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Librarians beyond books: Supporting the accreditation process in Nigerian universities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of librarians in supporting the accreditation process of Nigerian universities. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 250 librarians from federal universities in the South-South and South-West regions of Nigeria, and a census sampling technique was employed. Data were collected using an online questionnaire, of which 223 valid responses were retrieved and analyzed. The findings revealed that librarians are key contributors to the accreditation process, performing essential roles such as preparing accreditation documents and reports, ensuring that library collections meet required standards, and collaborating with academic staff to support accreditation requirements. The study also found that accreditation has a positive impact on library development, particularly in terms of resources, services, and facilities. Furthermore, librarians perceived the accreditation process as beneficial, as it provides opportunities for institutional recognition, improved infrastructure, enhanced information resources, and increased collaboration. However, several challenges were identified, including the late involvement of librarians in accreditation planning and inadequate funding for the acquisition of information resources and subscriptions to online databases. The hypothesis test revealed that librarians' involvement in the accreditation process significantly influenced library services and resource provision in universities. It is therefore recommended that librarians be involved early in the accreditation process to facilitate effective planning, and that adequate funding be provided to support resource acquisition and database subscriptions.

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Introduction

University accreditation is a globally recognized quality assurance process that appraises tertiary institutions to ensure compliance with established academic and administrative standards. Its core objectives include promoting academic excellence, ensuring institutional accountability, and fostering continuous improvement (Duarte & Vardasca, 2023; Kumar et al.,

2021). Through accreditation, students, employers, and other stakeholders are assured of the credibility and integrity of institutions in delivering quality education. In Nigeria, the accreditation of academic programs is conducted by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The commission undertakes periodic evaluations of key institutional components such as curriculum relevance, staffing, infrastructure, funding, and library resources (Jafarov, 2024). Programs that meet the required standards are granted full accreditation, while those that fall short are assigned interim status or denied accreditation.

The university library constitutes a critical component of the accreditation process. It is evaluated based on the availability and relevance of information resources, adequacy of professional staff, sufficiency of infrastructure, and access to information and communication technologies (Khotimah, 2017; Okogwu & Akidi, 2022). As a central support system for teaching, learning, and research, the quality of the library significantly influences accreditation outcomes (Bloom et al., 2025). Well-funded and efficiently managed libraries enhance academic program quality, whereas deficiencies in library resources and services may negatively affect accreditation results. Librarians play indispensable roles during accreditation exercises. They are responsible for preparing documentation, organizing collections in alignment with academic programs, and representing the library during evaluation visits (Ram, 2020). Their involvement ensures that information resources are current, accessible, and properly documented. In addition, librarians align library operations with accreditation standards, respond to evaluators' inquiries, and recommend improvements for sustained compliance (Patil, 2021).

The accreditation process also presents opportunities for the development of library services and infrastructure. In preparation for accreditation visits, universities often allocate funds for the acquisition of information resources, subscriptions to electronic databases, improvement of library facilities, and recruitment of qualified staff (Mbagwu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2021; Umeozor & Emasealu, 2016). These developments enable librarians to advocate for long-needed resources and infrastructural upgrades. Accreditation further enhances the visibility of librarians through increased collaboration with academic staff and institutional management (Fazal, 2016). This expanded role promotes professional growth, strengthens confidence, and reinforces the strategic importance of librarians within the university system.

In developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, accreditation is a structured quality assurance process used to evaluate academic programs, library services, and institutional governance (Corrado, 2025). External bodies assess institutions based on standards relating to curriculum quality, staffing, infrastructure, and learning resources.

Libraries play a central role by providing current, relevant, and accessible resources that support teaching, learning, and research (Polat & Akkaya, 2024). Although challenges such as time constraints, evolving standards, and increased workload may exist, they are generally managed through early librarian involvement and systematic planning (Boyer, 2025). Consequently, practices such as panic acquisition of resources or temporary compliance measures may be minimal, with emphasis on sustainability and continuous improvement. In developing contexts like Nigeria, librarians may be involved late in accreditation planning, which, combined with limited funding, understaffing, and evolving standards, can limit their ability to prepare collections, upgrade facilities, and address gaps (Nkiko et al., 2015; Salisu, 2024). Some of these libraries may also resort to temporary measures, raising ethical concerns and misrepresenting true capacity (Joseph & Urhiewhu, 2016).

