

**FACULTY PERCEPTION OF LIBRARY AESTHETICS AND PERCEIVED NEED FOR  
A FUNCTIONAL RESEARCH COMMONS TO SUPPORT SCHOLARLY  
PRODUCTIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF HEZEKIAH OLUWASANMI LIBRARY,  
OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examined Faculty Perception of Library Aesthetics and Perceived Need for a Functional Research Commons to Support Scholarly Productivity: A Case Study of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey research method. A total of 132 faculty lecturers were considered across all the faculties in Obafemi Awolowo University. Questionnaire was used for data collection and 132 self-structured questionnaire was distributed to the lecturers as respondents in the university. 129 (97.73%) questionnaire were received and used as the basis for data analysis. The findings revealed that overall ambience of the library is welcoming and aesthetically pleasing, the furniture in the library is modern, comfortable, and conducive to research. A visually pleasing library environment enhances ability to concentrate on academic tasks and aware about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members that a visually pleasing library environment enhances the ability to concentrate on academic tasks and awareness of the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members that understands how

a Research Commons supports collaborative and interdisciplinary research. It was recommended that the university management should invest in sustaining and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the library. Regular refurbishment, ergonomic furniture, optimized lighting, and clean, orderly spaces can boost scholarly engagement. The university should equally prioritize the functionality of a Research Commons equipped with high-speed internet, collaborative spaces, research software, data analysis tools and digital repositories to support faculty research.

**Keywords:** Library aesthetics, Research Commons, Scholarly productivity, Hezekiah

Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University

## INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries have traditionally served as the central hubs for knowledge acquisition, research development, and intellectual engagement within higher institutions. However, academic libraries are no longer perceived and served merely as repositories of books but as dynamic learning environments that contribute significantly to teaching, research, and scholarship (Cox, Pinfield, & Rutter, 2020; Le Maître & Bérubé, 2020). Over the past few decades, the role of academic libraries has evolved from being mere storehouses of books to dynamic spaces that support teaching, learning and research. As universities strive to improve scholarly output and global rankings, attention has shifted toward optimizing library infrastructure, including aesthetics and specialized research environments, to enhance user experience and promote research productivity, particularly among faculty members in the universities (Tewell & Nickel, 2020; Sadek, 2020).

The aesthetics of library spaces encompassing architectural design, spatial organization, lighting, furniture, color schemes and ambient conditions are recognized as influential factors in user satisfaction, engagement and productivity (Sadek, 2020; Tewell & Nickel, 2020). More so, library aesthetics, according to El-Sayed, 2021; Abubakar & Salisu, 2022, refers to the physical attractiveness and ambient qualities of the library space, such as lighting, layout, furniture design, color schemes, noise levels, ventilation and overall spatial arrangement. A well-designed library environment fosters comfort, inspiration and deeper cognitive engagement, which are

vital for academic research (Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Tewell & Nickel, 2020). Research has shown that the spatial and visual quality of academic libraries plays a significant role in influencing the behavior, mood and productivity of users (Applegate, 2009; Montgomery, 2014; Sadek, 2020).

Furthermore, in response to increasing faculty research demands and the complexity of modern academic work, many institutions have begun incorporating Research Commons into their library designs. A Research Commons is a purpose-built, collaborative space that provides technological, infrastructural and intellectual support for faculty and postgraduate research (Corrall, Kennan, & Afzal, 2020; Ayeni & Adetoro, 2021). These spaces, according to Baughman, 2020; Corrall et al., 2020), typically offer access to high-speed internet, research consultation services, group workrooms, data visualization tools and digital scholarship support, all within an aesthetically appealing and flexible environment. Understanding faculty perceptions is essential because they are the primary drivers of academic research in the university system. Faculty members require library environments that not only provide access to scholarly resources but also support deep work, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation (Cox et al., 2020; Tewell & Nickel, 2020).

