



Academic Libraries: Catalyst of Academic Development: a Case Study of Lagos State University Library, Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role of Lagos State University (LASU) Library as a catalyst of academic development of the university. A mixed method research design was used whereby copies of questionnaires and structured interview guide were utilized to collect data. The study was conducted among 100 library users (students and staff), circulation librarian as a key informants. The study found out that the LASU Library is playing an important role in the academic development in terms of education and research. The library offers information literacy training, free Internet access and digital library services for e-resources for all users. The study also revealed significant role in contributing to teaching and learning by providing reference services and circulation of books, journals, magazines and newspapers. The study however identified the challenges that bedeviled Lagos State University library to include: lack of relevant resources, inadequate ICT facilities, lack of internet connectivity and absence of enough reading space for users.

Keywords: University libraries, academic development, catalyst, Lagos State University Library

INTRODUCTION

Academic development mainly refers to the development of learning environment of a university. According to Clement and Ylanne (2005), academic development is all the initiatives taken both at the central as at the local level- in order to support faculty members to fulfill their different roles (teaching, research) throughout their academic career. Mukerji and Tripathi (2017) define academic development as educational or professional development; it involves academic and professional staff in planned activities to enhance all dimensions of teaching, learning and scholarship in universities. So, academic development is the advancement of academic environment which is badly needed for academic achievement. Library is regarded as the fundamental part of a university. University libraries help in many important ways to achieve the missions of the universities of which they are a part. They are active partners in teaching and

research process and support students and faculty through the provision of information resources and technology, spaces for individual and group work and study, programs and events, and assistance with finding, using, and evaluating information. Their contribution is reflected in academic development within the universities. According to Khan et al. (2014), in academic institutes both academics as well as researchers mostly depend on the library resources and facilities. No doubt a quick and easy access to such resources accelerates both academic and research activities more effectively. University plays a major role in developing a country, it an institution of higher education and research which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects. The academic way of life of modern universities is changing with the changing of teaching learning concepts. In addition, the abundance of ICT has brought about a revolutionary change in the global knowledge. As a result, the information needs of students, staff and researchers are growing very high in this age of information explosion. It affects the library to strengthen its role by adopting suitable resources and services. The works done by the library demonstrate the goal and success of the university. The library contribution is very important for building any institution reputation and it's an indispensable tool of university, the library which does not show the ability to play effective role will lose its position in the University. Consequently, university will fail to secure its position has the second best in the ranking of state university which will also affect the development process of the country. In recent years, many changes have been brought by technology to the rapidly expanding information space like changes in technology have created an increasingly complex environment which effect of changes in scholarly communication and technology, university libraries are experiencing many challenges to fulfill the constantly growing demand of users. Lagos State University Library is also facing some problems of technology, resources, space and personnel that the authors has already witnessed through working in the library. The changes in technology also provide both challenges and opportunities as academic libraries work to successfully contribute to their organization's mission. Therefore, this study was designed to examine the current role of library in facilitating the development of academic standard in Lagos State University. It is important to note that the Lagos State University has a good position in the world ranking of universities.

According to the National Policy of Education (1998), the goals of tertiary education are to: Contribute to national development through relevant manpower training; Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society; Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; Acquire both physical, intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful of the society; Promote and encourage scholarship and community services; Forge and strengthen national unity; and Promote national and international understanding and interaction. Hussain and Abalkhail (2013), opines that providing quality information services the library should have a systematic assessment policy to maintain and to improve the quality of services to meet the information needs of users at the highest level. Evaluation of the quality of library services can be done by getting feedback from users as they are the best judges to quality. It also assists to indicate the performance of the services provided for the library users. The role of a university library is obviously to meet the research and information needs of its community. The university library collections here have been based mainly on books and then serial publications like newspapers, magazines and journals etc. Lagos State has four (4) tertiary institution which include the Lagos State University (LASU), Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education (AOCOED), Lagos State Polytechnic (LASPOLY), and Michael Otedola College of Primary Education (MOCPED). The Lagos State University Library has been taken as a sample for this study which will pave the way for further research. When the Lagos State University Library was established and the library started its activities with the aim of bringing library and information services closer to the students, lecturers and members of the university. The building where the library is currently housed is a one-storey building but its space are too small and so it cannot cater for the number of users.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The library of a university is regarded as its central organ around which all the academic activities pulsate. According to Chaudhari (2018), academic library is the vital component which develops the teaching–learning and research activity. It serves as a key factor to accomplish the aims and objectives of the higher education. A quality education and research is not possible without a modernized library. According to Dold (2013), good library skills are integral to academic success. In collaboration with research and teaching faculty, librarians create a foundation for knowledge acquisition in the developing university education. She explained the academic role of librarian as faculty. Librarians work as gatekeeper of information resources, teacher in information literacy, scholar in doing research and collaborator in curriculum design and planning. Above all, librarians address all levels of information needs for the university.

