

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the data presented in chapter four. The interpretation of the data is based on identifying factors that lead to the success of a consortium. In particular, the following details are discussed: consortium history of libraries towards success; factors that influence libraries to join and continue participating in a consortium; relationship between consortium leadership (governance and staffing) and its success; most important values for a library consortium; and factors that contribute to the success of a consortium. The disparities noticed across library types are outlined too.

5.2 Factors that influence libraries to join a consortium

Results of the current study indicate that consortium member libraries prefer to subscribe to a single consortium that provides all or most of the important services that serve the needs of the patrons (faculty, students, staff and community) as opposed to subscribing to multiple consortia **Ch.4, Graphs 1-6**. A consortium should be a one stop shop for all the services, products and programs that satisfy the membership needs, while recognizing each member institution's autonomy, and giving respect for the diverse missions and populations served by those libraries.

Past consortium experience and the long tradition of cooperation play a significant role in the success of a consortium as evidenced among CARLI libraries. For example, 89% of all libraries in this survey belonged to a consortium before joining CARLI. The fact that these libraries belong to a community (the State of Illinois) that embraces collaboration makes it easier for them to participate in consortium activities.

Based on the findings from this research, discounted/ subsidized electronic resources and brokering; ability to obtain quick delivery of physical materials from member libraries (ILDS); the perception of cost effectiveness; reciprocal borrowing; shared integrated library system; value of networking with other members during meetings/ conferences; and training and continuing education are the most important factors that influence libraries to join and continue to participate in a consortium **Ch.4, Graph 7, Graph 13, and Graph 19**. However there are some disparities among

individual library types, for example, for research libraries, reciprocal borrowing, and training and continuing education are the most important factors **Ch.4, Graph 12**; while libraries that serve institutions with many teaching subject specializations such as public universities, are influenced by all the factors, **Ch.4, Graph 8**. It is important to note that libraries see as cost effective the participation in a single consortium where they get all the services they need **Ch.4, Graph 7, Graph 13, and Graph 19**. And the longer they stay in a single consortium, the more they discover how cost effective it is.

Research has shown that consortium staff play a very significant and more important role not only influencing libraries to join a consortium, but also influencing them to continue participating in the consortium. **Ch.4, Graph 13** For example 39% member libraries were influenced by CARLI staff to join CARLI, while 57% are influenced by CARLI staff to continue subscribing to the CARLI **Ch.4, Graph 19**. CARLI management staff also emphasized the need to have an extraordinary staff as a must for consortium success **Ch.4, section 4.11**.

Research has also shown that the more time consortium member libraries spend participating in a consortium, the more likely they are to continue participation and identify new services, products and programs that suit their needs **Ch.4, Graph 13; Ch.4, Graph 19**. However, this depends on how innovative the consortium staff is in identifying and implementing collaborative solutions to shared challenges.

A consortium whose services are perceived to be cost effective will attract many libraries to join it. For example, after the formation of CARLI in July 2005, 10% of the respondents who had no consortium experience joined CARLI.

5.3 Consortium values ranked high by libraries

The most important values of a consortium to its member libraries are: sharing the full range of academic library resources effectively and economically; cooperation among academic and research libraries of all types, sizes and missions; and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of programs, services, and products. These three values are a reflection of the most important factors that influence libraries to join and continue to subscribe to a consortium. These should be the guiding principles of any consortium. In addition, the consortium should be able to put value in the following principles: responsiveness to member needs; innovation in identifying and implementing

collaborative solutions to shared challenges; respect for the diverse missions and populations served by member institutions; careful stewardship of all consortium resources; recognition of each member institution's autonomy; and excellence in providing services and programs. It is important to note that the preference for these values is the same across all member categories.

5.4 Factors that contribute to the success of a consortium

The most important factors that contribute to the success of a consortium include an Integrated Library System (ILS), electronic resources brokering, library delivery service, and the perception of cost effective consortium services respectively. Regardless of the library type, these factors are the most important and highly preferred services, products and programs from the library consortium.

