

EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP STYLE ON SERVICE QUALITY AMONG LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA.

ROKIBAT MAYOWA KARIM-ASIYANBI (PHD) (CLN)

Federal College of Education(Special) Oyo,Oyo State

OLUWASEUN OLUROPO AJIBARE (PHD)

Dept of Information Management, Lead City University.

and

FOLASADE BUSAYO OGUNTOYE. (PHD)

Dept of Information Management, Lead City University.

Abstract

Service quality has become a key performance indicator for academic libraries, reflecting their ability to support teaching, learning, and research in higher education. In the Nigerian context, the quality of library services is often constrained by inadequate leadership practices, low staff motivation, and inconsistent service delivery. This study examined the effect of leadership style on service quality among library personnel in Colleges of Education in South West Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 183 library personnels across public Colleges of Education in South West, Nigeria. While Total enumeration sampling employed. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. The study focused on four leadership styles as defined in the Situational Leadership Theory, and examined their influence on service quality dimensions. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. Findings revealed that service quality among library personnel in college of education libraries is high.the study also identified directive leadership as the predominant style. Inferential analysis indicated that there was a significant influences of leadership styles on service quality in college of education libraries in south West Nigeria(Adj. $R^2 = 0.437$, $F(1,145) = 114.108$, $p = 0.000$).Based on these finding, it was recommended that library leaders receive training to encourage a more balanced approach that integrates both directive and participatory elements. While directive leadership ensures order and compliance, participatory leadership fosters creativity,

innovation, and staff engagement. By combining these approaches, libraries can maintain efficiency while promoting inclusiveness and adaptability in decision-making processes.

Keywords: Leadership style, Service quality, Library personnel, Colleges of Education.

Introduction

Service quality has become a vital measure for assessing the effectiveness and overall impact of libraries in higher education institutions (Sarmah, etal. 2021). A library's true value lies not merely in the breadth of its collections but in the quality of its services and how effectively resources are made accessible, how users are treated, and how their information needs are met (Bailey & Tierney, 2009). Libraries today are more than repositories of knowledge; they are dynamic learning environments that support teaching, research, and lifelong learning (Ikubaje & Adeyeye, 2025). However, the ability of a library to fulfil these roles depends largely on the competence, motivation, and attitude of its personnel, all of which are profoundly shaped by the style of leadership under which they operate (Hongo, 2024). In the contemporary digital era, the focus of library excellence has shifted from the quantity of materials owned to the quality of interactions and experiences provided to users (Baryshev, etal.2020). Maintaining high service quality is essential to sustaining user engagement, promoting intellectual curiosity, and ensuring that libraries remain indispensable in academic life (Ullah, & Usman, 2023). Yet, achieving such quality requires more than resources and infrastructure; it requires effective leadership that inspires commitment, nurtures professionalism, and aligns staff performance with institutional goals.

Leadership style, therefore, plays a pivotal role in determining the level of service quality delivered in libraries. The approach a leader adopts whether directive, coaching, supportive, or delegating affects not only how tasks are executed but also how staff perceive their work, relate with users, and respond to change (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Directive leadership involves providing explicit direction, structured guidance, and close supervision to ensure tasks are carried out efficiently. Coaching leadership emphasizes the personal and professional development of subordinates through feedback and encouragement, while supportive leadership prioritizes the emotional and social needs of team members. Delegating leadership, on the other hand, assigns responsibility and authority to subordinates to make decisions and carry out tasks with minimal supervision (Tsolka, 2020).

Service quality in libraries encompasses dimensions such as affect of service, information control, and library as a place, all of which reflect how effectively library personnel attend to users' needs and expectations (Cristobal, 2018). These dimensions are strengthened when staff operate within a supportive and empowering leadership environment. Leadership style thus becomes a catalyst that translates institutional vision into daily service behaviour, influencing how personnel greet users, manage information requests, and resolve service-related challenges. In the context of Colleges of Education in South West Nigeria, where libraries play a critical role in teacher training and academic advancement, the leadership style of library heads is particularly significant.

Effective leadership can motivate personnel to adopt positive service attitudes, embrace technological innovation, and sustain a culture of excellence in user relations (Ned & Umesi, 2023). Conversely, ineffective leadership may result in low staff morale, limited initiative, and inconsistent service delivery. Given the growing emphasis on accountability, user satisfaction, and institutional performance, it is essential to understand how leadership practices shape service quality in academic libraries. Examining this relationship provides insight into how library leaders can foster environments that support professional growth, efficient operations, and superior user experiences. Therefore, this study examines the effect of leadership style on service quality among library personnel in Colleges of Education in South West Nigeria, with the aim of highlighting how leadership behaviour influences the delivery of effective, responsive, and sustainable library services in contemporary academic settings.

