



Fundraising in University Libraries in Delta State

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Abstract

This study instigated fundraising in university libraries in Delta state. Three research questions were raised to ascertain the level of librarian's understanding of fundraising in university libraries; investigate fundraising activities carried out in university libraries; and identify challenges university libraries face in fundraising initiatives. The result revealed that: librarians in university libraries in Delta state have a high level of understanding of fundraising (56%); they are not fully engaged in fundraising activities as the aggregate mean is lower than the criterion mean of 2.50, which signifies that the extent of fundraising activities in university libraries is low; librarians in university libraries are faced with challenges such as limited budget and difficulty engaging donor. Consequently, the study recommends that adequate budget should be made for libraries to fully engage in fundraising, there is need for university parent body to carefully craft a realistic budget that takes into account a variety of expenses, including staffing, fundraising event-planning costs and to support fundraising activities in university libraries. Libraries should seek corporate sponsors; host fundraising events; and renting out meeting space to other organizations.

The study employed the descriptive survey design. The population comprised of 113 librarians in the university libraries in Delta State. The stratified sampling technique was adopted. The instrument for data collection is structured questionnaire titled "Fundraising in University Libraries in Delta State (FULQ)". The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and mean.

Keywords: Fundraising, Activities, University Libraries.

Introduction

Fundraising is very important in sustaining and enhancing the operations and services of university libraries. As essential hubs of research, learning, and community engagement, university libraries rely on various fundraising activities/methods to secure additional

resources beyond the budgets usually allocated. These resources enable libraries to expand their collections, invest in technology, improve facilities, and provide innovative services to their users. Effective fundraising in university libraries involves identifying funding opportunities, cultivating relationships with donors and stakeholders, and demonstrating the impact of contributions on the library's mission and goals.

It is also seen as requesting donations from individuals and businesses. Collins English Dictionary (2010) defines it as the act or occupation of soliciting money from charitable organizations, political parties, etc. Wikimedia (n.d) describes fundraising as the process of acquiring and collecting voluntary financial contributions from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations, and governmental agencies.

Fundraising enables university libraries to thrive as dynamic and responsive centers of learning, research, and innovation, empowering them to better serve their users and fulfill their mission in an ever-changing academic landscape. Fundraising offers numerous benefits to librarians in university libraries, enabling improved resources, facilities and services. It provides financial support for expanding collections, acquiring new materials, and subscribing to databases, enhancing the quality and diversity of resources available. Fundraising also supports facility integration of advanced technology, enriching the library environment for study, research, and collaboration. It fosters the development of innovative services like digitization projects, specialized workshops, and research support programme to meet evolving user needs.

Moreover, fundraising activities enhance staff professional development in areas such as grant writing and donor stewardship, while also strengthening community engagement by building connections with students, alumni, and other stakeholders. This financial support promotes sustainability by reducing reliance on institutional funds, ensuring the continuity of essential library programmes. Successful initiatives also highlight the library's value and impact, enhancing its reputation and securing further recognition and support from the community.

Objectives of the Study

This study strives to explore fundraising activities in university libraries in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain the level of librarian's understanding of fundraising in university libraries;
- ii. Investigate fundraising activities carried out in university libraries;
- iii. Identify challenges university libraries face in fundraising initiatives.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide the study:

- i. What is the level of understanding do university librarians possess regarding fundraising?
- ii. What fundraising activities are undertaken in university libraries?



- iii. What are the challenges university libraries face in fundraising initiatives?

Literature Review

Fundraising in University Libraries

Academic libraries go after funds from various sources including government grants, private donations, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events, endowments and partnerships with foundations or alumni associations. Ifidon (1990, as cited in Ubogu, 2011) established that the primary source of financial support for university libraries comes from governmental funding. Fundraising enables libraries irrespective of types expand their collections of print and electronic resources including books, journals, databases, and multimedia materials; providing access to emerging technologies such as marker space, Dspace, Internet of Things (IoT), Electronic records management systems (ERMS) etc. Fundraising has brought about significant influence to academic libraries. Through fundraising, libraries can broaden access to high-quality educational materials, specialised collections and cutting-edge technologies, ensuring equitable access for all users. Mahood et al. (2005) stated that libraries have benefited from individual support over the years. Some examples are donations from John Harvard University, Carnegie also donated money worth million dollars for the building of library within the United States.

Fundraising Activities in University Libraries

Law Insider (2024) defined fundraising activity as soliciting, or directing others to solicit, campaign contributions from one or more contributors, either personally or by hosting or sponsoring a fundraising event. It also refers to the actual events or campaigns undertaken to generate funds, such as charity auctions or bake sales. In essence, fundraising activities are what the library does to generate money.

