



**COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE APPROACH IN ACHIEVING QUALITY LIBRARY
SERVICE DELIVERY IN SELECTED ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN OGUN STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated importance of competitive intelligence approach in achieving quality library service delivery. The survey research design was employed for the study. The study population consisted of 71 library personnel from two university libraries (Babcock and Tai Solarin Universities). Total enumeration sampling technique was applied as all members of the population were used for the study. Self-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The study found that Babcock and Tai Solarin Universities libraries use competitive intelligence approach in their service delivery. However, these libraries may not necessarily be using new technological methods in their service delivery due to lack of funds, lack of ICT equipment, etc. Based on the findings, recommendations were made thus, that adequate provision of funds should be made available to libraries in order to purchase computers and other modern ICT equipment that will aid in effective quality service delivery and also help to gain competitive advantage over other libraries around. Libraries should also create prompt awareness and guidelines of various services they offer; the awareness of what is available could lead to its demand and use.

Keywords: *Competitive intelligence, Quality Service delivery, Academic libraries*

Introduction

Competitive intelligence is a systematic and ethical program for gathering, analyzing, and managing information that can affect a company's plans, decisions, and operations (Miller, 2003). According to Liu and Oppenheim (2006), competitive intelligence is both product and a process of making the product; which as a product needs to meet the requirement for both external and internal environments, support decision-making, among others. The authors further asserted that the core

competence of a competitive advantage is the ability of the organization (library), through the integration of ICTs provides timely, relevant, reliable and current information to its clients. Libraries are to embrace this approach to provide adequate, quality and satisfactory services to its users. Quality services, on the other hand, entail meeting the user's demands with current, adequate and quality product and services. For this reason, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and in currency to meet and support users' needs and demands.

While library, overtime, has been known and regarded as a service oriented organization. They offer services by acquiring, organizing, processing, storing, preserving information in various formats, and making them available and accessible to users. Yaya, Achonna and Osisanwo (2014) opined that with the increasing need for information in organizations, information professionals are required to be competitive information leaders utilizing both competitive intelligence and information system to communicate for strategic purposes and remain purposeful in their capacities. It is important to note at this point that library is of no use to users if it fails to meet the needs of the users when requested. Therefore, using competitive intelligence approach will enhance services of libraries and information centers and attract more users to the library, especially, employing information and communication technologies (ICTs) to communicate and provide services to users without their physical presence in the library. However, the level to which these libraries under study employ competitive intelligence approach in their service delivery and in what way(s) is question that requires answer. This study therefore explores the importance of competitive intelligence approach in achieving quality library service delivery in selected university libraries in Ogun State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the level to which libraries employ competitive intelligence approach in achieving quality services delivery;
2. assess the strength of the library in quality services provision;
3. establish library services with competitive edge over other libraries;
4. find out challenges libraries face in their quest to achieve competitive advantage over other libraries; and
5. find out ways to improve library services for competitive advantage.

Review of Related Literature

Competitive Intelligence in Library and Information Centers

Competitive intelligence is defined as the systematic process of collecting, gathering and analyzing external information that will help a company or organization be more competitive (Rataic-Lang and Huynh, 2012; Miller, 2003). Oder (2001) in Mangemba (2011) posit that competitive intelligence has to do not only with the collection of information (from both primary and secondary sources) but also analysis of how that information affects the company's competitive environment and communication of that anal to decision-makers. Mangemba (2011) citing Prescott and Gibbons (1993) in Timberger (2010) noted that competitive intelligence is the evolving process by which the management teams assess the evolution of its industry and capabilities and behaviour of its current and potential competitors to assist in maintaining and developing a competitive advantage. Moreover, Santos and Correia (2010) view competitive intelligence as an information processing routine that looks forward to prepare the organization to compete (and win) in changing environments, whose dynamism is the result of systematic monitoring.