According to Abduldayan et al. (2016), research in every institution sets a hallmark for development and increasing the visibility of such institution and its global ranking. Academic libraries are wholly designed for the purpose of rendering information services that promote research, learning and innovations. However, Gabbay and Shoham (2017) found, most faculty members believe that the library fulfills their teaching needs. Regarding research, faculty members believe most libraries support the technical aspects, but they do not support others aspects, such as locating the information or providing more comprehensive information relevant for the faculty members' research. Indeed, providing ICT based information aids and services academic library can play very significant role in the entire research process for better output. Information and digital literacy skills are needed for that.

In the role of the library and academic development regardless of the notable negative impact of underfunding of educational institutions in Nigeria, the library remains the core and most vital equipment of any recognized educational institution and as a resource, it occupies a central and primary place serving the functions of teaching, learning and research in the creation of new knowledge, promotion of current information in professional practice and transmission to posterity of the learning and culture of the present and past age (LawaI, 2004). In this 21st Century, information has received a widespread acceptance as the essential feature of production, consumption and exchange. The world has entered an era where the source of wealth and power is increasingly from information and human mental creativity as compared with physical resources. Thus global economy has become not only knowledge intensive but also transactional and extremely competitive (Opeke, 2004). Because of the central place of information in national development as exemplified by the topmost economies of the world, Nigeria needs to mainstream libraries and information in her development project. This necessitates that information be perceived, portrayed and utilized as a requirement for the peoples survival and be used to harness their sentiments, energies and talents for appropriate development actions. In this regard, librarians in academic libraries and other libraries for that matter must be the major actors in providing, designing, coordinating, maintaining and steering the course of information powered development. Such information must be accurate, timely, relevant, complete and concise. Furthermore, in this 21st century which is the age of the internet, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will be employed at its highest level to harness the necessary information globally for accelerated national development. In the light of the foregoing, it is pertinent to reiterate the obvious fact that for the purpose of the pursuance of the goals of the NV 2020, the library must be brought to the front burner so that its services can be harnessed to leapfrog Nigeria to the desired goal. The library is regarded as the heart of any educational institution, particularly the tertiary institutions which are relied upon to produce the middle and higher level manpower for national development. This is because the quality of the products of these institutions are measured to a very large extent by the information resources provided by their libraries for teaching and research required to equip the students with the necessary skills and knowledge for national development. Without the library component properly mainstreamed into the NV 2020 project, one wonders how the project intends to achieve its educational objective of having a modern and vibrant educational system that will provide the country with adequate and competent manpower. Since it is the academic libraries in higher institutions that do provide the necessary information for teaching and research to equip the students with knowledge and skills required to make them competent manpower for the achievement of the NV 2020, then the library