In Nigeria, however, most academic libraries, including those in federal universities, still operate within the constraints of outdated designs and under-resourced facilities (Ifijeh, Ilogho, & Adebayo, 2021; Abubakar & Salisu, 2022). Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library at Obafemi Awolowo University is a prominent academic library among them in Nigeria, with a reputation for large-scale holdings and rich historical collections. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that the library may not yet fully align with global best practices in terms of space aesthetics and research-focused infrastructure for faculty members (Ayeni & Adetoro, 2021). This gap necessitates an empirical assessment of how faculty members perceive the library environment and whether there is a pressing need for a functional Research Commons within the library in the university.

Their satisfaction with library space and support services directly influences their research output and overall academic performance (Ifijeh & Yusuf, 2020; Abubakar & Salisu, 2022). Therefore, this study investigates the perceptions of faculty members regarding the aesthetics of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library and the perceived need for a functional Research Commons. The study seeks to explore how the physical and aesthetic conditions of the library influence scholarly

engagement and to assess the extent to which the current library infrastructure supports or constrains faculty research productivity. Findings from this study will provide evidence-based recommendations for library and university administrators to design inclusive, aesthetically responsive and research-oriented environments that align with global best practices and the evolving needs of 21st-century scholars.

### **Statement of the Problem**

University libraries are believed to be central to the research enterprise of any university, especially in their undeniable role of supporting faculty members who are the primary producers of scholarly outputs in the universities. However, beyond the availability of information resources, increasing attention is being drawn to the physical and aesthetic quality of library spaces, which has been shown to significantly affect user satisfaction, concentration and productivity. Particularly, the aesthetic appeal of library environments such as lighting, ventilation, spatial organization, noise control and ergonomic furniture that can either stimulate or inhibit scholarly engagement among faculty members.

Meanwhile, in global contexts, university libraries are increasingly integrating modern infrastructure such as Research Commons that is dedicated, technology-rich and aesthetically enhanced spaces which is to support research collaboration, digital scholarship and faculty development. These developments are driven by the recognition that conventional library designs may no longer meet the evolving research expectations of academic staff in the 21st century. Unfortunately, therefore, many Nigerian university libraries, including Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library at Obafemi Awolowo University, still operate with traditional spatial configurations that may not reflect current best practices in library aesthetics and/or provide specialized research environments.

Observations suggest that while Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library is rich in collections and academic history, its physical environment may lack the modern aesthetics and infrastructural innovation required to support sustained scholarly productivity among faculty members. Additionally, there appears to be an absence of a fully functional Research Commons tailored to the needs of researchers, potentially limiting collaborative research, digital scholarship and advanced information services. Despite the critical importance of these factors, few empirical

studies have assessed how faculty members perceive the library's aesthetics and their expectations for research-oriented spaces in Nigerian academic libraries.

This gap underscores the need to investigate faculty members' perceptions of the current library environment and to evaluate the necessity and expectations for a functional Research Commons within Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. Without such insight, efforts to reform the library space may fail to address the specific needs of academic researchers, ultimately impacting the university's research performance and global visibility.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. to examine faculty members' perceptions of the current aesthetic condition of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.
- ii. to determine the influence of library aesthetics on faculty members' scholarly productivity through the use of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library for research purpose at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
- iii. to assess the level of awareness about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
- iv. to explore faculty members' expectations and perceived need for a functional Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
- v. to identify possible challenges for implementing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the faculty members' perceptions of the current aesthetic condition of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of library aesthetics on faculty members' scholarly productivity through the use of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library for research purpose at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

3. What is the level of awareness about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?
4. What are the faculty members' expectations and perceived need for a functional Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?
5. What are the possible challenges for implementing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Library aesthetics is referred to as the visual, spatial and sensory appeal of library environments, which include elements such as architecture, lighting, color, furniture arrangement, spatial organization and general ambiance. These elements significantly influence how users interact with library spaces and the frequency and duration of their use. Aesthetic appeal, while often overlooked, is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in academic libraries' ability to support learning and research activities (Shill & Tonner, 2004; Sadek, 2020; Tewell & Nickel, 2020). Bennett (2007) emphasizes that the physical design of library spaces reflects institutional values and signals to users whether the space is intended for deep intellectual engagement or merely functional use. Likewise, Applegate (2009) found that well-designed study areas encourage prolonged use and positively affect user satisfaction. For faculty members, who require conducive environments for focused thinking and writing, aesthetic quality can either promote or hinder scholarly productivity (Yusof & Hassan, 2021; Khan & Bibi, 2023).