This is the reason Mangemba (2011) iterated that competitive intelligence is critical for organizations to stay abreast of changing market condition and avoid costly mistakes. Going by the above definitions, librarians need to identify library users both internal and external, identify their needs in order to collect current and up-to-date information, analyze and make the information available and accessible to them (users). According to Yap and Rashid (2011), competitive intelligence emerges as one of the measures for companies to face the competitive environments more effectively. The authors expressed that the business environment has become more turbulent and competitive because of advancement of information and communication technologies and globalization, of which libraries, though service oriented are not left out. Thus, gaining competitive advantage in libraries, not only should information products and services be presented in a marketable format suitable for consumption, libraries should scan the environment to know different strategies that could be employed in providing quality services to patrons thereby gain competitive edge over others. This is more reason Yaya, Achonna and Osisanwo (2014) affirmed that information professionals, in addition to providing traditional library services, need to use non-traditional and innovative methods to meet highly specialized needs of information users.

However, Adekunmisi, Osinulu and Ogunbote (2008) declared that many libraries still hold myopic view that their services and products are so essential that people will use them as they have always done without any additional effort on their part. They erroneously assume that user's needs are also satisfied because they come to use the library. This may likely not be the case as users can look for alternative if their needs are not met. It is very essential that competitive intelligence concept is wholly and quickly adopted if libraries are to continue to exist as information providers in the future. In order to remain viable with regard to the supply and evaluation of information, Vries (1994) and Barnes (2002) suggested ways by which libraries may employ competitive advantage, this follows rapid processing and dissemination of information, the supply of relevant and timely information for improved decision-making, and the innovative use of information in the creation of new opportunities. Therefore, to achieve these, it is important to identify the strength and weaknesses of other providers, know services they are yet to offer, utilize the opportunity to create competitive edge in one's information center.

Library Information Services

Meeting users expectations determines their intention to demand for more services and as well make regular use of the library information resources. On the other hand, if the library fails to offer quality service, users will look for alternative to satisfy their information need. Thereby the library will lose its customers. Where the latter is the case, library gains competitive edge over their other competitors. Udoka (2000), Nwalo (2003) and Oluwole and Olaide (2008) listed the following library services to users: lending services, reference services, reservation services, seating and studying facilities, online information searching, CD-ROM literature searching, Compilation of reading list (help to accelerate information retrieval and dissemination process), Information analysis (interpretation, synthesis, evaluation and repackaging of information or numerical data), Bindery services, Translation services, Photocopying/Reprographic services, Audio/visual services, Power point presentation of seminars/lectures, Video coverage, E-mail services, Internet services, Compilation of bibliographies (based on subjects), Document delivery services (print and electronic), Indexing and abstracting, Inter-library loan services, Current awareness services, Selective dissemination of information (SDI), Referral services (suggest sources (organizations or Individuals) likely to satisfy the clients).



Therefore, proper organization and distribution channels are necessary to fulfill the specific needs of the library users as the extraction of relevant information becomes difficult for the users to go through all because information get accumulated at such a fast pace. Moreover, researchers need reference services, as well as other facilities, in order to further research and development in their work. Library and information centers function as the facilitators in the provision of easy access to these information services. As revealed by Capron (2000), mail, telephone, TV and radio, books, newspapers and periodicals are the traditional ways users send and received information. The use of modern technologies has the potentials to develop and increase users' access and participation in the library.

Quality Information Services in Libraries

Quality and value according to Popoola (2009) are defined in the concept of 'goodness' as applied to a particular library. Quality can then be viewed as effectiveness that is, 'how good is the service' being offered by the library, while value is defined as benefit that is, how much good does it do? Thus, the ultimate criteria for assessing the quality of a service are its capacity for meeting the user needs, and the value of a service is the beneficial effect accruing from its user as viewed by the funder. Qualities that should be evident in an effective library service for example should include tangible outputs, responsiveness, reliability, assistance to users, and empathy (Debowski, 2003). According to Popoola, high quality product is known to attract more buyers or users. Thus, libraries have had to compete with funds for the management of their departments and that libraries have had to take decisions in the face of alternatives being created by technology. Jestin and Parameswari (2002) submitted that increasing important role of information has resulted in information system that provides a variety of services and products. They stressed the idea that library services must be based on the modern concept of marketing to achieve reader satisfaction, and to nurture a culture of customer service to enhance the library's image in the eyes of the users. In the same vein, Shafique (2009) observed that the investigation of the type, quality, and quantity of services required by the users is the basis of marketing for libraries, which will help to gain competitive advantage.