should be a separately recognized main sector or at least a prominent sub-sector of education in the NV 2020 project. This is the only way by which government can demonstrate a positive change of attitude to the importance of libraries to this project and hence be able to focus attention and funds on libraries in order to harness their contributions towards the success of the NV 2020 project. It is rather unfortunate that in analyzing the financial requirements of \$100 billion for the NV2020 project for the next six years, the federal government identified just four infrastructural areas that would require investment. They are: Power (\$20 billion), Rail Track (\$17 billion), Roads, (\$14 billion), and Oil and Gas (\$60 billion) (Okebukola, 2009). It is indeed worrisome that education is not seen by government as one of the very important sectors that requires such huge financial commitment in pursuance of the NV 2020. This unfortunate omission in this 21st century and in the face of the seeming desire of government to attain NV 2020 goals brings into focus the outcry on the deplorable state of education in Nigeria by Ayodele and Sofola (2010) that: There is the need to take a critical look at the entire education policy and accommodate noticeable trends used in shoring up the quality of education elsewhere (other countries). This calls for change in policies. The quality of education being dished out (in Nigeria) should be a concern to all. Development in the 21st century springs from ideas and ideas come from informed minds. That means that Nigeria needs to develop a radical approach towards revamping education. The public policy challenge in the present circumstances is to take a holistic view at the entire sector with a view to seeing what stakeholders have either not done correctly or done with half measure. While articulating issues of importance in his lecture titled, "Education Reform Imperatives for Achieving Vision 20:2020", Okebukola, (2009), observed that through education, skills and knowledge for growing the economy and spawning new industries are developed. Education engenders research for new inventions, processes and products which are boosters of the economy. Microsoft, Toyota and Boeing are examples of the institutions that have exploited the power of education to leverage economy through research. The academic libraries are at the centre of the teaching and research which engenders these transformations in the economy. Furthermore, the examples of the topmost economies of the world such as United States of America, Britain, Germany, France, Japan, etc, and the direct correlation between the buoyancy of their economies and the types of tertiary institutions and the academic libraries which they boast of should be a wake up call for the Nigerian government if she is really serious about making Nigeria one of the 20 most developed economies of the world by the year 2020. The views of Ayodele and Sofola (2010) already noted elsewhere in this paper, should be taken very seriously. Nigeria needs to copy from other advanced countries, what they are doing right about their educational system and their libraries as a way of shoring up our educational system to be able to achieve the NV 2020. It is now very obvious that absence of emphasis on libraries and academic libraries in particular as the catalyst that should drive Nigeria to attain NV 2020 should be redressed. This is an essential step that must be taken at this stage in the history of Nigeria because it is evident that education and libraries are some of the areas most neglected by the Nigerian government in funding and provision of infrastructure. Since libraries of tertiary institutions of the countries with the topmost economies of the world are the best due to adequate provision of funds and infrastructure for teaching and research, it is imperative that Nigeria must follow the same path. As it stands, the NV 2020 project which is the blueprint for the economic transformation of Nigeria by the year 2020 is ironically a stagnating force for the improvement in the state of academic libraries in Nigeria. This is because, it did not give even the slightest mention to libraries either as a main sector or thematic sub-sector. One implication of this is that the education sector and academic libraries will continue to receive the same neglect as before. One would have expected such a document to give serious attention to libraries so that libraries at all levels including academic libraries can be transformed to cater for the research and teaching needs in education for the NV 2020 project, thereby using libraries as catalysts to accelerate achievement of this project and hence national development as is expected in this 21st century. The Nigerian government should recognize the important role of libraries in this all important project. Many countries of the world have since recognized that educational institutions and their libraries are the catalysts which drive their economies and Nigerian government should do the same by integrating development of libraries into their project and demonstrate commitment by providing adequate funds to revamp libraries, especially academic libraries, as other sectors of the Nigerian economy are being revamped preparatory to attaining the NV 2020 goals. It is only when this is done, that the driving force for the development of academic libraries in Nigeria

especially in this 21st century can be achieved.

Adeola (2014) made a case study indicating the role of library on the accreditation process of Fountain University at Osogbo in Nigeria and found that the library played a stirring role in the accreditation process of an institution. The way the university library manages and supports library resources reflects the priority of the institute, the educational goals and methods of faculty, and the performance of the students and graduates. One of the most important aims of the accreditation is to promote and foster good quality university education and training for the production of high quality skilled manpower. Library helps in accreditation process and contributes to the future development of the university. Wijitunge (2012) elucidates the role of the university librarians as lecturers, giving examples as well as providing theoretical knowledge, she emphasized on the teaching role of the university librarian to develop knowledge economy in the current global context of new teaching learning approach. She also expects to see the librarians as policy makers who have a great leadership role and responsibility to develop a healthy academic environment in the university. American Library Association (ALA) also asserts that the character and quality of an institution of higher learning are shaped in large measure by the nature and accessibility of its library resources as well as the expertise and availability of its librarians. Librarians perform a multifaceted role within the academy. It includes not only teaching credit courses but also provides access to information, whether by individual and group instruction, selecting and purchasing resources, digitizing collections, or organizing information. In all of these areas, librarians impart knowledge and skills to students and faculty members both formally and informally and advise and assist faculty members in their scholarly pursuits. They are involved in the research function and conduct research in their own professional interests and in the discharge of their duties.