Faculty members' perceptions of library spaces often go beyond access to resources. They are influenced by spatial functionality, privacy, quietness, lighting, seating comfort and overall environmental quality (Montgomery & Miller, 2011). Faculty prefer spaces that support independent research, collaborative meetings and engagement with digital tools. According to Schachter (2012), academic staff often regards aesthetically pleasing library environments as extensions of their academic departments, particularly when those environments are intellectually stimulating and technologically equipped. Recent studies have shown that faculty increasingly expect library spaces to integrate advanced technologies and hybrid features, including flexible layouts and supportive ambient qualities, to align with contemporary research

practices (Khan & Bibi, 2023; Tewell & Nickel, 2020). In the Nigerian context, libraries have traditionally focused on collections rather than the spatial or aesthetic needs of users. Afolabi (2019) observes that many Nigerian university libraries, despite their centrality to academic life, lack user-centered designs that foster creativity and sustained academic work. Hence, it creates a disconnection between faculty expectations and the services provided (Abubakar & Salisu, 2022; Ifijeh, Ilogho, & Adebayo, 2021).

The research commons is a modern library innovation designed to meet the specialized needs of faculty and postgraduate researchers. It is a dedicated, technology-enabled and service-rich environment that integrates resources, space and expertise to support high-level academic work (Branin, 2007; Corral, Kennan, & Afzal, 2020). Unlike traditional reading rooms, research commons offer flexible workspaces, seminar rooms, data analysis tools and access to librarians trained in research support and digital scholarship. Carlson (2009) notes that research commons have transformed academic libraries in North America and Europe by positioning them as active partners in research. These spaces foster interdisciplinary collaboration, enhance access to digital tools and provide an academic community for researchers (Corral et al., 2020; Ayeni & Adetoro, 2021). Despite their proven benefits, research commons remain largely absent in most Nigerian university libraries due to funding constraints, infrastructural deficits and limited awareness (Ayeni & Adetoro, 2021; Abubakar & Salisu, 2022).

Scholarly productivity is influenced not only by access to resources but also by the quality of the environment in which research occurs. Faculty members spend extended hours reading, writing and analyzing data; therefore, comfort and environmental stimulation are critical (Tewell & Nickel, 2020). According to Harrop and Turpin (2013), libraries that incorporate user-centered design principles report higher levels of engagement and academic productivity among faculty and students alike. In a study conducted by Ogunniyi & Adepoju (2021) on library space usage in selected Nigerian universities, faculty members expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of quiet, comfortable and aesthetically inviting spaces for research. They emphasized the need for tailored environments that support both individual work and collaborative research efforts (Sadek, 2020; Ifijeh et al., 2021).

In another study, according to Shill & Tonner (2004) on creating a better place: physical improvements in academic libraries, 1995–2002, the findings include that renovations that enhanced lighting, furniture, noise control and spatial layout led to significant increases in library



usage and user satisfaction. Faculty and graduate students particularly valued private study spaces and quiet zones for research work. Aesthetic improvements correlated positively with perceived institutional support for research. Also, according to a study by Harrop & Turpin (2013), exploring learners' informal learning space behaviors, attitudes and preferences, the findings were that faculty and postgraduate researchers preferred aesthetically pleasing and personalized workspaces with natural lighting, art and ergonomic furniture. Such spaces were perceived to support extended study hours and research focus and the study recommended rethinking library interiors to reflect academic seriousness and comfort (Tewell & Nickel, 2020).