Statement of problem

In contemporary higher education, the library is recognized as a vital component for knowledge creation, dissemination, and lifelong learning. Its effectiveness is increasingly assessed not only by the volume of its resources but by the quality of services provided to users. Service quality in libraries encompasses responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, and the overall experience of users. Despite its centrality to academic success, several studies have shown that many academic libraries in Nigeria continue to face

challenges in sustaining high-quality service delivery due to inadequate leadership, limited staff motivation, and poor organizational commitment. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the work environment, influencing staff attitudes, and determining how effectively library services meet user expectations.

The leadership style adopted by a library head whether directive, coaching, supportive, or delegating affects communication flow, decision-making, and employee engagement, which in turn influence service quality outcomes (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). However, in many Nigerian Colleges of Education, leadership within library settings is often characterized by hierarchical control, low levels of delegation, and insufficient staff empowerment. This has resulted in reduced morale, inconsistency in service delivery, and declining user satisfaction. Moreover, the dynamic nature of information delivery in the digital age demands leadership that fosters innovation, adaptability, and user-centered service. Without effective leadership that encourages participation, continuous learning, and accountability, libraries may struggle to align their operations with institutional goals and evolving user needs. Understanding this relationship is crucial for improving staff motivation, strengthening service delivery, and ensuring that libraries remain responsive and effective in supporting academic excellence and national development goals.

Research Question

1. What is the level of service quality among Library personnel in College of Education libraries in South West Nigeria?
2. What is the prevailing leadership style employed by library personnel in College of Education libraries in South West Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Service quality is a distinctive phenomenon which reflects degree of excellence in delivering satisfaction to each consumer which evaluation is grounded in five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles (Idayati et al., 2020). In library contexts, user satisfaction is achieved when the services provided are at least comparable to the users' expectations (Moses et al., 2016). Quality of library services is important element, as user happiness is contingent upon the service quality provided by their libraries which is dynamic element for any service-oriented institution (Alam, & Mezbah-ul-Islam, 2023). Their survival and reputation as a library are contingent upon quality of services provided (Hernon & Altman, 2010). Users constitute the primary objective of a library; hence, they are the most effective evaluators of service quality inside libraries (Nagata, et al. 2004).

Library service quality is increasingly recognised as a function not only of resources and infrastructure but also of the leadership practices that guide service delivery. As academic libraries adopt user-centred service models, the leadership style of library managers becomes a critical determinant of how effectively services are planned,

implemented, and sustained. Leadership style influences staff behaviour, motivation, and commitment, which in turn shape users' perceptions of service quality.

Leadership style serves as a social influence mechanism through which a leader seeks to obtain the voluntary participation of subordinates in order to accomplish organisational goals, the leadership style demonstrated by a librarian is crucial for the efficient operation of the library (Oguntuase, etal. 2025). Librarians' leadership styles have a considerable impact on the efficacy and enthusiasm of library staff in attaining the library's goals and objectives. Perceived leadership style refers to the approach a leader employs in providing direction, implementing strategies, and motivating individuals to achieve organisational goals (Udovita, 2020). One of the goals of leadership styles in an organisation is to provide managers with the ability to motivate their employees to voluntarily carry out tasks that are required of them, with the end goal being effective performance(Hassan, 2020). There are various leadership styles that can achieve organization goals through distinct mechanisms. For instance Directive leadership styles is effective in situations requiring prompt and decisive action, as leaders exercise full authority and control over subordinates' behaviour. Followers often perceive such leaders as above reproach, with responsibility for decisions from inception to implementation (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). However, excessive reliance on a single individual for all decision-making can be detrimental, as errors by the leader may misguide employees and negatively impact library organisational objectives.