The current state of education in Nigeria even in this century leaves much to be desired. There is a general neglect and decay of educational facilities at all levels of education in Nigeria occasioned by the long standing culture of poor funding of education by successive governments in Nigeria. This situation brought about the comment in the editorial of the Guardian in 2007 that there must be something anti-intellectual about the policies and allocation of resources in our country especially under past military governments, sadly, the civilian administration have not fared any better. Budgetary allocation have declined to the extent that universities and other tertiary institutions are barely able to pay the salaries and allowances of personnel, libraries, laboratories and engineering workshops have long been in decay with the result that most tertiary institutions lack the intellectual preparation and critical skills required to drive the development process in any sphere of nationwide life. The Nigerian Universities are far too ill-equipped to train and develop new graduates that are suitable for the 21st century, their products are mediocre. Analyses of the situation point to the extreme level of infrastructural as well as pedagogical deficiency in Nigerian Universities, this being the result of underfunding of public universities (Nwakanma, 2010). It is in the light of such deficiencies that Okecha (2008) and Peretemode (2010) decried the very poor level of funding of Nigerian education and universities libraries and referred to the world universities ranking in which Nigeria Universities did not feature at all. At the same time as decrying the poor state of education in Nigeria and the resultant effect on Nigeria, Ibrahim (2009) lamented that Nigeria was losing quite a huge sum of foreign exchange because of applicants seeking foreign university education, he also gave comparison of universities in Nigeria and Britain, noting that in an average British university, all facilities are available for research with libraries having the latest books on different subjects unlike in Nigeria. A recent report claimed that Nigerians are among the largest foreign students in the United States and Britain. Nigerians are also moving in large numbers to study in Ghana, other European and Asian universities but this is at a cost. For instance, report recently suggests that Nigerian students spend N 17.7 billion to acquire education in Britain and the United States alone in the last two years. To say that the state of education at all levels in Nigeria is miserably poor is an understatement. Infrastructure is at terribly low level, students are crowded in hostels and lecture rooms like animals, necessary equipment machinery and current journals are absent (The Nation, 2019). Peretemode, (2010) was categorical in his submission that the library should be given priority in funding in the university because for the educational institution to be strong academically, the library which is the heart of the university must be strong. He also noted that the top universities in the world have strong libraries for instance, Havard university library consist of 80 individual libraries and has

over 15 million volumes of books thereby priding itself as the largest academic library in the world. This is the case with all the topmost universities in the world. For instance, the University of California, Berkeley's library has 10 million volumes of books and 70,000 serial titles; Stanford university library has over 8 million volumes of books and 19 libraries. In Africa, the University of Cape Town has one main library and 9 branch libraries containing 1.5 million volumes and over 27,000 journals titles. All these when compared with the situation in Nigeria where the premier university of Ibadan which was ranked 65th among universities in Africa has one million volumes of books, 60,000 journals and subscription to 20 databases, gives a rather gloomy and discouraging picture of the state of the other tertiary institutions in Nigeria as regards their libraries. According to the National Planning Commission (2009): The Nigeria Vision 20: 2020 is the country's blueprint and perspective action plan which captures the collective aspirations of Nigerians to make their country one of the twenty leading economies in the world.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 100 users were consulted. Data on the sex of respondents are shows that most of the respondents were males; only 36% were females. The status category (identity of the users in the university like students, lecturers or university staff) of the users and that 68% respondent are students, while 22% are lecturers. Only 10% fall in the category of university staff.

Library as information center

The respondents were asked to state where they turn to in order to satisfy their information needs. Forty eight participants indicated that they rely on the internet in order to satisfy their information needs. While 40% of the participants indicated that the library is their first point of information. Fellow students and lecturers were regarded as first point of information by 12%.

Rationale for using the library

Respondents were requested to indicate why they go to the library, in order to determine what services they use at the library. 36% of respondents use the library for studying purposes, 24% do so for research, while 22% go to the library to borrow books and only 18% of the respondents go to the library for using internet. This is an indication that the library is mostly used for studying purposes which also corresponds with the findings on the status of participants, of which students were majority.

Adequacy of Information Resources

Table 1: Adequate of Information Resources.

Resources	Adequate	Fairly adequate	Not adequate
Studying	20	65	15
Research	10	50	40
Reference	50	20	30

Since one of the aims of the study was to assess the extent to which the different sources of information found in the library are adequate to cater for the information needs of the users of the university. 65% of the respondents indicated that the library materials for studying are fairly adequate and only 20% indicated that the materials are adequate to cater for their information needs. 50% of the respondents also indicated that the resources are fairly adequate for research information needs and 40% reflected that the materials are not adequate for research. 50% indicated that materials for reference are adequate, while 30% indicated the reference materials are not adequate. Only 20% of respondents feel that reference materials are fairly adequate. The Lagos State University library resources were overall rated as fairly adequate for studying and research purposes.

Table 2: Types of Information Resources in Lagos State University, Library

Resources includes	Adequate	Fairly adequate	Not adequate
Print	20	70	10
Electronic	50	15	35
Audio-visual	40	10	50

Users were also asked to indicate the availability of information resources in different formats. 70% of the respondents indicated that the print materials are fairly adequate, while 20% indicated that the materials are adequate. Only 10% respondents indicated that the print materials are not adequate. 50% of respondents indicated that the electronic materials are adequate and 35% respondents said electronic materials are not adequate, while only 15% indicated that the electronic materials are fairly adequate. 40% respondents indicated that the audio-visual materials are adequate, while only 10% indicated that materials in audio-visual forms are fairly adequate. 50% indicated that the audio-visual materials are not adequate. Therefore, the print materials were overall rated as fairly adequate. The materials in electronic and audio-visual forms are not fairly adequate but have shortage.