Fundraising activity is very demanding, but essential for the progress of the mission of the library. Fundraising enables the provision of community programming, the expansion of locations, and the availability of a wide selection of books for library users. Fundraising efforts in university libraries involve various activities/methods aimed at generating financial support to sustain and enhance library services, resources, and facilities. These activities are essential for supplementing budgetary constraints, funding special projects, and sustained energy of the library. Everylibrary (2020) outlined fundraising activity ideas as;

1. **Book Sales:** Book sales are a classic and effective fundraising activity for libraries. Libraries often receive donations of books from individuals or organizations, which they sell to generate funds. These sales are held regularly or as special events, such as during book fairs or community festivals. Revenue generated from book sales serves as support to various library programmes, services, and acquisitions, benefiting both the library and its users.



2. **Crowdfunding:** This involves funding by many individuals contributing their money towards a shared objective, usually via the Internet. The library utilizes online crowdfunding platforms to generate funds for specific projects or initiatives, leveraging the power of social networks and online community to reach a wider audience. Libraries use crowdfunding for acquiring special collections, digitizing materials, funding research projects, renovating spaces, or supporting educational programmes. Crowdfunding campaigns often leverage on social media, email newsletters, and other digital marketing channels to spread awareness and encourage donations. Sarika (2018) research, revealed that crowd funding initiatives have helped libraries to build and decorate libraries, collection development, and to provide services. Based on the discovery, it was recommended that awareness of crowdfunding should be created by experienced library professionals who conducted such in their libraries and exchange their experiences and practices.

3. **Corporate Partnerships:** Libraries can establish partnerships with corporations, businesses, community organizations, or other institutions to sponsor events, programmes, or initiatives. Corporate sponsorship is a fundraising activity where companies provide financial support or other resources to the library in exchange for promotional opportunities or other benefits. These benefits include brand exposure, advertising, networking opportunities, or alignment with the values or target audience. Companies can also sponsor events, programmes, sports teams, or initiatives that align with marketing objectives, corporate social responsibility goals, or target demographics. In return, the sponsored entity typically provides visibility for the sponsoring company through signage, mentions in marketing materials such as magazine, social media promotion, or other forms of acknowledgment. This sponsorship is a mutually beneficial arrangement that helps raising funds for the library while allowing companies to enhance their brand visibility, engage with their target audience, and demonstrate their commitment to supporting communities or causes. Sawahel (2020), identified Book2Africa group, and United Kingdom-based charity Book Aid International (BAI), who supported a range of higher education institutions – universities, teacher training colleges, nursing colleges, vocational training institutions and polytechnics with up-to-date and relevant tertiary education books.

4. **Use of Library Space:** Libraries have long been recognized as excellent gathering places to host community members while fundraising for the library. This can be a great way to generate income. EveryLibrary Institute (2020) suggested that library space can be rented out as conference facilities and other communal areas for Organisations, school groups, or any other community group requiring a space for meeting. The renters could be charged a reservation fee based on the size of the space and duration.

5. **Offer Specialised Services:** The library staff brings their expertise through diverse range of events such as; workshops on creative writing, courses on business writing technological classes, workshops with entry fee. Offering affordable educational and professional development courses for the university community. In this digital age, libraries can raise funds by offering Technology and computer classes, circulate hotspots, expand internet connectivity for public use (Infobase, 2022). Fundraising submitted that university library extends their services to their immediate communities where they are situated. This is accomplished by ways of providing the community users with adequate information resources to cater for their immediate needs and aspirations. University libraries provide services such as computer programmes designed to inculcate to the users on how to use the systems for their personal and immediate needs. They also provide books that could serve as a standard for education and cultural advancement of their society.

6. **Acknowledging/ Honouring Donor:** Honoring donors within university libraries involves recognizing and showing appreciation for individuals, organizations, or groups who have contributed financially or through other means to support the mission. This recognition can take various forms such as; display plaques, engraved bricks, or donor walls prominently within the library to acknowledge contributions; engraving name for specific spaces, collections, programs; acknowledging donor in library newsletters, annual reports, websites, or other publications to highlight their donations and impact; hosting donor through appreciation events, receptions, or dinners to express gratitude to donors; provide personalized gifts, certificates, or other tokens of appreciation to donors as a gesture of thanks for their assistance.