The present research is closely related to the previous research by Joseph and Urhiewhu carried out in 2016/2017 as the two research papers are dedicated to the significant role that academic libraries play in university accreditation in Nigeria. Both papers emphasize that libraries participate in the accreditation process by collecting and preparing documents and facilitating teaching and research activities and also that they face many pitfalls that include insufficient funding, lack of staff, and the fact that librarians are not always consulted at an early stage in the accreditation process. Nevertheless, this study extends further as it provides more topical empirical data and considers the modern trends in library work, particularly the growing role of digital materials, electronic databases and new technology. Although, the nature of the 2016/2017 study was to a large extent literature based and descriptive but this study also reflects the impact of new accreditation rules and regulations by the NUC that currently focus on digital accessibility and international competitiveness. The necessity of this new research is motivated by the technological, funding, and institutional changes. It, therefore, gives a current insight as to whether previous challenges are still present and if the current role of librarians remains the same.

Given this, there is a need for focused research on librarians' experiences in the accreditation process. Such investigation will highlight their contributions, inform policy decisions, and strengthen their role in enhancing library services and supporting quality assurance in Nigerian universities.

Statement of the problem

The accreditation process in Nigerian universities serves as a key quality assurance mechanism for ensuring compliance with standards in academic programs, staffing, infrastructure, and library services. Within this system, the university library has a central role in supporting teaching, learning, and research. Librarians contribute by facilitating access to relevant

information resources, organizing collections, and aligning services with institutional requirements. Accreditation also provides opportunities for library development, enabling librarians to advocate for improved funding, infrastructure, and resources. Challenges may arise during the accreditation process. In some cases, librarians may participate late in the planning process, and factors such as limited funding, understaffing, and evolving standards may affect the preparation of collections, the upgrading of facilities, and the addressing of gaps (Nkiko et al., 2015; Salisu, 2024). Temporary measures may also be implemented; which can raise ethical concerns and misrepresent institutional capacity (Joseph & Urhiewhu, 2016). The evolving nature of accreditation standards set by the NUC requires continuous updates to library services and resources; which can present additional difficulties for institutions. Given the limited empirical evidence on librarians' roles and experiences, this study examines their contributions, impact on library development, and the challenges encountered during the accreditation process in Nigerian universities.

Research questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

- What roles do librarians perform in supporting the accreditation process in universities?
- What is the influence of accreditation requirements on library services and resources in universities?
- What opportunities are available to librarians in facilitating a smooth accreditation process?
- What challenges do librarians face during the accreditation process in Nigerian universities?

Hypothesis

The research hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance

- Librarians' roles in supporting the accreditation process has a significant influence on library services and resource provision in universities.

Literature review

Literature was reviewed according to the research questions.

Librarians roles in the accreditation process

Kwegyiriba et al. (2021) conducted research into academic libraries' role during program accreditation procedures in technical universities across

Ghana. The finding shows that librarians participated in complete certification procedures because they provide vital information resources needed for accreditation. Similarly, Achi et al. (2019) studied library and accreditation procedure regarding academic programs at Bingham University in Nassarawa State, Nigeria. The results reveal that librarians played essential roles through their work in supplying recent information resources available in printed versions as well on electronic platforms. Also, Masoud (2019) conducted an examination of the United Arab Emirates libraries in university accreditation procedures. The findings reveal that the accreditation process at the university heavily depends on UOS libraries, which played an essential role by presenting their collections while also sending an “Accreditation Information Package” that validates the services and resources needed for academic operations throughout the institution. Equally, Men and Isreal (2017) did a study on the significance of academic libraries for undergraduate program accreditation. The accreditation procedures fully involved the librarians; because they provided essential information resources which the accreditation programs required. Nonetheless, White (1999) conducted a study to determine the roles of librarians during the accreditation process of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and found poor documentation practices and poor perceived librarian participation throughout the accreditation process.

Influence of accreditation exercise on library resources and services

Bakrin and Adeyeye (2023) examined the NUC accreditation exercises and acquisition of information resources by private university libraries in Oyo and Osun States. It was found that library acquisition has become accreditation-focused, as funds are usually allocated to the library during accreditation periods. On the same note, Azubogu and Madu (2021) examined the effectiveness of accreditation exercises on library resources in Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri. The outcomes revealed that the accreditation exercise raised the availability of information resources, which include the use of printed materials and furniture, such as reading chairs and tables/carrels and shelves. Libraries tend to enhance information resources and physical facilities only during the accreditation times, as most academic libraries purchase, repairs, and staffing tends to drop right after the accreditation visits (Etido & Wali, 2024; Linh & Tu, 2020; Mbagwu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2021).