Table 3: Level of Resources Satisfaction

Particulars	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Library collections and resources	30	34	36
State of shelves and arrangement of books	20	25	55
Staff assistance	50	35	15
Library services	20	50	30
Computer and internet	15	20	65
Rules and systems of the library	18	27	55
Library opening hours	50	40	10
Reading facilities and environment	20	55	25

It was indicated that less people were very satisfied with diverse services, systems and facilities found in the library except for opening hours and staff assistance in which both gained 50% respondents. 36% respondents were not happy with the library collections and 55% respondents were also not satisfied with the state of shelves and arrangements of books as well as library rules. 65% of the respondents were equally not satisfied with the computer and internet facilities. However, 50% of respondents were satisfied with library services while 55% are satisfied with reading facilities and environment.

Library Role in contributing to academic development

Respondents were further asked to indicate what role the library is playing in the university and how it is contributing to the academic development.

The identity issues around the use of library reflect the role of the library for individuals in which respondents identified the support in education and research as the main role the library is playing in the university. Students and faculty of the university need teaching learning aids in their study and research. The Lagos State University Library provides necessary support and information for them. In addition they are also getting instructions to be information literate through information literacy training provided by the library.

Findings from the Circulation Librarian

The following interview was conducted with the circulation librarian of Fatiu Ademola Akesode Library, LASU

- a. To identify the library services and development offered in the library.

Response

In identification of library services, the librarian identified the following services as the major services provided by Library:

- i. Circulation service.
 - ii. Reference service.
 - iii. Internet service.
 - iv. Reprography service.
 - v. Print collections (Newspaper, Journal, Magazine, Serial, Report, Government information).
- b. The researchers also asked about the relationship between the library and the user's generally in ensuring that, resources provided meet the information needs of the users. Despite the lack of relevant resources for researchers as indicated by users, the researchers reflected that he ask his users to indicate the kind of materials they want in the library.

Response

The circulation librarian raised a concern that due to lack of space many of their collections cannot be displayed. Asked about whether the library has an outreach program, all respondents indicated that there is nothing and this is due to shortage of staff members to carry out this task.

- c. Circulation librarian was also asked about the role of the library and how the library contributes to the academic development of the university.

Response

The librarian indicated that the library tries to provide necessary support for quality education and research that the users need in order to cope with the fast changing world. The library contributes to academic development by providing reading materials and information in education and research. Internet facilities in the library also help the students and faculty to navigate the deep of information.

Significance of the study

The findings from the case study provide information on how Lagos State University library in developing itself can contribute in the academic development of its institution. It is expected that the findings obtained from this investigation will help to take necessary measures to improve the Lagos State University Library as well as the academic standard of the university, and stimulate further research in this area. Identification of the role of a particular library may be useful for other libraries planning the strategy of development. The study will also help people to know the problems or obstacles of the third world university libraries. Although there are a number of studies regarding this, this is the first one of its kind in Lagos State University, Ojo - Lagos State.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to determine the role of Lagos State University Library in the academic development of this university. The findings indicated that the library mainly has educational and research role through the provision of circulating information and reading materials to the university members. The library also has a role to play in enhancing the library usages and information access through internet facilities and information literacy training provided by the library. However, there are challenges of too few e-resources and ICTs those users feel there is urgent need to address. There is also a challenge of lack of skilled manpower and limited reading space for the users that the library management needs to look into. Although the library is seen as essential to students and staff, it needs to engage with the users to raise the awareness of the library facilities and services. Besides, the provision of information, librarian needs to make partnership with departments and faculties to form integrated information literacy program as well as digital literacy programs. This study provides information to start a discussion with the university management about the role of the library in the academic environment and its potential for ensuring academic development and sustainability of university library services.

Based on the findings, the authors made the following recommendations:

- i. The library needs to get more qualified staff members to be able to carry out the activities of the library, including outreach programs.
- ii. The library should provide more ICTs facilities, as the current ones are not enough to cater for all the users.
- iii. There is need for provision more space needs to be created as the current space is not enough to accommodate all activities taking place.
- iv. Urgent need to carryout outreach program by taking library services to users, marketing of the library services as well as creating more awareness about the importance of the library.
- v. Additional up to date and relevant sources of information to create for all users, especially for students and staff of the university.

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