Moreover, another study made by Ogunniyi & Adepoju (2021) on library space and faculty research productivity in selected Nigerian universities, findings reported that current library environments in Nigerian universities were uninspiring and lacked the amenities to support rigorous research. Inadequate research commons and poor aesthetics discouraged faculty from using library spaces for research purposes. Respondents called for dedicated, technology-enhanced spaces for scholarly collaboration and quiet research (Ayeni & Adetoro, 2021; Abubakar & Salisu, 2022). Kuhlthau et al. (2014) in the Research Commons Model: A Framework for Support of Faculty Scholarship, found that research commons were effective in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, data analysis and access to digital research tools. Faculty appreciated the availability of consultation support within research commons from subject librarians and IT experts, and productivity increased where libraries offered spaces that were aesthetically pleasing, quiet and customizable (Corrall et al., 2020). Ifijeh & Yusuf (2020) in Academic Libraries and Research Support Services in Nigeria: Current Practices and Challenges found that many Nigerian academic libraries lack functional research commons, which limits faculty engagement with the library. Faculty respondents recommended infrastructural redesign and aesthetic upgrades to reflect modern academic standards. Aesthetic decline was linked to low usage by scholars and a preference for departmental offices or external environments for research.

This study, therefore, fills a crucial gap by exploring faculty perceptions of library aesthetics and assessing the demand for a functional research commons. The findings will contribute to discussions on the transformation of academic libraries in Nigeria to meet global standards of research support and design innovation.



## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a **descriptive survey research design**. The population of the study comprised **all academic staff members** of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, who are registered users of the Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. These include professors, senior lecturers, lecturers I and II, and assistant lecturers across various faculties and departments in the university. A **purposive sampling technique** was used to select **132 faculty members** from diverse disciplines and academic ranks. The sampling approach ensures that only those who have direct experience with the library's services and facilities, including the physical space and study environments, are included in the study. The instrument used for data collection is a **structured questionnaire** titled "*Faculty Perception of Library Aesthetics and Research Commons Needs Questionnaire (FPLARCQ)*". The questionnaire is divided into four sections: **Section A:** Demographic information (e.g., academic rank, faculty, years of experience). **Section B:** Perception of library aesthetics (e.g., physical layout, lighting, furniture, noise control, ambiance). **Section C:** Perceived impact of library aesthetics on scholarly productivity. **Section D:** Awareness, need, and expectations regarding a functional research commons. **Section E:** Possible challenges for implementing a research commons. A total of 132 questionnaire was distributed to the respondents and 129 copies of questionnaire were received. The questionnaire used a combination of **Likert-scale items** like simple percentage, mean and aggregate score with **closed-ended questions** quantitative data. The researcher administered the questionnaires in person and through institutional email platforms to enhance response rates. Participation is voluntary and ethical considerations, including confidentiality and informed consent, was strictly observed. Respondents was given a week to complete the questionnaire, with follow-up reminders where necessary. Quantitative data was analyzed using **descriptive statistics** such as frequency counts, percentages and mean scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table1 shows the total population of 132 according to the faculties to ensure the inclusive representation and normal distribution of questionnaire, the number of questionnaire administered and the number of questionnaire received with the response rate of 129 (97.73%).

**Table 1: Population of the Study and Questionnaire Response Rate**

S/N	Category of Respondents according to Faculties	Population (Estimated )	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received	Response Rate (%)
1	Technology	17	17	17	100%
2	Administration	16	16	16	100%
3	Education	14	14	14	100%
4	College of Health Sciences	15	15	15	100%
5	Sciences	15	15	13	86.7%
6	Environmental and Design Management	17	17	17	100%
7	Social Sciences	15	15	15	100%
8	Law	08	08	08	100%
9	Arts	15	15	14	93.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b><math>\Sigma X</math> = Total Population</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>97.73%</b>

**Research questions one:** What are the faculty members' perceptions of the current aesthetic condition of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 2 shows the faculty members' perceptions of the current aesthetic condition of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

