS < 1.49 Strongly Disagree

Table 2 indicates the factors that led to successful completion of the project, it could be deduced from the table that majority of respondents agreed that all listed factors led to successful completion of the project; (with mean values X= 3.06, 3.04, 3.02, 2.98, 2.94, 2.92, 2.86, 2.80, 2.76, 2.70, and 2.66 except item 13 that was rated low and ranked last with mean value 2.18). Respondents indicated that staffing for the project in terms of skilled and unskilled labour was inadequate

Research Question 2: What are the factors that led to timely completion of the project?

Table 3: Factors affecting the Timely Completion of the Project

S/N	ITEMS	NO.	SA=4	A=3	D=2	SD=1	MEAN
1	The initial project timeline was realistic	50	22(44%)	13(26%)	11(22%)	4(8%)	3.06
2	Communications were appropriate and clear to enhance timely completion	50	13(26%)	20(40%)	11(22%)	6 (12%)	2.88
3	Projects were completed on time, according to schedule determined at project outset	50	16(32%)	18(36%)	10(20%)	6 (12%)	2.88
4	The project was monitored to ensure plan targets were being met	50	15(30%)	19(38%)	10(20%)	6 (12%)	2.86
5	The project outcome met all specified requirements	50	14(28%)	18(36%)	12(24%)	6(12%)	2.80
6	The project was adequately staffed to enhance timely completion	50	5(10%)	10(20%)	23(46%)	12(24%)	2.16
Average Mean							2.77
Criterion Mean							2.5

Table 3 indicates the responses about the completion of project on time, majority of respondents rated all items listed in the table positive (with X=3.06, 2.88, 2.88, 2.86 and 2.80 respectively, except item 6 that was rated low with mean X=2.16. Respondents indicated that the project was completed on time despite that it was not adequately staffed.

Research Question 3: What are factors that made the project to fall within the budget provision?

Table 4: Completion of Project within Budget Provision

S/N	ITEMS	NO.	SA=4	A=3	D=2	SD=1	MEAN
1	The release of fund for the project was timely	50	14(28%)	19(38%)	11(22%)	6(12%)	2.82
2	The budget for the project was realistic	50	15(30%)	17(34%)	10(20%)	8(16%)	2.78
3	Project was completed within budget prescribed at project outset.	50	12(24%)	22(44%)	9 (18%)	7(14%)	2.78
Average Mean							2.79
Criterion Mean							2.5

Table 4 shows response about the completion of project within budget provision, it could be deduced from the table that majority of respondents agreed that release of fund for the project was timely, the budget for the project was realistic and that project was completed within budget prescribed at project outset, with mean score X=2.82, 2.78 and 2.78, respectively. Respondents agreed that the project fall the budget provision with average mean of 2.79 that is above criterion mean 2.5

Research Question 4: What are the challenges encountered during library resources relocation project?

Table 5: Challenges Encountered on Library Resources Relocation Project

S/N	ITEMS	NO.	SA=4	A=3	D=2	SD=1	MEAN
1	Inadequate provision for hazard management	50	22 (44%)	15 (30%)	8(16%)	5(10%)	3.08
2	Inadequate manpower	50	21 (42%)	14 (28%)	11(22%)	4(8%)	3.04
3	Lack of Commitment to project	50	10 (20%)	9 (18%)	15(30%)	16(32%)	2.26
4	Lack of communication management	50	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	18 (36%)	15(30%)	2.20
5	Lack of Cooperation	50	6(12%)	9 (18%)	16 (32%)	19(38%)	2.04
6	Unrealistic budget	50	5 (10%)	8 (16%)	19 (38%)	18(36%)	1.96
Average Mean							2.43
Criterion Mean							2.5

Table 5 shows responses on challenges encountered during library resources relocation project. It could be inferred from the table that the major challenges encountered are inadequate provision for hazard management and inadequate manpower with mean score $X=3.08$ and 3.04 , respectively. Respondents indicated that budget of the project was realistic, and there was effective communication, cooperation and commitment during library resources relocation project with low mean score $X=1.96$, 2.20 , 2.04 and 2.26 , respectively. It means that the four factors were not significant challenges since they had a mean score below the criterion mean of 2.5 for this study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was crystal clear that there has been no effort to study the practice of project management in FUTA library. This study was the first to discuss project management in FUTA university library. It could be deduced from the study that project management has come to be part and parcel of the 21st century academic library and it demonstrated the importance of project management in librarianship. It is recommended that library schools should introduce project management as a course in their curriculum to enable librarians develop project management skills

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