Opportunities available to librarians in facilitating a smooth accreditation process

According to Conrad et al. (2017), librarians participate in workshops and training on assessment practices, accreditation standards and data

management, leading to substantial improvements in academic planning and institutional research competencies. Men and Israel (2017) as well as Bangert and Gratch (1995) noted that accreditation brings librarians closer to leadership roles, which strengthens both library visibility and academic and research support work. This procedure leads to increased library investments through updated textbooks and electronic databases and modern technological tools (Adeeko et al., 2021). The investment enables the library to improve both its resources and service quality while providing better access. Fazal (2016) noted that libraries benefit from upgraded Internet connectivity, improved furniture arrangements, and facility renovations that support academic development. Azubogu and Madu (2021) show that integration of library systems and digital platforms during accreditation strengthens librarian technical abilities and enables contemporary service provision. However, Mbagwu and Udo-Anyanwu (2021) discovered that the visibility of library personnel to the university community was rated as only slightly below average, which means that despite the increase in resources, there were no significant advances in the professional level of library employees. In the same manner, Neel and Frick (2024) discovered that the accreditation processes have led to more administrative workload among librarians without any significant changes in leadership positions, training possibilities, or resource distribution.

Challenges faced by librarians during the accreditation process

Okogwu and Akidi (2022), Uzoagba and Okiche (2018) conclude that the lack of adequate time allocated to libraries does not support their preparation for accreditation. The limited time of preparation minimizes their ability to rearrange resources and refresh the collections as well as make the necessary service enhancements. The other big challenge is associated with lack of financial assistance. University libraries often survive with limited budgets and receive accreditation funds primarily during periods close to accreditation evaluations (Okojie, 2010). In the absence of accreditation, university libraries in Nigeria receive minimal attention from the university management, which leads to poor service delivery and inadequate new acquisitions. Uzoagba and Okiche (2018) emphasized that funding delays happen through bureaucratic mechanisms which hinder fund accessibility. University libraries also experience problems due to their outdated collection of information resources. Libraries fail to meet the standards of accreditation since they neglect routine updates and collection development (Obiano, 2021). Joseph and Urhiewhu (2016) indicated that lack of accreditation team transparency combined with staffing shortages and inadequate collections represent

major issues. Ogunbodede and Wiche (2022), Achi et al. (2019) identified erratic power supply as a primary operational barrier that hinders library activities, particularly because libraries heavily rely on digital resources. Unstable power supplies limit accreditation activities by disrupting the use of essential electronic databases and equipment operation.