Information professional are now undoubtedly showing concern in quality services. They are seriously thinking of abandoning the traditional approach to library management for a new and better approach. Furthermore, Pao-Nuan, Pao-Long and Kuen-Hong (2000) assert that the increasing expectations of users have challenged libraries to improve their quality of services, and for libraries to offer quality services to their clients they need to understand: the unique and varied needs of their users; the nature and of interaction of their users. This will guide them towards providing users requirement. Pao-Nuan, Pao-Long and Kuen-Hong (2000) warned that while the libraries exist for serving customers, the service delivery system should be user-oriented. All functions of the library should be directed towards satisfying the quality requirements and information needs of customers. From the perspective of library services, adopting quality programs increases the effectiveness of the library and satisfies increasingly higher customer expectations. More so, information service system is a service delivery system that has direct contact with customers. Therefore, the function of a library is dynamic and customer oriented. Librarians should provide services that will suit and satisfy their customer requirement. This could be done firstly by scanning the environment to identify customer needs or requirement and present the service in manner acceptable to users.

Methodology

Survey research design was employed for the study. The total population consisted of 71 library personnel from two universities (Babcock University (BU)-54 and Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED)-17; both in Ogun State, Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was employed as all members of the population were used for the study. The research made use of self-constructed questionnaire to collect data from the respondents, while descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages presented in tabular form were used to analyze the data collected from the respondents.

Data Presentation

A total of 71 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and completely retrieved. Data analysis was based on the retrieved questionnaire. The analysis is presented below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Library	Male	Female	Total
TASUED	7(41.2%)	10(58.8%)	17(100%)
BU	24(44.4%)	30(56.6%)	54(100%)

Table 2 revealed that 31(43.7%) are male while 40(56.3%) of the respondents are female. Hence, majority of the respondents are female.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Years	TASUED	BU
20-30	10(58.8%)	23(42.6%)
31-40	6(35.3%)	28(51.9%)
41-50	1(5.9%)	3(5.6%)
TOTAL	17(100%)	54(100%)

Table 2 revealed the respondents distribution by age. It shows that 33(46.4%) of the respondents are within the ages of 20-30years, respondents within the ages of 31-40 had 34(47.8%) while 4(5.6%) are within the ages of 41-50years, this implies that most of the respondents are within the ages of 20-40years. Which also indicates that the library works force is of young adults.

Table 3: Education Qualification Distribution

Library	Ph.D.	M.A./M.Sc.	B.Sc./ Equivalent	OND/NCE	‘O’Level	TOTAL
TASUED	-	6(35.3%)	7(41.2%)	-	4(23.5)	17(100%)
BU	1(1.8%)	7(13.0%)	6(11.1%)	4(7.4%)	36(66.7%)	54(100%)

Table 4 revealed that 1(1.8%) of the respondents is a Ph.D. holder, those with M.A/M.Sc. and B.Sc. equivalent had 13(18.3%) respectively. Those with OND/NCE qualification had 4(7.4%), while 40(56.3%) of the respondents are with O’Level certificate. Hence, majority of the respondents are ‘O’ Level holders.

Table 4: Level to which Libraries employ Competitive Advantage in Library Service Delivery

S/N	Information	Strongly Agree	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
1.	By providing both printing and electronic information resources	39(54.9%)	27(38%)	5(7%)	4(8.5%)	-

2.	By providing timely document and information	39(54.9%)	27(38%)	5(7%)	-	-
3.	By providing relevant information resources	34(47.9%)	37(52.1%)	-	-	-
4.	By providing space that enables quiet study	33(46.5%)	29(40.8%)	-	9(12.7%)	-
5.	By providing 24 hours internet services	31(43.7%)	20(28.2%)	-	7(9.9%)	13(18.3%)
6.	By providing convenient access to library collections	24(33.8%)	47(66.2%)	-	-	-
7.	By providing reliable information resources	19(26.8%)	46(64.8%)	4(5.6%)	2(2.8%)	-
8.	By providing full PDF electronic resources	2(2.8%)	47(66.2%)	15(21.1%)	7(9.9%)	-

Table 4 indicates how library employ competitive intelligence in their service delivery. The result shows that majority of the respondents perceived that they employ competitive intelligence in their service delivery by providing print and electronic information and timely document and information with the highest scores of 39 (54%) respectively. This is followed by the provision of relevant information resources with a score rate of 34(47%) and closely followed by the provision of space that enables quiet study with the score rate of 33(46%), while providing full PDF electronic resources had the lowest score of 2(2.8%).

