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DYNAMICS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY EVALUATION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The dynamics of an academic library evaluation lies in the fact that library is established to support the parent institution in the areas of curriculum development, support various faculty members in their official and personal researches, enhance academic excellence among students and other researchers. As opined by Abubakar et al, (2004) there is hardly any doubt that an academic institution can effectively survive without a library, if the assertion is right this bring us to the fact that academic library plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process by bringing in forceful and regular changes to the library services.

Academic Library

Academic Libraries are found in institutions of higher learning such as the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. Academic libraries are established to reflect the distinctive nature of institutions they serve. For example, college of education are established to produce trained teachers and promote teacher education programmes, Polytechnics are founded to train students in vocational and technical training while universities are expected to combine the aforementioned roles of other higher institutions. In addition, universities focus on training of high-level manpower for over all development of the states or nations where they are situated. Library as the integral part of an academic institution, often design their collections and services to meet the instructional programmes of a particular institution (Issa, 2003). Academic library programmes vary depending upon a number of factors, which include whether:

- The institution awards first, master, and doctor degrees or a research institution.
- It is a comprehensive University or College that offers a liberal Arts

programme as well as several other programmes such as engineering and business administration,

- It is a liberal arts college, a two years college or a specialized institute such as a technical college, theological, medical, law or professional school, (Issa, 2003).

Furtherance to the above Abubakar et al, (2004) posited that the purpose of staff, buildings, programmes of service, equipment and physical facilities in academic library is determined by a number of factors that include staff strength and expertise, sophistication of services and equipments, level of clientele's knowledge about the library and services it can provide in various formats.

Academic libraries play a role of central importance in the instructional and scholarly life of Colleges, Polytechnic and University, Ifidon (1999). The need for higher institution to be established without other units like the Bursary, Registry and works department but not without a well stock library for such an edifice to continue to be relevant in the arena of knowledge of which higher institutions all over the world are known for, academic libraries must be subject to routine evaluation to measure it continuing relevance to the academic environment and it users. In the light of the above, Olorunsola, (2001) concludes that academic libraries need to reshape if we want it to be responsive now and effective in the future. In order to evaluate the service of academic libraries one needs to assess various units include the building, which is the structural design of the library and its equipments. The library organizational structure and staffing that are the bedrock of academic library dynamism. Collection development entails the totality of acquisition of library materials of both book and non-book materials to users services and their education in order to enlighten them on the various services and service points available in the library. Resource sharing through inter library loan and the use of Information Technology give users the ample opportunity of enjoying information materials that are not in their immediate environment through various means like cooperative collection and the use of internet in various libraries with common understanding and agreement.

Library building

The library building especially in an academic institution epitomized what we may call house for all, this is because it is a building every member of

an academic community and beyond must reach but not all other places in such an environment may be reached by the dwellers of the community. This is the more reason why its design must follow the line of its uniqueness and provided with facilities befitting of such buildings. The library building housed library staff, readers, books and equipments. Ifidon (1999) explains that this called for visionary approach to its planning between architect and librarian who will provide brief on various service points and space to be provided for book stacks and equipments. Academic libraries are not built just like any other building providing for spacious terrace but adequate thought must be given for services that are to be provided and an ideal plan for a new library building should begin well in advance of need. Consideration must be given to the actual number of users a library is proposed to serve and the nature of their needs especially science and technical education patrons who may, from time to time require audio visual and other technical related information services from the library. Feasibility should be carried out and consultation with the registry department and faculties to determine the actual population size of the library patrons. In some cases are situation in which the University library building has become too small for the size of its parent institution. A Periodic assessment of all indices like students' enrolment and library statistics will give librarian of an academic library the vision to, project what the future will tell on library building expansion. Nwalo (2003) while trying to justify the importance of library statistic opined that management is likely to approve the recommendation that a new library building with increased user space be constructed or expand the old one. Routines examinations of library building will bring out the area where the library is continuously relevant or where improvement is required for library to maintain its lead in academic excellence.

Such other thing like security of library stock and preservation of material should be looked into especially in the period of dwindling economy to protect and preserve existing library materials, if new one cannot be bought the old one must be periodically assessed to ensure their continuing relevance and effectiveness. Akinfolarin, (1992) stated that librarians in academic libraries have tried to preserve their materials against such threat like theft, mutilation, insect, fungi's, fire, flood, dampness and so on These are enemies of not only the libraries and it materials but also the diverse users of the library who may temporarily or permanently deprived asses to the materials whenever any of the

threats occurred.

Library Organizational Structure

Organizational structures are the various components that define any organization in term of individual, job, assignment and their relation to each other on organizational charts and job description. To accomplish a library objective, activities are grouped in a manner that is most conducive to its purpose, Ifidon, (1999). The grouping of university library organization structure is to allow systematic relationship to exist between one unit of the library and the other toward achieving overall goals and objectives of the library. Organisational structure in the library does not only lie in the manpower but the library stock that are also divided along subject lines for easy location and retrieval by both staff and library patrons. Organisational chart of library staff is traditionally divided between the university librarians in the case of university, college librarian for colleges of education and polytechnic librarian for the polytechnics. In the university library, for example deputy university librarians assist the University librarian like reader services technical service, research and bibliographic, acquisition or collection development and automation deputy librarians. Under these deputies are unit heads like serial and branch librarians.