Coaching leadership style focuses on developing employee skills, overseeing performance, and fostering professional growth of library staffs. By enhancing communication and clarifying organisational goals, coaching leaders promote internal motivation, encourage idea-sharing, and increase employee engagement. This approach not only strengthens leader employee relationships but also supports innovation and organisational learning (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

Supportive leadership style contributes to service quality by fostering teamwork, emotional support, and shared responsibility. In library settings, supportive leaders can help staff manage challenging interactions with users, promote collaboration in service planning, and ensure that employees feel valued and motivated. This approach enhances empathy and assurance dimensions of service quality, as staff are better equipped to understand and meet user expectations effectively (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). And Delegating leadership style encourages staff autonomy and accountability, allowing experienced librarians to make decisions on service delivery independently. This can lead to faster problem-solving, innovative service initiatives, and higher user satisfaction, particularly when employees are skilled and self-motivated. Delegation supports the tangibles and responsiveness aspects of library service by enabling staff to act efficiently and adaptively (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

Every leadership style comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages that are unique to it. This perspective emphasises that the employed style must be acceptable

to positively influence staff behaviour, hence enhancing the library's objectives. The application of suitable leadership styles in library management may enhance creativity and innovation.

Research Question 1: What is the level of service quality among Library personnel in College of Education libraries in South West Nigeria?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Responses on Level of Service Quality

	Question items	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Mean	Std. Dev.
	Affect of Service						
1	I do greet users warmly and make an effort to understand their need	116 (78.9%)	30 (20.4%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3.78	0.43
2	I have the ability to remain calm and composed when dealing with difficult users	70 (47.6%)	71 (48.3%)	6 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3.44	0.57
3	I remember regular users or tailor services to meet specific needs	68 (46.3%)	75 (51.0%)	4 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3.44	0.55
4	I quickly and timely respond to user inquiries (either in-person, by phone, or online).	79 (53.7%)	61 (41.5%)	7 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3.49	0.59
	Weighted mean					3.54	
	Information Control						
5	I have ability to accurately identify and retrieve relevant information for users	91 (61.9%)	55 (37.4%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3.61	0.50
6	I ensure that users can easily locate and retrieve needed information.	62 (42.2%)	67 (45.6%)	18 (12.2%)	0 (0.0%)	3.30	0.68
7	Ensuring needed materials are present and up to date	64 (43.5%)	83 (56.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3.44	0.50
8	I offer information literacy instruction, helping users become independent researchers	71 (48.3%)	50 (34.0%)	9 (6.1%)	17 (11.6%)	3.19	0.99
	Weighted mean					3.39	
	Library as a Place						
9	Facilities and equipment in our library are well maintained and functional	46 (31.3%)	89 (60.5%)	11 (7.5%)	1 (0.7%)	3.22	0.61
10	Our library seat and study space is comfortable	80 (54.4%)	55 (37.4%)	10 (6.8%)	12 (1.4%)	3.45	0.68
11	I contribute to a friendly and inclusive atmosphere	61 (41.5%)	66 (44.9%)	19 (12.9%)	1 (0.7%)	3.27	0.71
12	My attitude and presence help users feel	66	76	4	1	3.41	0.58

welcome, safe, and respected	(44.9%)	(51.7%)	(2.7%)	(0.7%)	
Weighted mean					3.34
Grand mean					3.42

Decision Rule: 1.00-1.74=Very low, 1.75-2.49=Low, 2.50-3.24=High, 3.25-4.00=Very high
Source: Field Survey, 2024

The findings in Table 1 indicate that library personnel in Colleges of Education libraries in South-West Nigeria demonstrate a high level of service quality across the three dimensions assessed. The affect of service recorded a very high weighted mean score (3.54), suggesting that library personnel exhibit strong interpersonal skills, including warm reception of users, responsiveness to user needs, emotional composure, and timely service delivery. These behaviours reflect a user-centred approach that enhances positive library experiences.

The information control dimension was rated high (weighted mean = 3.39), indicating that library personnel are generally effective in identifying, retrieving, and facilitating access to relevant and up-to-date information resources. However, the comparatively lower ratings observed in information literacy instruction suggest a need for improvement in user education and research support services.

Similarly, the library as a place dimension recorded a high weighted mean score (3.34), reflecting adequate maintenance of facilities, comfortable study spaces, and a welcoming and inclusive library environment. The positive perceptions of staff attitude further highlight the role of library personnel in creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Overall, the grand mean score of 3.42 confirms that service quality among library

personnel is high. This implies that library personnel largely meet user expectations, although targeted interventions particularly in information literacy provision could further strengthen service delivery.