**Table 2: Faculty Members' Perceptions of the Aesthetic Condition of the Library**

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
1	The library's lighting is adequate and enhances reading and research	64 (49.6%)	41 (31.8%)	14 (10.9%)	10 (7.8%)	3.26
2	The furniture in the library is modern, comfortable, and conducive to research.	65 (50.4%)	46 (35.7%)	10 (7.8%)	8 (6.2%)	3.32
3	The interior color scheme of the library promotes focus and calmness.	63 (49.6%)	51 (40.2%)	10 (7.9%)	3 (2.4%)	<b>3.37</b>
4	The library space is clean and well-maintained.	59 (45.7%)	51 (39.5%)	12 (9.3%)	7 (5.4%)	<b>3.23</b>
5	The overall ambience of the library is welcoming and aesthetically pleasing	62 (48.1%)	57 (44.2%)	7 (5.4%)	3 (2.3%)	<b>3.38</b>
6	The arrangement of books, shelves, and resources is orderly and visually appealing	60 (46.5%)	47 (36.4%)	13 (10.1%)	9 (7.0%)	<b>3.21</b>
7	The physical environment of the library supports deep thinking and scholarship.	61 (47.3%)	42 (32.6%)	18 (14.0%)	8 (6.2%)	<b>3.17</b>
8	The current state of the library reflects the university's commitment to excellence	59 (45.7%)	52 (40.3%)	11 (8.5%)	7 (5.4%)	<b>3.23</b>
<b>Weighted mean score = 3.27</b>						

Table 2 indicates that the participants agreed that the overall ambience of the library is welcoming and aesthetically pleasing (3.38), the interior color scheme of the library promotes focus and calmness (3.37), the furniture in the library is modern, comfortable, and conducive to research (3.32), The library's lighting is adequate and enhances reading and research (3.26), The library space is clean and well-maintained (3.23), the current state of the library reflects the university's commitment to excellence (3.23), the arrangement of books, shelves, and resources is orderly and visually appealing (3.21). **While least** faculty members' perceptions of the aesthetic condition of the library includes the physical environment of the library supports deep thinking and scholarship (3.17). It is therefore concluded that participants agreed to the perceptions of the current aesthetic condition of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria based on the fact that they all scored above 2.50. The weighted mean value (3.27) suggests that the peceptions of faculty members on the aesthetic condition of the library is high. This study corroborates with a study carried out by Beard & Dale (2010) who found that aesthetic enhancements like lighting, furniture and spatial arrangements significantly influence users' perceptions of library spaces. Also, supported by a study by Khoo, Rozaklis & Hall (2012) who reported that aesthetically pleasing environments make libraries more engaging and productive for academic users.

**Research question two:** What is the influence of library aesthetics on faculty members' scholarly productivity through the use of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library for research purpose at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 3 shows the influence of library aesthetics on faculty members' scholarly productivity through the use of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library for research purpose at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

**Table 3: Influence of Library Aesthetics on Faculty Scholarly Productivity**

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
1	The aesthetic quality of the library motivates me to spend more time conducting research.	58 (45.0%)	46 (35%)	15 (11.6%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.23</b>
2	A visually pleasing library environment enhances my ability to concentrate on academic tasks.	52 (40.3%)	61 (47.3%)	10 (7.8%)	6 (4.7%)	<b>3.25</b>
3	I prefer to use the library for research when the physical environment is attractive and well-designed.	56 (43.4%)	49 (38.0%)	13 (10.1%)	11 (8.5%)	<b>3.17</b>
4	The library's ambience positively influences my research creativity and innovation.	57 (44.2%)	43 (33.3%)	19 (14.17%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.14</b>
5	Poor aesthetics in the library reduce my willingness to use it for research.	48 (37.2%)	51 (39.5%)	17 (13.2%)	13 (10.1%)	<b>3.01</b>
6	The current physical condition of the library supports my academic productivity	52 (40.3%)	57 (44.2%)	13 (10.1%)	7 (5.4%)	<b>3.20</b>
7	A well-maintained and aesthetically appealing library inspires me to write	51 (39.5%)	57 (44.2%)	15 (11.6%)	6 (4.7%)	<b>3.19</b>

	and publish more.	)	)			
8	The library's design and spatial layout contribute to my research efficiency.	61 (47.3%) )	43 (33.3%) )	15 (11.6%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.21</b>
<b>Weighted mean score = 3.18</b>						