Behind the success of a consortium is the need for a strong and enthusiastic backing of a host or coordinating institution. When the respondents were asked to identify other factors that have contributed to the success of CARLI, they stated that the presence and involvement of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has played and continues to play an important role in the success of CARLI. CARLI staff in the interview agreed and they further emphasized the need for any consortium to avoid mixing consortium issues and those of the host institution through consortium branding, effective communication and membership involvement at all decision making levels.

Common goals and interests of the member libraries lead to consortium member libraries having a common objective and shared concerns. For example in the case of CARLI a shared integrated library system (I-Share), discounted/ subsidized electronic resources and brokering, reciprocal borrowing, and the need for training and continuing education were the reasons for the need to participate in a consortium. Therefore a consortium will need to identify the common goals of member libraries and how well they fit into the consortium goals.

The active participation of membership in consortium committees is a very important factor to the success of a library consortium. For example through CARLI committees, participating libraries either small or large are able to make their voice heard and CARLI staff are able to receive feedback from these libraries. The

committees not only bring members together, but also create a wide range of innovative ideas for the consortium.

Through effective communication, consortium staff are able to liaise efficiently and successfully with their membership. The most effective means of communication that are used by CARLI include but are not limited to e-mail, website, wikis, tele- and computer conference, newsletter, annual reports, reports on products, programs and services, surveys, and annual conferences directed to administrators such as library directors. According to CARLI staff, effective communication leads to trust building among the consortium members.

Building a culture to volunteer for consortium activities among both professional and non-professional library staff plays a significant role in consortium success. According to a CARLI evaluation survey report (May 2007), staff who volunteer to participate in consortium activities understand consortium activities well and can suggest and use the services and products of the consortium.

CHAPTER 6

APPLICATION OF SUCCESS FACTORS TO A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

6.1 Introduction

The main objective for this research was to identify the factors contributing to the success of a consortium, and then find practical but local ways of applying these factors in a developing country like Uganda putting into context the economic, political, educational and sociological environments in these countries.

6.2 Factors that could lead to the success of consortium in a developing country like Uganda

The consortium governance and leadership (staff) play a significant role in the success of a consortium. There is an urgent need to expand Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) governance and leadership (staff) structure to make it more result oriented and engaging its membership in a structure similar to CARLI's permanent and temporary committees. For example a structure like General Assembly → Board of Directors → Executive Committee → CUUL staff → Functional Committees could be adopted. If this structure is adopted, the board of directors could be elected by the participating institutions with full powers equivalent to those of the General Assembly but will be required to report back to the General Assembly. In this case, the board could be meeting regularly to avoid delays in decision making and implementation of consortium activities.

A common integrated library system (like I-share) is a significant factor towards the success of a library consortium. Uganda libraries lack such a system, and they need to embrace a common integrated library system that will provide an online catalog for their own collection as well as a merged, union catalog of the holdings of all libraries in Uganda. As well as supporting resource sharing among CUUL libraries, the integrated library system will also support other library management functions like circulation, cataloguing, acquisition, serials control, course reserves and reporting. For example, Makerere University library is currently implementing a very robust VTLS integrated library system called Virtua, and it would be good if CUUL can endorse such a system so that other libraries can be able to join. Makerere University library has used the system and gained the necessary expertise and experience to bring on board other

libraries in Uganda. Though it's a vendor managed system that might be costly to some libraries, who may complain of the cost, but still they do not have the expertise in place to implement their own. If libraries come together to embrace such a system it will be less expensive, and easy to adopt because Makerere University already has the experience.

There is a need for CUUL to initiate and maintain new and effective communication channels to further stewardship, advocacy and increased awareness of its services, products and programs to its member libraries. CUUL can adopt the use of social networks and web 2.0 technologies. Blogs, wikis, website, twitter, e-mail, and telephone and computer conferencing are some of the technologies that should be considered. The only way for CUUL to reach out to its members is to innovatively initiate and use the available online communication channels to encourage members to get involved.