Research Question 2: What is the prevailing leadership style employed by library personnel in College of Education libraries in South West Nigeria?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Responses on Prevailing Leadership Style Employed

SN	Question Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Directive Leadership Style							
1	Our libraries head takes charge of all decision-making processes and then delegate tasks to others without much input from your coworkers	39 (26.5%)	73 (49.7%)	34 (23.1%)	1 (0.7%)	3.02	0.73
2	Our libraries head helps to create a stable environment where individuals know what is expected of them and how they should act to achieve the goals set.	40 (27.2%)	98 (66.7%)	7 (4.8%)	2 (1.4%)	3.20	0.58
3	Our libraries head ensure you adhere to strict policies and procedures	66 (44.9%)	73 (49.7%)	8 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)	3.39	0.59
4	Our libraries head provide directions, supervise your team and check in frequently to verify overall progress.	56 (38.1%)	72 (49.0%)	19 (12.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.25	0.67
Weighted mean						3.22	
Coaching Leadership Style							
5	Our libraries head use to motivate employees and achieve success.	41 (27.9%)	78 (53.1%)	28 (19.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3.09	0.68
6	Our libraries head creates an environment where employees feel valued.	46 (31.3%)	91 (61.9%)	10 (6.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3.24	0.57
7	Our libraries head creating an environment where conversations flow freely and ideas are exchanged without	27 (18.4%)	91 (61.9%)	29 (19.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2.99	0.62

	hesitation.						
8	Our libraries head always looking for ways to help team members learn and thrive, through: Seminars, Workshops, Courses and training, and Additional resources.	66 (44.9%)	71 (48.3%))	10 (6.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3.38	0.61
	Weighted mean					3.18	
	Supportive Leadership Style						
9	Our libraries head hear out every team member, ask their opinions, inputs, and ideas, and value their contributions.	22 (15.0%)	94 (63.9%))	31 (21.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2.94	0.60
10	Our libraries head look at what team members need and work with them to find a solution.	38 (25.9%)	93 (63.3%))	16 (10.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.15	0.59
11	Our libraries head work with the member until he or she is empowered and skilled enough to handle tasks with minimal supervision in the future.	13 (8.8%)	104 (70.7%))	30 (20.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2.88	0.53
12	Our libraries help colleagues overcome the challenges they encounter	57 (38.8%)	81 (55.1%))	9 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3.33	0.59
	Weighted mean					3.08	
	Delegating Leadership Style Impact						
13	Our libraries head trusted team members are to decide on the best approach and tools to use.	35 (23.8%)	112 (76.2%))	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3.24	0.43
14	Our libraries head checks in periodically to ensure the project is on track but does not interfere with the technical decisions made by the team.	34 (23.1%)	94 (63.9%))	19 (12.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.10	0.59
15	Our libraries head provide the necessary resources and support but do not closely oversee the work.	43 (29.3%)	73 (49.7%))	14 (9.5%)	17 (11.6%)	2.97	0.92
16	Our libraries head embrace new creativity and innovation	42 (28.6%)	96 (65.3%))	9 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3.22	0.55

Weighted mean	3.13
Grand mean	3.15

Decision Rule: 1.00-1.74=Very low, 1.75-2.49=Low, 2.50-3.24=High, 3.25-4.00=Very high
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The results in Table 2 indicate that multiple leadership styles are practiced by library heads in Colleges of Education libraries in South-West Nigeria, with all four styles recording high mean scores. Among these, directive leadership style was the most predominant, with the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.22$), suggesting that library heads largely take responsibility for decision-making, enforce policies, provide clear direction, and closely supervise staff to ensure goal attainment. Coaching leadership style ($\bar{x} = 3.18$) and delegating leadership style ($\bar{x} = 3.13$) were also rated high, indicating that library heads motivate staff, support professional development, encourage innovation, and grant a reasonable level of autonomy. Supportive leadership style recorded the lowest, though still high, mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.08$), implying comparatively less emphasis on participatory decision-making and emotional support. Overall, the findings suggest that leadership in these libraries is largely structured and task-oriented, with directive leadership being the most prevalent approach adopted by library heads.

H₀₁: There will be no significant influence of leadership style on service quality in college of education libraries in South West Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis of Influence of Leadership Style on Service Quality

Table 3a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.664	0.440	0.437	2.95650

Table 3b ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	997.404	1	997.404	114.108	0.000
Residual	1267.426	145	8.741		
Total	2264.830	146			

Table 3c Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	12.097	2.720		4.448	0.000
Leadership Styles	0.574	0.054	0.664	10.682	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results presented in Tables 3a–3c demonstrate that leadership style has a statistically significant influence on service quality in Colleges of Education libraries in South-West Nigeria. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between leadership style and service quality ($R = 0.664$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that improvements in leadership practices are associated with higher levels of service quality. The adjusted coefficient of determination ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.437$) shows that leadership styles accounted for 43.7% of the variation in service quality among library personnel, while the remaining 56.3% is attributable to other factors not examined in this study.