Table 3 indicates that the participants agreed that a visually pleasing library environment enhances my ability to concentrate on academic tasks (**3.25**), the aesthetic quality of the library motivates me to spend more time conducting research (**3.23**), The library's design and spatial layout contribute to my research efficiency (**3.21**), the current physical condition of the library supports my academic productivity (**3.20**), A well-maintained and aesthetically appealing library inspires me to write and publish more (**3.19**), I prefer to use the library for research when the physical environment is attractive and well-designed (**3.17**), the library's ambience positively influences my research creativity and innovation (**3.14**), **while the least is poor aesthetics in the library reduce my willingness to use it for research (3.01). It is therefore concluded that participants agreed to the influence of library aesthetics on faculty members' scholarly productivity through the use of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library for research purpose at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria based on the fact that they are all scored above 2.50. The weighted mean value (3.18) suggest that the level of agreement is high. This study is supported by a study by Applegate (2009) that emphasized that comfortable and aesthetically sound libraries enhance user satisfaction and academic performance. Also, supported according to Miller (2011) that highlighted that an engaging and well-designed physical space can inspire creativity and increase scholarly outputs.**

**Research question three:** What is the level of awareness about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 4 shows the level of awareness about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

**Table 4: Faculty Awareness of the Benefits of a Research Commons**

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
1	I am aware of what a Research Commons is and its purpose within a university library.	61 (47.3%)	40 (31.0%)	17 (13.2%)	11 (8.5%)	<b>3.15</b>
2	I understand how a Research Commons supports collaborative and interdisciplinary research.	59 (45.7%)	46 (35.7%)	16 (12.4%)	8 (6.2%)	<b>3.21</b>
3	I am aware that a Research Commons provides access to specialized research tools and services.	51 (39.5%)	49 (38.0%)	23 (17.8%)	6 (4.7%)	<b>3.10</b>
4	I know that a Research Commons can enhance the quality of academic writing and publication output	57 (44.2%)	49 (38.0%)	18 (14.0%)	5 (3.9%)	<b>3.21</b>
5	I have received information or orientation about the concept of a Research Commons from the university.	59 (45.2%)	42 (32.6%)	17 (13.2%)	11 (8.5%)	<b>3.15</b>
6	I am aware that a Research Commons can support postgraduate supervision and mentoring activities.	57 (44.2%)	49 (38.0%)	19 (14.7%)	4 (3.1%)	<b>3.21</b>
7	I recognize the importance of establishing a functional Research Commons in	58 (45.0%)	43 (33.3%)	18 (14.0%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.15</b>



	Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.					
8	I believe increased awareness of Research Commons will positively impact faculty research culture	53 (41%)	47 (36.4%)	20 (15.5%)	9 (7.0%)	<b>3.12</b>
<b>Weighted mean score = 3.16</b>						

Table 5 shows that the participants agreed on awareness about the benefits of a Research Commons among faculty members that I understand how a Research Commons supports collaborative and interdisciplinary research (3.21), I know that a Research Commons can enhance the quality of academic writing and publication output (3.21), I am aware that a Research Commons can support postgraduate supervision and mentoring activities (3.21), I am aware of what a Research Commons is and its purpose within a university library (3.15), I have received information or orientation about the concept of a Research Commons from the university (3.15), I recognize the importance of establishing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library (3.15), I believe increased awareness of Research Commons will positively impact faculty research culture (3.12), while the least is I am aware that a Research Commons provides access to specialized research tools and services (3.10). It is therefore concluded that participants are all aware about the benefits which could be meted by a functional Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife based on the fact that the score is above 2.50. Equally, the weighted mean value (3.16) suggests that the level of agreement to the awareness about the benefits is high. This findings supported the study carried out by Corral (2014), Corral emphasized that academic staff are increasingly aware of and interested in collaborative research spaces like Research Commons, especially in environments that promote interdisciplinary scholarship. Also, supported according to Gonzalez (2010), this study highlights the importance of faculty awareness in the successful adoption of Research Commons, noting that high awareness leads to greater utilization and support. In another study, according to Bennett (2009), faculty who understands the value of Research Commons tend to advocate for its use and integration in research workflows.