CUUL needs to look at innovative and engaging ways to cost effectively carry out its activities. For example, at the time this paper was written the CUUL website was down for over 10 months. Since its inception, CUUL has had neither permanent nor official offices where it can carry out its activities. It has been a constantly moving consortium, with its offices moving to the institution of the sitting chairman. Makerere University library as a coordinating institution could as well become the host institution through a Memorandum of Understanding with CUUL. Makerere University library could be able to provide free office space, CUUL can use Makerere University's IT department to host its website and e-mail server instead of soliciting for expensive internet services. It's on record that Makerere University library's monetary contribution, continued advocacy for CUUL, and training has always been high and so it can still do more for the success of CUUL.

Consistent with the CUUL, CUUL constitution, CUUL could initiate policies and procedures, so that consortium business is conducted within the law to avoid conflict of interest hence cultivating trust among members. This could avoid rivalry developing among the participating member libraries and the coordinating institution. For example, there is no policy or procedure in place between CUUL and Makerere University library as a coordinating institution, although there is a Memorandum of Understanding

between International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and Makerere University Library. There is also the need for policies and procedures on the responsibilities and privileges of member libraries, staff, board of directors, and functional committees; as well as branding standards to avoid confusion and monopoly of the big libraries. The failure for the continuity of the library delivery services was a result of failed or lacking interlibrary loaning policies, because the service was based “just on the trust” between librarians of the respective institutions (Rosenberg, 2001, 1993).

The need for collective advocacy to CUUL membership (library staff of the participating libraries), institutional administrators, and the government is necessary in order to solicit support in areas like Library Delivery Services (LDS) and e-resources subscription fees. For example, with funding from the government through the Uganda Higher Education Ministry, CUUL can have a Memorandum of Understanding with Uganda Postal Service to deliver print materials between institutions at a relatively low price. CUUL could be charged with setting up policies and procedures on behalf and in the interest of its member libraries. There is need for user awareness of such services and libraries to have respect and take extra care while handling items from other libraries, which can only be achieved through setting up tight and strict policies and procedures with stringent penalties for violating the same.

The culture of volunteering to perform consortium activities is another factor that needs to be strengthened among CUUL membership starting from the top (library directors) to bottom (non-professional staff). There are a number of advantages that staff benefit from participation in consortium activities as outlined in **4.11, section.8**. In order to avoid confusion to non experienced staff, CUUL staff liaison can be charged with overseeing and guiding the committee in its activities.

Electronic resources brokering is a vital, significant service, and the backbone of consortium success that CUUL needs to improve and bring more institutions on board, including research libraries. Bringing more members on board reduces e-resources subscriptions fees, increases income for the consortium through membership subscription fees, and the more members the consortium has, the more popular and solid its operations become. This can be achieved through electronic resources

licensing policies which will guide CUUL's efforts towards libraries subscription fees over a sustainable period of time. Through collective licensing, libraries will reduce e-resources costs for members, increase the breadth and coverage of collections, and purchase materials of lasting value.

Consortium funding is the foundation on which other factors build. Therefore CUUL needs to innovatively look for other ways to increase its funding base. This can be through: writing winning grants to start new programs and services, lobbying for government funding to support an e-resources budget, and rolling out a single integrated library system (Virtua) to reduce subscription costs, increase membership subscription fees (currently CUUL members pay \$150 compared to the CARLI Governing member category that pays \$1,000 or more, up to \$10,000), and provide/facilitate training programs to libraries. Consortium members will only value their consortium participation and continue to participate if they get value for the money paid.