Theoretical framework: Institutional theory

The study is based on institutional theory (IT) proposed in 1977 by sociologists John Meyer and Brian Rowan. IT functions as a useful analytical tool to investigate librarians, the impact, potential opportunities, and accreditation-related challenges in Nigerian university libraries. This theory shows how organizations, including universities alongside their libraries, align with regulatory standards from entities such as NUC to obtain their legitimacy and necessary resources. The accreditation process serves as a robust institutional framework, which guides library operations by requiring libraries to meet external measures relating to their staff composition as well as their collection management, facilities and service quality standards. The IT reveals that librarians play multiple roles during accreditation, through which they provide service while fulfilling institutional responsibilities to create documents and develop strategic plans to achieve accreditation success. Concerning the impact on library resources and services, the IT clarifies how accreditation requires libraries to submit to coercive pressure from universities that allocate temporary resources to achieve evaluation criteria. This approach tends to be short-term oriented even though it solves immediate accreditation problems by focusing on visits but not on academic needs. Academic accreditation provides useful potential opportunities that become visible when examined through this theoretical approach. The elevated library presence within the institution makes it possible for librarians to obtain additional resources and staffing along with structural enhancements. Through IT we can understand methods which librarians can use during institutional critical moments for promoting future innovations while driving lasting organizational changes. Finally, the challenges that librarians go through in the course of accreditation are consistent with the fundamental ideals of IT. There are huge struggles associated with divergent expectations of stakeholders (university administrators, faculty, students and outside accrediting bodies), resource constraints and institutional complexities. Librarians need to be able to balance the desire to meet the standards with the somewhat underfunded or understaffed libraries.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey as its research methodology. The population of the study comprised 250 librarians from federal universities in South-West and South-South Nigeria. The census sampling technique was adopted, and an online questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed *via* professional social networks, such as the LinkedIn and WhatsApp platforms, of the Nigerian Library Association, which are restricted to librarians. It was clearly stated that only librarians in federal university libraries in these two regions should respond by filling out the questionnaire. It was also stated that the respondents should not fill out the questionnaire more than once. The questionnaire was also sent privately to the respondents to encourage timely responses. The respondents were given about two months, from July 1st to August 31st, 2025, to respond to the questionnaire. Out of the librarians who received the questionnaire, 223 completed it, and with that, the analysis was made. The research procedures were conducted ethically during the distribution of the questionnaire. Initially, the researchers introduced their self and the purpose of the study to the participants, obtaining their consent. All participants who completed the questionnaire process did so voluntarily. Two specialists in measurement and evaluation, as well as library and information science, validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a result of 0.86.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in LIS education to enhance its content and improve its clarity. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data *via* SPSS version 29. A nominal scale and 4-point Likert-type scale were used to measure and analyze responses to the questionnaire. The research questions 1-4 adopted a criterion score of 2.5. The criterion score was calculated by dividing the total by 4, where the sum was (4 + 3 + 2 + 1) divided by 4, or the criterion score = (4 + 3 + 2 + 1)/4 = 2.5. For research questions 1, 2 and 4, the mean response below 2.5 was considered disagree, while the mean response above 2.5 was considered was considered agree. The mean scores less than 2.5 were taken as negative, and the mean scores between 2.5 and above were taken as positive for research question 2.

Demographic information

The finding in Table 1 suggests that females made up the majority of librarians involved in the study

Research question 1

What roles do librarians perform in supporting the accreditation process in universities?

The results in Table 2 indicate that all items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.5 (SD = 0.61). This suggests that librarians play a significant and active role in supporting the accreditation process in universities. The highest mean scores were recorded for preparing accreditation documents and reports (Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.59) and ensuring that library collections meet accreditation standards (Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.48), indicating strong involvement in documentation and compliance activities. High mean values were also observed for collaboration with academic staff (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.50) and recognition of librarians' roles by university management (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.50), reflecting effective teamwork and institutional support during accreditation exercises. However, relatively lower mean scores were recorded for involvement in implementing accreditation recommendations (Mean = 3.1, SD = 0.77) and receiving adequate training (Mean = 3.0, SD = 0.76). This indicates some gaps in post-accreditation engagement and

Table 1. Gender of the respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	109	49
Female	114	51
Total	223	100

Table 2. Librarians roles in supporting the accreditation process.

S/N	Librarians roles in the accreditation process	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Librarians play a significant role in preparing accreditation documents and reports.	156	58	7	2	3.7	0.59
2.	Librarians ensure that library collections meet accreditation standards.	168	51	4	–	3.7	0.48
3.	Librarians collaborate with academic staff to support accreditation requirements.	145	76	2	–	3.6	0.50
4.	The university management recognizes the role of librarians in the accreditation process.	145	76	2	–	3.6	0.50
5.	Librarians participate in meetings with accreditation panels.	129	85	2	7	3.5	0.68
6.	Librarians are actively involved in implementing accreditation recommendations.	74	109	33	7	3.1	0.77
7.	Librarians receive adequate training to support accreditation processes.	67	94	62	–	3.0	0.76
Grand Mean						3.5	0.61

professional development. The findings confirm that librarians are key contributors to the accreditation process, particularly in documentation, compliance, and collaboration, although improvements are needed in training and in their participation in implementing accreditation outcomes.

Research question 2

What is the influence of accreditation requirements on library services and resources?