**Research question 4:** What are the faculty members' expectations and perceived need for a functional Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 5 shows the faculty members' expectations and perceived need for a functional Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

**Table 5: Faculty Expectations and Perceived Need for a Functional Research Commons**

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
1	A functional Research Commons is essential for enhancing faculty research productivity.	61 (47.3%)	47 (36.4%)	11 (8.5%)	10 18 (7.8)	<b>3.23</b>
2	I expect the Research Commons to provide access to high-speed internet, workstations and digital tools	63 (48.8%)	41 (31.8%) )	16 (12.4%)	9 (7.0%)	<b>3.23</b>
3	I need a dedicated space in the library for collaborative research and group discussions.	61 (47.3%)	39 (30.2%) )	17 (13.2%)	12 (9.3%)	<b>3.17</b>
4	The establishment of a Research Commons will increase my use of the library for academic purposes	58 (45.0%)	49 (38.0%) )	14 (10.9%)	8 (6.2%)	<b>3.22</b>
5	I expect the Research Commons to offer research support services (e.g., data analysis, reference	53 (41.1%)	45 (34.9%) )	18 (14.0%)	13 (10.1%)	<b>3.10</b>

	management					
6	I expect the Research Commons to offer research support services (e.g., data analysis, reference management).	54 (43.5%)	43 (34.7%) )	17 (13.7%)	10 (8.1%)	<b>3.15</b>
7	I need training and technical support in a Research Commons to enhance my research skills.	51 (39.5%)	57 (44.2%) )	12 (9.3%)	9 (7.0%)	<b>3.17</b>
8	I strongly support the establishment of a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library.	56 (43.4%)	49 (38.0%) )	13 (10.1%)	11 (8.5% %)	<b>3.17</b>
<b>Weighted mean score = 3.18</b>						

Table 5 depicts that the participants agreed on faculty expectations and perceived need for a functional research commons that a functional Research Commons is essential for enhancing faculty research productivity (3.23), I expect the Research Commons to provide access to high-speed (3.23), The establishment of a Research Commons will increase my use of the library for academic purposes (3.22), I need a dedicated space in the library for collaborative research and group discussions (3.17), I need training and technical support in a Research Commons to enhance my research skills (3.17), I strongly support the establishment of a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library (3.17), I expect the Research Commons to offer research support services (e.g., data analysis, reference management) (3.15), while the least is I expect the Research Commons to offer research support services (e.g., data analysis, reference management (3.10). **The weighted mean value (3.18) suggests that the level of agreement is high. This is corroborated with a study carried out by Delaney & Bates (2015), the authors found that faculty strongly desire services like data analysis support, training and collaborative spaces which are the core features of a Research Commons. Also, in the study of Zhao (2014), Zhao emphasized that faculty expectations now include dedicated, technologically equipped spaces for collaborative and interdisciplinary research. In another study carried out by Sinclair (2009), who**

found out that research support services, internet access, technical training and physical space are identified as critical needs for modern academic researchers.

**Research question 5:** What are the possible challenges for implementing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 6 shows the possible challenges for implementing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

**Table 6: Possible Challenges for Implementing a Research Commons**

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
1	Lack of adequate funding is a major challenge to establishing a Research Commons in the library	61 (47.3%)	41 (31.8%)	20 (15.5%)	7 (5.4%)	<b>3.17</b>
2	Limited space and poor physical infrastructure hinder the creation of a Research Commons	67 (51.9%)	42 (32.6%)	15 (11.6%)	5 (3.9%)	<b>3.29</b>
3	Shortage of skilled staff to manage and support Research Commons services is a critical concern.	61 (47.3%)	41 (31.8%)	17 (13.2%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.17</b>
4	Resistance to change among library staff or faculty may delay the implementation of a Research Commons.	58 (45.0%)	57 (44.2%)	10 (7.8%)	4 (3.1%)	<b>3.30</b>
5	Poor awareness about the purpose and benefits of a Research Commons can affect	59 (45.7%)	52 (40.3%)	13 (10.1%)	5 (3.9%)	<b>3.29</b>