The organisation of knowledge in any academic institution usually depend on the strength of the population it intend to serve, this is to say that available courses and students determine what an academic library will give to community of user. In some academic libraries there are departmental libraries where materials needed to support intellectual works in various faculties and departments as require by accrediting bodies are brought closer to its users, in all, there is need for periodic assessments to discover both the merit and demerits inherent in them. Organization of personnel and knowledge objective of the library and result have to be audited periodically so as to determines how well or how badly the library is performing in its set objectives towards the attainment of academic excellence.

It is important that lines of communication and reporting in the library are continuously checked to ensure non-losing of focus. Academic libraries cannot continue to use yesterday processes if they want to be relevant tomorrow. Even for this singular reason the need to examine and reshape is as imperative in academic libraries as elsewhere.

Staffing

Staffing is central to the quality service delivery in the library since it constitutes the overall personnel in the academic library; all are connected to each other from lower cadre to the higher cadre in the library. Issa (2002) said the education for library profession in Nigeria has a relatively recent history especially when compared with the history of such others as Medicine, Law and Engineering. This notwithstanding, library profession is the foundation for all these older professions since it form the bedrock for their training. It therefore calls for great perusal to recruit good and quality hand to deliver library services in the academic library.

Great importance must also be attached to the quality of clientele the academic library is established to serve, by designing a good selection system for competent hands to work in the library. In all universities in Nigeria, the university librarians are members of the senate where they will have opportunity to participate in the formulation and development of programmes and policies of the institution. All these require strategic planning and management of human and materials resources that should be routinely checked to assess its workability. The importance of staffing in a library according to Kolo (1999) cannot be over emphasized as a prerequisite for a good library. Evaluation of academic library staff begin at their points of entry through rigorous interview to select from many, Ifidon, (2000) clarifies the fact that purpose of the evaluation that takes place during interviews is to assimilate, sort and appraised a wide range of information about potential staff members from different successful candidates, staff assessment on the job in form of staff evaluation to identify the most competent and to determine individual uniqueness since academic libraries has many units within its that staff might be more efficient.

For adequate communication network in the library, the head of the library usually establish vertical and lateral systems of communication, which is used as evaluation devices for staff performance from time to time, (Ifidon, 1999).

Collection Development

Nwalo (2000) while quoting Aguolu (1982) define libraries to be a collection of records of human culture in diverse formats and languages

restricted to use within the library. This call for an interval assessment of such services to ensure their standard and ways must be created to thwart the abuse of such privileges. In most academic libraries the number of materials borrowed by individual students and staff are made clear. Usually the actual number of library materials will determine number that can be borrowed in order not to deprive others of access to the library materials.

Occasionally, there could be borrowing policy, in this case some relevant materials that are limited in copies are withdrawn to the reserve to allow more access to them but at limited time within the library.

Resource Sharing

Resource sharing is another good way of managing library materials through the use of Information Technology and manual operation schedules. It is a cheaper way of making available material on exchange and information sharing among academic libraries. Kolo (1999) asserted that no single library could ever contain all the information it requires to meet users' needs, particularly the research needs of their clientele. With or without adequate library materials, adequate academic library could tap from World Wide Web (WWW) made available on the Internet to ensure adequacy of information provision for her patrons. Resource sharing cannot be possible when resources are as limited as to be only adequate for the immediate use of local clients because no one library can be self-sufficient. Odini (1991) added that the success of any resource sharing ventures depends not only on having appropriate goals and objectives, but also on creating and operating a service check for legal, administrative and fiscal framework on a regular basis.

Budgeting and Finance

A yearly budgeting is the preparation of itemized financial statement showing what the expenditure of a library should be during the year. A typical library budget in academic library entails the listing of current and recurrent expenditures for rapid development in an effort to build a veritable collection development, there are many ways through which the library can get funding, these include, grant, endowment, donation, gift, exchange and cooperation (Norag & Peter, 1988). The Academic Staff Union of Universities, in 1993 got her requests granted with the Federal Government and National University Commission by approving 10% yearly grants to federal and state owned higher

institutions for library development. Apart from this, the establishment of bodies like Education Trust Development Fund (ETDF) has changed the face of academic library through funding of projects for acquiring library materials to actual funding of library building project. Well meaning organizations like the World Bank, British Council, Book Aids International and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) have changed the face of library development in many academic libraries in Nigeria. In the opinion of Kolo, (1999) if government wants these institutions to survive and to be of good quality, more funds should be allocated to the libraries in academic institutions. This is to say that in whatever ways fund come to the libraries there should be regular review of it for continuing relevance to the institutions need, 10% of yearly grant in 1993 is a peanut in 2009, considering the astronomic inflation rate in the country. There should be regular review of this if we want to meet up with the rate of information explosion today in our academic libraries.

Recommendations

Academic libraries should continue to maintain its present stead of satisfying various people that passes through the academic institutions by establishing programmes that will not only assist user to be successful in their academic pursuits but creating a long lasting impact of developing reading culture that will make them appreciate the literary world the more. Library in an academic environment should be more dynamic by organizing regular scholarly events that can assist users to discover their potentialities like seminar, conferences and other academic programmes that will not disturb library regular schedules. Training of library staff on the new information trends should involve the users too so that they have sense of belonging and to foster a permanent cooperation between librarian, library resources and users.

Conclusion

Librarians appreciate the fact that most academic libraries especially in Nigeria are only the libraries where next to an ideal situation in libraries can be found. Efforts still need to be stepped up to improve the standard in all facets of the library programmes through regular refresher courses for library staff at exposing them to the new trends in the academia all over the world. Users of academic libraries are becoming increasingly aware of roles expected of them as think thank for their various communities. As a result they need to armed

themselves with current information that will add to their prestige of being occupants of ivory towers whom the people look up to in the time of political and economic crisis.

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