In order to assess the strength of the library in quality service provision, the respondents were asked to indicate from the options given to them. Thus, the result is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Strength of the Library in Service Provision

S/N	Library Strength	Response
1.	Availability of up-to date resources	68(95.8%)
2.	Availability of required information	60(84.5%)
3.	Convenient access to library collections	60(84.5%)
4.	Availability of modern equipment	58(81.7%)
5.	Free access to internet	57(80.3%)
6.	Full access to electronic resources	55(77.5%)
7.	Workers customer relationship	51(71.8%)
8.	Access to Online Public Access Catalogue	48(67.6%)

Table 5 revealed that majority of the respondents agree that availability of up-to-date resources which has 95.8% is the strength of the library in service provision, followed by availability of required information and convenient access to library collections with 84.5% concurrently. This is followed by availability of modern equipment, free access to internet, workers customer relations, full access to electronic resources and access to online public access catalogue were 81.7%, 80.3%, 77.5%, 71.8% and 67.6% respectively.

The respondents were asked to identify library services that have competitive advantage over other libraries. Table 6 shows the result.

Table 6: Library Services that have Competitive Edge over other Libraries

S/N	Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided
1.	Circulation services	47(66.2%)	15(21.1%)	9(12.7%)	-	-
2.	Reference services	44(62%)	18(25.4%)	9(12.7%)	-	-
3.	Reprographic Services (binding/ lamination/photocopying)	40(56.3%)	23(32.4%)	6(8.5%)	2(2.8%)	-
4.	Scanning/Printing	35(49.3%)	7(9.9%)	17(23.9%)	8(11.3%)	4(5.6%)
5.	Personal assistance of library staff	34(47.9%)	21(29%)	12(16.9%)	4(5.6%)	-
6.	Audiovisual Services	28(39.4%)	14(19.7%)	15(21.1%)	4(5.6%)	10(14.1%)
7.	Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	28(39.4%)	5(7%)	17(23.9%)	13(18.3%)	8(11.3%)
8.	Internet/ E-mail services	28(39.4%)	7(9.9%)	26(36.6%)	8(11.3%)	2(2.8%)
9.	Inter Library Loan Services	24(33.8%)	17(23.9%)	22(31%)	4 (5.6%)	4 (5.6%)
10.	User education/training in library use	15(31.9%)	7(14.9%)	19(40.4%)	4(8.5%)	2(4.3%)
11.	Indexing and Abstracting	20(28.2%)	17(23.9%)	17(23.9%)	17(23.9%)	-
12.	Services from library website	13(18.3%)	24(33.8%)	22(31%)	8(11.3%)	4(5.6%)
13.	CD-ROM Search	11(15.5%)	14(19.7%)	32(45.1%)	10(14.1%)	4(5.6%)
14.	Internet provision	7(9.9%)	27(38%)	29(40.8%)	4(5.6%)	4(5.6%)
15.	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	5(7%)	34(47.9%)	26(36.6%)	4(5.6%)	2(2.8%)
16.	Current Awareness Services	5(7%)	14(19.7%)	41(57.7%)	11(15.5%)	-

Table 6 indicates library services that have competitive advantage over other libraries. The table shows that 66.2% strongly agree that circulation services gives them competitive advantage over other libraries, while 62% stated reference services. Similarly, 56.3% indicated reprographic services, scanning/printing had 49.3%, personal assistance of library staff had 49.3%. Furthermore, 39.4% said audiovisual services, online public access catalogue, and internet services respectively. Interlibrary loan services was rated 33.8%, while user education/training in library use has 31.9%, and in that order.