	its successful adoption.					
6	Technical limitations (e.g., unreliable power supply, internet issues) may affect Research Commons usability.	60 (46.5%)	44 (34.1%) )	15 (11.6%)	10 (7.8%)	<b>3.23</b>
7	There may be challenges in sustaining the long-term maintenance and relevance of a Research Commons.	62 (48.1%)	49 (38.0%) )	13 (10.1%)	5 (3.9%)	<b>3.33</b>
8	Bureaucratic delays and administrative bottlenecks can impede the implementation process.	59 (45.7%)	60 (46.5%) )	8 (6.2%)	2 (1.6%)	<b>3.41</b>
<b>Weighted mean score = 3.27</b>						

Table 6 reveals that the participants agreed to the possible challenges for implementing a research commons that Bureaucratic delays and administrative bottlenecks can impede the implementation process (3.41), there may be challenges in sustaining the long-term maintenance and relevance of a Research Commons (3.33), Resistance to change among library staff or faculty may delay the implementation of a Research Commons (3.30), Limited space and poor physical infrastructure hinder the creation of a Research Commons (**3.29**), Poor awareness about the purpose and benefits of a Research Commons can affect its successful adoption (3.29), Technical limitations (e.g., unreliable power supply, internet issues) may affect Research Commons usability (3.23), while the least agreements include lack of adequate funding is a major challenge to establishing a Research Commons in the library (3.17) and shortage of skilled staff to manage and support Research Commons services is a critical concern (3.17). It is therefore concluded that all participants agreed to the itemized series of possible challenges for implementing a Research Commons in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria based on the fact that the agreements were all scored above 2.50. The weighted mean value (3.27) suggests that the level of agreement is high. This findings support Koh & Abbas (2015) that confirm that lack of funding, poor planning, and limited awareness are common barriers to implementing research support facilities in academic

libraries. Also, according to Bennett (2007) that notes that effective implementation of modern learning and research spaces requires cultural change, adequate training, and clear policy guidelines.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study assessed faculty members' perceptions of library aesthetics and the perceived need for a functional Research Commons at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Findings revealed that faculty members generally view the library's current aesthetic condition positively in key aspects such as lighting, furniture, color scheme, cleanliness and ambience were rated above average which suggest that the environment is conducive to academic engagement and research activities. Additionally, library aesthetics were found to positively influence faculty members' scholarly productivity. Elements such as a visually pleasing environment, conducive layout and well-maintained infrastructure enhanced research motivation, concentration, creativity and output. This highlights the critical role of physical library space in fostering academic productivity.

Faculty awareness of the concept and benefits of a Research Commons was also moderately high with many participants recognizing its potential to support collaborative research, enhance academic writing and facilitate mentoring and postgraduate supervision. Expectations for the establishment of such a facility were strong, with faculty members emphasizing the need for access to digital tools, research support services and training. However, the study also identified significant challenges to the implementation of a Research Commons. These challenges include inadequate funding, limited space, lack of skilled staff, bureaucratic bottlenecks, resistance to change and infrastructural deficits such as poor internet and electricity supply.

Conclusively, the study affirms the importance of aesthetically pleasing and functionally supportive library environments in promoting faculty research productivity, while also demonstrating the readiness of faculty members for the integration of a Research Commons to meet modern academic demands.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the followings are therefore recommended:

1. University management should invest in sustaining and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the library. Regular refurbishment, ergonomic furniture, optimized lighting, and clean, orderly spaces can boost scholarly engagement.
2. The university should prioritize the functionality of a Research Commons equipped with high-speed internet, collaborative spaces, research software, data analysis tools and digital repositories to support faculty research.
3. Librarians and faculty should be trained on the effective use of Research Commons tools and services. Regular workshops and seminars will build a research-focused culture within the academic community.
4. Sensitization campaigns should be conducted to increase awareness and reduce resistance to change among staff and faculty. This will foster cooperation and a shared vision for innovative library services.
5. Institutional policies should be formulated to guide the planning, implementation, and sustainability of the Research Commons. Administrative processes should be streamlined to avoid delays.

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