7. **Grant Writing:** Grant is an amount of money given especially by the government to an organization for a special purpose, the library inclusive. Librarians research and seek grants from various sources. Grant writing in university libraries involves seeking external funding opportunities from government agencies, foundations, corporations, and organisations to support specific projects, initiatives, or programs within the library. Grant is solicited with the aim of funding for a specific clearly defined or special project that has not been defined in the yearly budget (Kraus, 2015). Grants should not be written in an atmosphere of secrecy; rather, it should remain open to other colleagues and the library administration. However, when writing a grant, it is advisable that as soon as you have an idea for research, share the idea (Brink, 1991 as cited in Kraus, 2015). Furthermore, in writing a grant, it is expected that Librarians research and identify potential grant opportunities that match with the goals, which involve searching grant databases, subscribing to funding alerts, and networking with other professionals in the domain; develops a proposal for a grant outlining the project or program to be funded, its objectives, methodology, budget, timeline, and anticipated outcomes; collaborate with other departments within the university, or external partners to strengthen grant proposals and enhance the chances of securing funding; submit the proposal



and application form to the funding agency following the specific deadline, guidelines and requirements; If the grant opportunity awarded, the library is responsible for managing the grant funds in accordance with funder's guidelines and requirement, which involve tracking expenses, reporting on the project progress and results, and fulfilling any reporting requirement stipulated in the grant agreement.

8. **Volunteering:** Volunteers can play important position within the library fundraising. Volunteering is an act which involves offering free will service for the library without been paid. It is done through individuals assisting with planning, organizing, and executing fundraising events which help to reduce staffing needs and increase the efficiency of event logistics, ultimately contributing to the achievement of fundraising initiatives; serving as ambassadors for the library.

9. **Alumni Engagement Programmes:** Alumni engagement in fundraising for university libraries involves connecting with former students to foster a sense of community, pride, and philanthropy towards their alma library. University library programme often overlooks alumni as a potential audience. Alumni commonly maintain connections with their alma maters through sports, reunion events, and fundraising efforts. However, every alumnus has the potential to be connected to the library from their time within the university. Collaboration between university libraries and alumni relations departments represents a good step to foster connection. Monnier & Kelly (2023, Introduction section). Alumni engagement aims to establish connections with alumni through various avenues like events, newsletters, social media platforms, and personalized outreach. By highlighting the achievements, initiatives, and impact, alumni are encouraged financial contribution to support its growth and development. Alumni engagement often includes opportunities for involvement, such as volunteering, mentorship programs, or special library access, to deepen alumni connections and cultivate a culture of philanthropy institution (Instrumentl, 2023).

Challenges of Fundraising in University Libraries

Fundraising serves as a cornerstone for university libraries striving to enhance resources and support the mission of providing valuable services to students, faculty members and researchers. However, amidst the pursuit of financial support, university libraries encounter multifaceted challenges that impede their fundraising endeavours. Several prominent challenges faced by university libraries in their fundraising efforts are;

1. **Limited Budget:** Limited budget refers to financial constraints that restrict the sum of money available for spending within the library. Limited budget in fundraising refers to having constrained financial resources available to support the fundraising efforts. Almost all libraries depend on the support from the government. This assistance may be as grants. Reduced budgets within state, and federal level result in less available funding. As such, some libraries receive less funding than desired or

needed, while others receive no funding at all. In relation to university libraries, having a limited budget in fundraising can impact the capacity to:

2. invest in resources such as personnel, technology, marketing materials, or fundraising software, which are essential for executing effective fundraising campaigns;
3. conduct targeted marketing, outreach, and communication activities to attract potential donors.
4. organizing fundraising occasions like galas, auctions;
5. pay advertising platforms like social media ads, Google Ads, or direct mail campaigns;
6. explore innovative fundraising strategies or experiment with new approaches to donor engagement and solicitation.

iConnectx (2021) stated that limited financial resources is the greatest enemy of fundraising in libraries. This is so as funds are required to accommodate and to cater for operational expenses and administrative charges.

2. **Shortage of Staff and Expertise:** University libraries due to limited staff strength will struggle to allocate dedicated personnel to concentrate on fundraising activities. With reduced staff strength, taking up additional responsibilities will be difficult, leaving little time or capacity to dedicate to fundraising initiatives. Effective fundraising requires expertise and capabilities in areas like donor cultivation, grant writing, event planning, and stewardship. Libraries with shortage of staff may lack individuals with the necessary expertise in these areas, making it challenging to execute successful fundraising campaigns and expertise dedicated to fundraising, making it challenging to develop and implement effective fundraising strategies. Reviewing the outcome of a case study, Olurayi, 2013 reveals that most library personnel are not involved in fundraising, thus making it difficult to execute fundraising initiatives. However, Libraries without skilled fundraising staff may struggle to develop and execute strategic fundraising plans effectively and unable to explore new fundraising channels and strategies to maximize fundraising impact.