CUUL needs not only to look at e-resources subscription as the only service that members can gain from the consortium. There are a variety of other services, products and programs that will get member libraries' attention to join the consortium. These include but are not limited to:- training and continuing education, abstracting and indexing services, consulting, technical support, preservation, digitization, retrospective conversion, web site development and hosting, courier/delivery services (Library Delivery Services), remote storage facilities, collection development, and electronic publishing.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The findings of the research are based on the data collected and presented in chapter 4. The data was collected using literature review, questionnaire and interviews. The data are presented in the form of figures (percentages), tables, graphs and charts with narrative statements for interpretation.

7.2.1 Factors considered more important by consortium membership

Ability to obtain quick delivery of physical materials from member libraries; discounted/ subsidized electronic resources and brokering; reciprocal borrowing; shared integrated library system (union catalogs); cost effectiveness; training and continuing education; consortium staff; and value of networking with other members during meetings/ conferences are the most important and influencing factors to consortium membership.

7.2.2 Factors considered more important by consortium staff

On top of the factors that influence consortium members to join and continue to participate in the consortium as outlined in 7.2.1 above, the following factors also are considered to be more important for the consortium staff: project planning and management; effective communication; technical expertise in Information and Communication Technologies; perceived need for cost-effectiveness in the delivery of programs, services, and products; careful stewardship of consortium services; advocacy for the consortium by all stakeholders at all levels.; and protecting the privacy and security of library records.

7.2.3 Factors that influence libraries to join and continue to participate in a single consortium

Ability to obtain quick delivery of physical materials from member libraries; discounted/ subsidized electronic resources and brokering; reciprocal borrowing; shared integrated library system (union catalogs); cost effectiveness; training and continuing education; consortium staff; value of networking with other members during meetings/ conferences are the most important factors that influence libraries to join and continue to participate in a consortium.

7.2.4 Most influential consortium values

The most important values of a consortium to its member libraries are: sharing the full range of academic library resources effectively and economically; cooperation among academic and research libraries of all types, sizes and missions; and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of programs, services, and products.

7.2.5 Factors that lead to the success of a consortium

Regardless of the library type, the most contributing factors towards the success of a consortium are: a shared Integrated Library System; electronic resources brokering; Library Delivery Services (LDS); and perception of cost effectiveness; a strong and enthusiastic backing of a coordinating institution; like mindedness, common goals and interests of the member libraries hence having a common objective; advocacy by all stakeholders at all levels; value of cooperation hence building trust, accountability and transparency; effective communication at all levels and by all players; and building a culture to volunteer by either professional or non-professional library staff at all levels.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

The research has identified the following as areas that may need further research

- The representation of private, and community college, and private University libraries in the collected data was below average and this might not have given a very good representation of the views of the libraries in those institutions compared to public university and research libraries. Further analysis with more representation of all stakeholders would help to give emphasis to the views that have been presented in this research.
- The research findings are based on the literature review, interviews from CARLI staff and questionnaire feedback from CARLI membership, however information about consortium in developing countries was based on the available literature. There is a need to survey consortium players in developing countries to get more details of why consortia in developing countries have not achieved more success.
- There is a growing concern among consortia membership from specialized library types and mostly those from smaller libraries that consortium member libraries that serve users with wider variety of needs like public and private

university libraries benefit more from the consortium. This creates imbalance and rivalry related to participation of small library types in the consortium. There is a need to investigate the lending behaviors of institutions and bring to light the wrongly perceived imbalance in sharing consortium services.

- This research has shown that the success of a consortium depends a great deal on the strength and enthusiasm of the coordinating institution. However, there is a growing reluctance among libraries in developing countries to accept this finding. There is a need for further research to establish why such belief does exist in developing countries. Such thinking in developing countries may well lead to the failure of the consortium.

7.4 Conclusion

The research findings showed that the consortium member libraries are influenced by services, products and programs that impact their library users directly, and those that are perceived to be cost effective. The innovativeness and enthusiasm of the consortium staff is a major influencing factor to the success of a consortium. The research further indicated that consortium history plays an important role in the success of a consortium. This lack of history might be an important factor in explaining why library consortia have not been successful in some developing countries.

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