The results in [Table 3](#) show that all items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.4 (SD = 0.58), indicating that accreditation requirements positively influence library services and resources in universities. The highest mean was recorded for the acquisition of library materials (Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.54), suggesting that accreditation strongly motivates libraries to expand and update their collections. Accreditation was also found to enhance library facilities and infrastructure (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.55), promote the adoption of modern information management systems (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.53), and improve access to e-resources and databases (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.53). These results indicate that accreditation encourages libraries to modernize operations and align with institutional and regulatory standards. Additionally, accreditation fosters a culture of continuous improvement in library services (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.57), supports better staffing and training (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.67), and enhances user-friendliness of library services (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.64). The findings demonstrate that accreditation requirements play a significant role in library development. They drive improvements in resources, facilities, systems, and services, ensuring that libraries are better equipped to meet academic needs, support teaching and research, and maintain alignment with quality assurance standards.

Research question 3

What opportunities are available to librarians in facilitating a smooth accreditation process?

The results in [Table 4](#) show that all items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.4 (SD = 0.58), indicating that librarians perceive the accreditation process as providing significant opportunities for professional growth and institutional engagement. The highest mean scores were recorded for *accreditation enhances the visibility and relevance of librarians in the university* (Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.50) and *the accreditation process allows librarians to advocate for improved infrastructure* (Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.53), suggesting that accreditation enhances both recognition and influence over resource allocation. Accreditation also encourages better funding for library resources

Table 3. Influence of accreditation requirements on library services and resources.

S/N	Influence of accreditation requirements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Accreditation requirements lead to improved acquisition of library materials.	108	111	4	–	3.5	0.54
2.	Accreditation helps to enhance library facilities and infrastructure.	97	120	6	–	3.4	0.55
3.	Accreditation promotes the adoption of modern information management systems.	99	119	5	–	3.4	0.53
4.	Accreditation requirements lead to improved access to e-resources and databases.	99	119	5		3.4	0.53
5.	Accreditation fosters a culture of continuous improvement in library services.	85	139	8	–	3.4	0.57
6.	Accreditation demands encourage better library staffing and training.	82	113	28		3.2	0.67
7.	Library services become more user-friendly due to accreditation requirements.	65	133	25	–	3.2	0.64
Grand Mean						3.4	0.58

(Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.61) and creates avenues for collaboration with other university departments (Mean = 3.4, SD = 0.55), highlighting the expanded roles and institutional involvement of librarians. Other identified opportunities include access to new technology and digital resources (Mean = 3.3, SD = 0.63), contributing to university policy development (Mean = 3.3, SD = 0.62), and engagement in professional development initiatives (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.68). The findings indicate that librarians view accreditation as highly beneficial, as it provides avenues for increased visibility, collaboration, infrastructure improvement, access to resources, policy contribution, and professional development.

Research question 4

What challenges do librarians face during the accreditation process in Nigerian universities?

The results in Table 5 show that all items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.2 (SD = 0.67), indicating that librarians face several challenges during the accreditation process. The highest mean scores were recorded for late involvement of the library during early accreditation planning (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.50) and insufficient funding to acquire relevant information resources across various programs (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.54), highlighting the impact of limited preparation time and financial constraints. Similarly, inadequate funding to subscribe to online databases (Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.67) and inconsistent accreditation policies (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.55) further complicate librarians'

Table 4. Opportunities available to librarians.

S/N	Opportunities available to librarians	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Accreditation enhances the visibility and relevance of librarians in the university.	116	107	–	–	3.5	0.50
2.	The accreditation process allows librarians to advocate for improved infrastructure.	107	114	2	–	3.5	0.53
3.	The accreditation process encourages better funding for library resources.	107	101	15	–	3.4	0.61
4.	Accreditation creates opportunities for librarians to collaborate with other university departments.	95	121	7	–	3.4	0.55
5.	Librarians gain access to new technology and digital resources during accreditation.	84	124	13	2	3.3	0.63
6.	The accreditation process provides a platform for librarians to contribute to university policy development.	78	125	18	2	3.3	0.62
7.	Accreditation processes provide librarians with opportunities for professional development.	76	113	31	3	3.2	0.68
Grand Mean						3.4	0.58

efforts to support accreditation compliance. Other notable challenges include poor collaboration between librarians and academic departments (Mean = 3.1, SD = 0.62), limited access to updated information resources (Mean = 3.1, SD = 0.69), and inadequate support from university management (Mean = 2.9, SD = 0.79). Time constraints (Mean = 2.8, SD = 0.80) and insufficient training on accreditation processes (Mean = 2.7, SD = 0.87) also hinder librarians’ effective contribution. The findings demonstrate that while librarians play essential roles in accreditation, late involvement, limited funding, inadequate training, poor collaboration, and inconsistent policies are key challenges that restrict their effectiveness in supporting the accreditation process.