The ANOVA results further confirmed the overall significance of the regression model, with a high F-value ($F = 114.108$) and a statistically significant p-value ($p = 0.000$),

indicating that the combined leadership styles directive, coaching, supportive, and delegating significantly predict service quality. The regression coefficient analysis revealed a positive and significant effect of leadership style on service quality ($\beta = 0.664$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that a unit increase in effective leadership practices leads to a corresponding increase in service quality when other factors are held constant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected, confirming that leadership style significantly influences service quality among library personnel in Colleges of Education libraries in South-West Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Library management should provide continuous professional development opportunities, adequate resources, and incentives that keep library personnel motivated and equipped to deliver excellent services.
2. Regular assessment and user feedback mechanisms should also be institutionalized to ensure that high standards are consistently maintained.
3. Library administrators should embrace transformational leadership practices. Such practices should empower staff, promote teamwork, and enhance decision-making.

References

Alam, M. J., & Mezbah-ul-Islam, M. (2023). Impact of service quality on user satisfaction in public university libraries of Bangladesh using structural equation modeling. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 24(1), 12-30.

- Bailey, D. R., & Tierney, B. G. (2009). *Transforming library service through information commons*. Crest Publishing House.
- Baryshev, R. A., Tsvetochkina, I. A., Babina, O. I., Kasyanchuk, E. N., & Manushkina, M. M. (2020). Transformation of university libraries during the digital era. *Журнал Сибирского федерального университета. Гуманитарные науки*, 13(7), 1073-1089.
- Bhargavi, S., & Yaseen, A. (2016). Leadership styles and organizational performance. *Strategic Management Quarterly*, 4(1), 87-117.
- Cristobal, A. S. (2018). Expectations on library services, library quality (LibQual) dimension and library customer satisfaction: relationship to customer loyalty. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 1706, 1-24.
- Hassan, Z., & Basit, A. (2024). Improving employee performance, commitment and satisfaction through leadership style: mediating effect of employee satisfaction. *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*, 33(3), 368-399.
- Hernon, P., & Altman, E. (2010). Assessing service quality: Satisfying the expectations of library customers. *American Library Association*.
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1982). Management of organizational behavior: *Utilizing human resources* (4th ed.). Prentice-Hall.
- Hongo, H. O. (2024). Leadership styles of university librarians and performance of selected university libraries in kenya (Doctoral dissertation, TUK).
- Idayati, I., Kesuma, I. M., Aprianto, R., & Suwarno, S. (2020). The Effect of Service Quality on Citizen's Expectation through Dimension of Tangible, Emphaty, Reliability, Responsiveness and Assurance (TERRA). *SRIWIJAYA International Journal of dynamic economics and business*, 241-252.
- Ikubaje, M. T., & Adeyeye, S. V. (2025). The Role of Libraries in Supporting Lifelong Learning and Continuous Education. *Lead City International Journal of Library, Information & Communication Sciences*, 2(2), 169-183.
- Moses, C. L., Olaleke, O., Oluwafunmilayo, A. M., Gbenga, A. M., Olokundu, M., & Deborah, A. (2016). Perceived service quality and user satisfaction in library environment. *Asian Journal of Information Technology*, 15(1), 18-25.

- Nagata, H., Satoh, Y., Gerrard, S., & Kytömäki, P. (2004). The dimensions that construct the evaluation of service quality in academic libraries. *Performance measurement and metrics*, 5(2), 53-65.
- Ned, A. E., & Umesi, C. D. (2023). Effective leadership and employee motivation for sustainable development. *Journal of Education in Developing Areas*, 31(2), 310-321.
- Oguntuase, M. O., Okhakhu, D. O., & Fasae, J. K. (2025). Leadership styles and collection development practices of librarians in academic libraries: a case of Ekiti state, Nigeria. *Collection and Curation*, 44(2), 37-44.
- Sarmah, K., Singh, S. K., & Kumar, S. (2021). Assessment of service quality of libraries in higher educations: A review. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2021, 1-16.
- Tsolka, A. (2020). Contingency and situational approaches to educational leadership. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of education*.
- Udovita, V. (2020). Conceptual review on impact of leadership style on employee performance. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, 9(9), 16-23.
- Ullah, A., & Usman, M. (2023). Role of libraries in ensuring quality education at higher education institutions: a perspective of Pakistan. *Inverge Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 13-22.