3. **Difficulty in Engaging Alumni:** Alumni contribute towards university libraries through donations, volunteerism, mentorship, and advocacy efforts, supporting the continued success and progress of their alma mater and the university community. Monnier and Kelly (2023) noted that libraries frequently neglect to consider alumni, as every alumnus has the opportunity to remain connected to the library from the period they spend at the university. However, engaging Alumni after graduation in library fundraising has posed serious challenge due to factors as; lack of connection, not fully understand the impact of their donations on the programs, services, and initiatives, no effective communication channels. To engage alumni, Aluminati (2024) suggested that they should be engaged early before students graduate. This will help to build more effective relationships and long-term networks.



4. **Donor Fatigue:** Donor fatigue is a common challenge for fundraisers. It is the reduced willingness or ability of donors to support fundraising in libraries, due to various factors such as oversaturation, lack of trust, or economic hardship. Donor fatigue occurs when people or organisations become less generous or responsive to donation requests, often due to a repeated or prolonged series of appeals. Donors, including alumni and the broader community members, experience fatigue from frequent solicitations for donations from various organisations. Continual requests for contributions, coupled with limited resources to demonstrate the influence of donations, can dampen donor enthusiasm and willingness to donate to the library. Barhyte (2017) stated that donor fatigue is as a result of non-sustainable relationships with donors. Organisations such as libraries have failed to excite donors in a way that inspires them to continue giving. To avoid these, there is the necessity to categorize donors according to their preferences and interests, behaviour, and capacity; to inform donors about how their contributions made a significant change to the library; to establish connections with donors that extend beyond soliciting donations.

Research Methods

The study covered fundraising in university libraries in Delta State. In this study, the survey method is chosen to make for objective collection, organization and analysis of data. The population of study consisted of librarians in university libraries in Delta State. The stratified random sampling method was used in the study. A total of 113 respondent were used for the study.

The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection, which focuses on the level of understanding of fundraising, fundraising activities carried out in the libraries as well as fundraising challenges experienced. The questionnaire was structured into two main parts – section A and B. Section A was based on personal identification of the respondent, while section B is concerned with fundraising in university libraries. The data collected were analysed using mean and frequency count - simple percentage.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Level of Understanding of Fundraising

Qualification	Frequency	%
High	63	56
Moderate	33	29
Low	10	8
Very Low	8	7
Total	113	100

As revealed in Table 1, 63(56%) of the respondents have high level of understanding of fundraising, 32 (29%) of the respondents have moderate understanding of fundraising, 10 (8%) of the respondents have low level of understanding of fundraising, while 8 (7%) of the respondents have very low level of understanding of fundraising. This therefore, indicates that majority of the librarians that participated in this study have a high understanding of



fundraising but not actively engaged in fundraising activities within their libraries due to limited resources – budget allocation, unauthorized support to initiate fundraising efforts as well as prioritizing their primary duties over fundraising activities.

However, some of the fundraising activities librarians engage in are identified by respondents in Table 2.

Table 2: Extent of Fundraising Activities in University Libraries

Fundraising Activities	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	\bar{x}
Book sale	-	10	5	98	1.22
Membership drives	-	16	47	50	1.70
Donor campaign	45	15	26	27	2.69
Special event	-	17	20	76	1.48
Crowd funding	-	-	2	111	1.02
Corporate partnership	48	13	25	27	2.73
Fundraising auctions	-	11	41	61	1.56
Products and services	-	7	28	78	1.37
Use of library space	-	5	34	74	1.39
Offering specialised service	-	8	62	43	1.69
Honouring donor	19	33	32	29	2.37
Online fundraising	26	25	15	47	2.27
Grant writing	25	44	33	11	2.73
Volunteering	13	21	25	54	1.94
Donor relationship and cultivation	7	23	41	42	1.96
Alumni engagement programme	-	12	15	86	1.35
Endowment campaign	2	15	26	70	1.55
Friends of the library programme	-	33	19	61	1.75
N	113	Criterion Mean	2.50	Aggregate Mean	1.82

As shown in Table 2, the aggregate mean is lower than the criterion mean of 2.50, which signifies that the extent of fundraising activities in university libraries is low. However, librarians engage in few fundraising activities such as donor campaign ($\bar{x} = 2.69$), corporate partnership and grant writing ($\bar{x} = 2.73$) respectively.