Hypothesis: Librarians’ roles in supporting the accreditation process have no significant influence on library services and resource provision in universities.

The result of the regression model in [Table 6](#) indicates that librarians’ roles in supporting the accreditation process are a significant predictor of library services and resource provision in universities. There is a moderate

Table 5. Challenges librarians face.

S/N	Challenges librarians face	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D.
1.	Late involvement of library during the early stages of accreditation planning	145	76	2	–	3.6	0.50
2.	Insufficient funding to acquire relevant information resources across the various programs.	143	74	6	–	3.6	0.54
3.	Insufficient funding to subscribe to online databases	129	85	2	7	3.5	0.67
4.	Inconsistent accreditation policies pose challenges to librarians.	68	140	15	–	3.2	0.55
5.	Poor collaboration between librarians and academic departments affects accreditation success.	56	134	31	2	3.1	0.62
6.	Limited access to updated information resources hinders accreditation compliance.	71	111	40	1	3.1	0.69
7.	Librarians experience inadequate support from university management during accreditation.	58	96	60	9	2.9	0.79
8.	Time constraints make it difficult for librarians to effectively contribute to accreditation processes.	49	108	57	9	2.8	0.80
9.	There is a lack of sufficient training for librarians on accreditation processes.	57	87	56	23	2.7	0.87
Grand Mean						3.2	0.67

positive relationship between librarians' roles and library services and resources ($R=0.62$), with $R^2 = 0.38$, indicating that 38% of the variance in library services and resource provision is explained by librarians' roles. The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(1,221) = 66.05$, $p=0.000<0.05$). This indicates that librarians' roles in supporting the accreditation process significantly influence library services and resource provision in universities. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings suggest that increased involvement of librarians in accreditation processes leads to improved library services and better resource provision in universities.

Table 6. Simple linear regression analysis of the influence of librarians’ roles in supporting the accreditation process on library services and resource provision in universities.

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
1 Regression	9.842	1	9.482	66.05	
Residual	32.973	221	0.149	–	0.000
Total	42.815	222			

$\alpha=0.05$; $R=0.62$; R Square= 0.38.

Discussion

The first research question reveals that librarians played a crucial role, actively performed vital tasks throughout the accreditation assessment process. Some of the roles include preparing accreditation documents and reports, prepare library collections to meet accreditation standards, collaborating with academic staff to support accreditation requirements, and participating in meetings with accreditation panels among others. Library participation in the accreditation process reveals the expanding scope of their contributions, which surpasses typical library responsibilities. Librarians are playing a critical role in ensuring that the institutions comply with the accreditation standards and earn the status of key players when it comes to academic quality assurance programs. These findings reveal the need for institutions to ensure that librarians are encompassed in the entirety of their strategic planning and decision making process as far as accreditation is concerned. The result supports the principles outlined by IT, which demonstrate that librarians exceed their role as service providers while functioning as institutional actors. Librarians carry out policy implementation together with documentation preparation and strategic accreditation support activities. This finding does not align with the study by White (1999), which revealed inadequate documentation and a generally low level of perceived librarian involvement among librarians in the accreditation process of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business.

According to research question two, institutional accreditation promotes the positive development of libraries, including library resources, library services, and library infrastructure. The accreditation process motivates educational institutions to enhance library resources and facilities through investments while fulfilling established accreditation criteria. There is continuous growth of library resources and services through accreditation, which subsequently results in a more enriched learning experience for students and faculty. This finding coincides with the tenets of IT that indicate that in some cases, universities would utilize their resources as short-term interventions to enhance library facilities and collections and meet accreditation standards. This result is consistent with the study of Azubogu and Madu (2021) confirming that accreditation exercises are sufficient in terms of information and infrastructural facilities. However, studies have shown that although accreditation exercises often stimulate

temporary improvements in library resources, many academic libraries experience a decline in acquisitions, maintenance, and staffing immediately after accreditation visits (Etido & Wali, 2024; Linh & Tu, 2020; Mbagwu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2021).