To establish the challenges encountered by libraries in provision of quality services and gaining competitive advantage over other libraries, the respondents were asked to identify these challenges. This is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Challenges Encountered in Library Services for gaining Competitive Advantage

S/N	Options	Response
1.	Inadequate funding	65(91.5%)
2.	Inadequate Computers in the library	48(67.6%)
3.	Lack of modern ICT equipment	45(63.4%)
4.	Lack of internet connectivity	33(46.5%)
5.	Poor Power supply	22 (31%)
6.	Lack of access to full electronic resources	19(28.8%)

Table 7 shows that most of the respondents 91% indicated inadequate funding as the major challenge to library services and competitive advantage; this is followed by inadequate computers in the library which scored 67.6% and lack of modern ICT equipment 63.4%. Furthermore, lack of internet connectivity 46.5%, poor power supply 31% and access to full electronic resources 28.8%.

In order to establish ways to improve library services for competitive advantage, the respondents were asked to give their suggestions. This is represented below.

Table 8: Ways to Improve Library Services for competitive advantage

S/N	Ways of Improvement	Response
1.	Developing awareness of current literature	63(88.7%)
2.	Producing information guides on new services and collections	61(85.9%)
3.	Creating awareness of library services.	57(80.3%)
4.	Identifying additional materials relevant to the users interest for acquisition	56(78.9%)
5.	Increase in internet points	55(77.5%)
6.	Provision of modern equipment in the library	49(69%)
7.	Providing research consultations within the specific disciplines	45(63.4%)
8.	Creating special library for post graduate students	39(54.9%)
9.	Charging for service rendered to users	28(59.6%)

Table 8 revealed the respondents view on how to improve the quality of library services to have a competitive advantage. From the findings of the analysis it is revealed that most of the respondents 88.7% believe that developing awareness of current literature, producing information guides on new services and collections was rated 85.9%, creating awareness of library services had 80.3%, identifying additional materials relevant to the users interest for acquisition as a means to improve quality library services had 78.9%. This is followed by 77.5% that said increase in internet points, provision of modern equipment in the library with 69%, while providing research consultations within the specific disciplines, creating special library for post graduate student, and charging for service rendered to users followed with 63.4%, 54.9% and 59.6%, respectively.

Discussion of the Findings

This study examined library personnel perception of service delivery using competitive intelligence approach. Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the libraries studied employed competitive intelligent approach in their service delivery. This is in agreement with the opinion of Yaya et al. (2014) who stated that with the increasing need for information in organizations, information professionals are required to be competitive information leaders utilizing both competitive intelligence and information system to communicate information for strategic purposes in remaining purposeful in their capacities. The findings showed that availability of up-to-date resources, availability of required information, convenient access to library collections and availability of modern equipment were the strength of the library in quality service delivery. This is in line with the finding of Broady and Barnes (2002) who found out that the core competence of a competitive advantage is the ability of the library through the integration of ICTs provides timely, relevant, reliable and current information to its clients.

The study also established that circulation services, reference services, reprographic services, scanning/printing, personal assistance of library staff were the major library services that have



competitive advantage over other libraries. It also established inadequate funding, inadequate computers in the library, inadequate ICT equipment, lack of internet connectivity, poor power supply and lack of access to full electronic were the major challenges the library face in delivering their services and gaining competitive advantage over other libraries. This could account for the reason the services these libraries provide to their users are mainly of the library routine activities (traditional services). Hence, Popoola (2009) advised that libraries had to compete with funds for the management of their libraries. This will help to increase the library revenue and thereby give opportunity to acquire more ICT equipment that will help to add quality in their services. Although it indicated that the libraries studied employed competitive intelligent in their service delivery, they also suggested ways to improve library services for more competitive advantage. These include developing awareness of current literature, providing guides on new services and collections, creating awareness of library services, among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the libraries studied use competitive intelligence in their services delivery, however, may not be using modern technologies which offer many advantages in competitive environment as lack of funding, inadequate computers and lack of modern ICT equipment were found to be major challenges in employing competitive intelligence to effective quality service delivery in the libraries. The study therefore recommends that adequate provision of funds should be made available to libraries in order to purchase computers and other modern ICT equipment for effective quality service delivery and to gain competitive advantage over other libraries. Also, libraries should create prompt awareness and guidelines of various services they offer; hence awareness of what is available could lead to its demand and use.



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