Table 3: Challenges faced by University Libraries in their Fundraising Initiatives

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}
Limited budget	76	37	-	-	3.67
Donor fatigue/difficulty in engaging alumni	69	44	-	-	3.61
Perceived lack of needs	57	56	-	-	3.50
Competing priorities	47	52	3	11	3.19
Risk management i.e fundraising not conducted in transparency	44	36	-	33	2.81
Complicated decision making	35	33	27	18	2.75
Limited staff expertise	39	29	20	25	2.73
N	113	Criterion Mean	2.50	Aggregate	
Mean	3.18				

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that the aggregate mean of 3.18 is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, which implies that there are lots of challenges faced by university



libraries in their fundraising initiatives. Therefore, it was specifically revealed that limited budget ($\bar{x} = 3.67$), donor fatigue/difficulty in engaging alumni ($\bar{x} = 3.61$), perceived lack of needs ($\bar{x} = 3.50$), competing priorities ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), risk management ($\bar{x} = 2.81$), complicated decision making ($\bar{x} = 2.75$), and limited staff expertise ($\bar{x} = 2.73$) are the challenges faced by university libraries in engaging in fundraising activities.

Discussion of findings

Level of Understanding of fundraising

The level of librarians understanding of fundraising was examined to find out if really librarians are aware/know much about fundraising in libraries. An assessment of this showed that librarians working in university libraries have a high level of understanding of fundraising. It is suggested that due to financial difficult experienced by universities and university libraries, librarians need to know how to effectively obtain and steward donors. There is need for librarians working in universities to feel confident in their ability to obtain contributions, sponsorships, and grants for their libraries. From major gifts to events to special collections (Jennings & Garczynski, 2020).

Extent of Fundraising Activities in University Libraries

Three major fundraising activities were identified by the respondents in the respective university libraries understudied. Not all fundraising activities are employed by university librarians in Delta State. The most popular are book sales, crowdfunding, use of library space, alumni engagement programmes, volunteering and offering specialized services (Table 2). However, there are other fundraising activities rarely engaged in by librarians in university libraries as the aggregate mean is lower than the criterion mean of 2.50, which signifies that the extent of these fundraising activities is low. A recent survey conducted by the American Library Association (2024) investigated into some of the reasons why librarians in university libraries need to engage in fundraising activities - as rising cost of technology, encouragement by parent institution, limited support from the parent institution, and the increasing cost of materials. This calls for the need for university librarians to engage more in fundraising activities as this will boost the availability of library resources.

Challenges faced by University Libraries in their Fundraising Initiatives

The major challenges identified by librarians in university libraries in their fundraising initiatives are; limited budget, donor fatigue and difficulty engaging Alumni. There are adequate librarians in university libraries who are expertise in fundraising activities within university libraries but are constrained with limited budget - When budget allocated are stretched too thin, University libraries may experience a variety of challenges - inability to subscribe to digital resources and databases, limits access to a wide range of electronic publications and databases (Schwirtlich Anne-Marie, 2016). University libraries cannot get anything new unless more funds are allocated to the library annually. The library is in need of continued funding for subscription resources as the cost for these resources generally goes up 5-10% annually for inflation costs & 10% minimum to support basic research needs. However, this does not allow for new resources or anticipatory needs for future programs. An annual cost inflation of 15-20% will help meet the minimum and anticipatory needs with



additional funding for one-time purchases. A lack of increase in funding equals a budgetary reduction, which will not allow the library achieve its goals (Azusa Pacific University, 2024). Donor fatigue - Klein (2020) emphasized on the causes of donor fatigue as that donors feel worn out when they do not feel appreciated. It is vital to strengthen already excellent relationships with donors who can make the case for support of Libraries.

Conclusion

Librarians in university libraries have basic and indepth understanding of fundraising activities but they are not fully engaged in fundraising activities. They are abreast of different fundraising activities they can engage in, in order to raise funds for the library but constrained due to limited budget, donor fatigue and difficulty in engaging donor. The major fundraising activities they are engaged in are cooperate partnership, acknowledging donors in different ways and through grant writing. However, librarians in university libraries should be encouraged to participate fully in fundraising activities. This will help the library to generate funds to enable the library achieve its objectives of meeting information needs of users; Parent body of university library should make adequate budget for libraries to fully engage in various fundraising Activities as it exists in university libraries in developed countries; the university needs to address limited budget by way of including fundraising in their strategic plan. This can be achieved through setting up fundraising committee to achieve the desired targets each year.

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