The librarians have perceived the accreditation process as one that can offer a variety of benefits, such as recognition, improved facilities, improved access to information resources, improved interdepartmental collaboration and acceptance of modern technology. The perceptions demonstrate how accreditation enables professional development along with institutional progress. The finding aligns with the principles stressed in IT, which noted that accreditation makes libraries more visible to the institution and strengthens librarians' abilities to seek additional funding and staffing resources and infrastructure development. The results of the study are consistent with Conrad et al. (2017), along with Men and Israel (2017) and Azubogu and Madu (2021), who have demonstrated that librarians also have similar benefits in terms of the accreditation review activity. Nevertheless, Etido and Wali (2024) discovered that in developing nations, the implementation of accreditation activities also does not imply the further enhancement of libraries in terms of funding or the enhancement of their infrastructure, which questions the idea that accreditation can and must be used to reinforce library capacity and services.

During the accreditation process, librarians encountered several obstacles, according to the fourth research question. Some of these challenges stem from the late involvement of the library; a lack of budgetary resources for database subscription and resource acquisition; unpredictable accreditation policies; poor management planning; weak collaboration between departments and librarians; and fraudulent activities by management. There are instances where the university's management conspired with librarians to hire books, arranged them on the shelves and borrowed staff just to convince the NUC accreditation team. These challenges create substantial barriers, which interfere with the library's ability to achieve accreditation goals. The resolution of these issues is fundamental to enhancing both accreditation achievements and library leadership in educational enhancement and organizational success. This observation goes hand in hand with the concepts emphasized by IT, which shows how stakeholders struggle to utilize the scarce resources in the context of an institution complex world. The research results match those obtained by Okogwu and Akidi (2022) and Joseph and Urhiewhu (2016).

The hypothesis test revealed that librarians' roles in the accreditation process significantly influenced library services and resource provision in universities. This means that librarians are of strategic importance in ascertaining that the requirements of accreditation are met in enhancing the quality and efficiency of library services in terms of assessment.

Consistent with the principles of Institutional Theory, the finding suggests that librarians perform multiple roles in the accreditation process, combining routine service provision with institutional responsibilities such as documentation, evidence generation, and strategic planning to achieve accreditation success and institutional legitimacy.

The results of the present research prove that librarians have essential functions in the accreditation process by providing informational resources, the preparation of documents and the assistance with academic programs. This is in line with the research undertaken in Ghana, the United Arab Emirates, and other settings where librarians are identified to play a critical role in the accreditation process. This implies that the roles of academic librarians in accreditation are consistent worldwide. Nevertheless, other context-specific issues identified in the study include unreliable power supply, insufficient funding, and failure of librarians to stay updated on accreditation plans. These are more eminent in the developing world, such as Nigeria, and the research published in developed settings focuses on workload and time constraints. This study implies that the activities of librarians in different parts of the world have some similarities, but mostly the environment in which the librarians operate varies greatly. The research has some significant international implications. It outlines the significance of librarians' early participation in accreditation planning, the importance of funding for library resources beyond the accreditation cycle, and the importance of librarians as a strategic tool in institutional quality assurance. Such implications are applicable not only to universities in Nigeria but also to other institutions in the world that require improving their accreditation performance by gaining adequate support for their libraries.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research establishes that librarians were essential contributors who actively performed vital tasks throughout the accreditation assessment process. Accreditation positively impacts library development by enhancing resources, services and other facilities. Librarians view the accreditation processes as beneficial, offering several opportunities such as recognition, improved infrastructure, access to information resources, collaboration, etc. On the other hand, librarians faced several challenges during the accreditation process. Examples include the late involvement of the library; lack of budgetary resources for database subscription and resource acquisition; unpredictable accreditation policies; poor management planning; fraudulent activities involving both library staff and administrative personnel; weak collaboration between departments and librarians; and restricted access to contemporary information materials. The finding from the hypothesis reveals that active involvement of

librarians in accreditation activities significantly enhances library services and the availability of information resources in universities. In accordance with the results, the researchers suggested that early involvement of librarians on accreditation committees should be suggested, as it is essential to demonstrate their significant relations to documentation and quality assurance. Universities should continue to develop their libraries with regular funding, even after gaining accreditation. Librarians should be appreciated by accreditation bodies, and ethical behavior that encourages professional contribution should be encouraged. There should be constant training to enhance the competencies of librarians. Stronger collaboration between librarians and academic departments is also recommended to improve accreditation outcomes and long term library effectiveness.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Oyinkepreye Sawyerr-George**: Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision; **Elizabeth O. Fischer-Amos**: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

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