

Top Trends in Nigerian Academic Institutions Affecting Academic Libraries

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Abstract: *The paper discusses the evolution of higher education in Nigeria. Concept of academic libraries were highlighted, lists the trends in higher institutions that affected academic libraries highlighted. Trends such as fact of funds, demand for higher education, enrolments, information technology, Digital preservation, Mobile technology and Patron driven e-book acquisition being discussed fully. The paper provided solutions and recommendation.*

I. Introduction

Historical Evolution of Academic Institutions in Nigeria

The early history of higher education in Nigeria would be incomplete without reference to the Yaba Higher College which later became the Yaba College of Technology. Later on few advanced Teachers' College and Polytechnics were started and in 1948, the University College, Ibadan came into being with only 104 students and 13 instructors. In 1962, the number of universities rose to five, these include University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, University of Lagos, University of Nsukka and the University of Ife. The last four are known as the second generation of Universities. By 1975, the number of universities had again risen to thirteen including University of Ilorin, Bayero University, University of Maiduguri etc. These are called the third generation of universities. By 1980, we to have the state universities. Today there are thirty-six universities.

I would like to ass here that the development of some these state universities are political and even people are still demanding for more. As the universities continue to increase certainly there have to be changes and problems in the system.

II. Academic Library

The librarians' Glossary of terms defines it as the one in the university, university colleges and all other institutions forming part of, or associated with, institutions of higher education.

Academic libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions such a universities, polytechnic institutions, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and also research institutes (Akporhonor, 2005). Singh and Kaur (2009) stressed that preservation and access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of academic libraries along side supporting the mission of their parent institutions which is teaching and research. AIA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services (1986) describes a university library as an integral part of the institution it serves, it designs its collections and services to meet the instructional programmes of the particular institution. It goes further to say that in some countries, particularly in the Third World, university libraries have a responsibility to serve as national libraries in addition to the role service to the faculty and students of the institutions and they play leading roles in national library development.

A library in an academic institution is usually an integral part of such an institution to the extent that the allusion is often made to the effect that a library is the 'heart' of the academic institution. It is a component part of the institution in that it exists to further the objectives of its parent establishment. In other words, the realization of any academic institution's goals and objectives will remain difficult until and unless its library is made most functionally efficient. This will manifest in the numerous services it provides to its group of users. This is the primary goal of its existence, i.e helping to accomplish the overall goals of its parent institution. Anything short of this become counter-productive to the attainment of the institution's set objective. It is in the above respect that libraries in our various colleges of Education, Polytechnics and of course, universities are being considered here. They exist mainly to cater for the varies needs of its community which includes the students, faculty members and the administrative staff.

Due to the global economic recession which is taking its toll on virtually every facet of human life a number of factors tend to affect academic libraries in general. Some of these include the lack or sometimes absence of funds, demand for higher education and school evolvments. These will now be discussed one after the other.

III. Lack Of Funds

The general downward trend in world economy has its manifestation in every sphere of human endeavour. Academic this, since their budgetary allocations were never spared from the impact of the crunch. The dwindling financial fortunes of these institutions' libraries against the backdrop of the fact that most of the needed materials are foreign put them in a different position especially as it relates to their existence and operations. The old good days of fat budgetary allocation combined with huge foreign reserves contrast sharply to the unfortunate situations of the present time. Since these economic conditions affect these libraries, their services performances have also been drastically affected.

It is quite instructive to mention also that the situation of inadequate funds for these libraries has multiplying effects on the entire spheres of the libraries operations. Not only will it pose the problem of insufficient/irrelevant materials collection, the morale of its staff stands to be a negatively affected too, while the performance cannot be affected on the long run. This, in turn will hamper the realization of the institutions' objectives as well.

The university library, for example, derives funds through the university whose sources of financial support are government grants, private contributions and gifts, endowments, students' fees, investments and consultancy. Direct collection of funds by the library may come from sources such as photocopying proceeds, fines for overdue books, sale of duplicates and charge for loan of special items (Nwafor 1990). "Funding for university libraries in the third World" cited the University of Jos Library as an example.

It said, "The University of Jos Library is one that has to accept a decreasing allocation for example, the total budget in the fiscal year 1985/86 was ₦1,036,648; in the following year, it was ₦766,828. One effect was the reduction of overseas journal subscriptions from about 2,000 to 200 titles"

In the same article, the university College Hospital Ibadan was said to have ceased acquiring periodicals and textbooks in 1985 and the National University Commission reported in 1987 that some libraries had no journal issue after 1984.

Ike (1988) in a paper presentation "Budgeting in university libraries: strategies for survival by Nigerian Academic Libraries" said from her own experience that many Nigeria academic and research libraries have not just become underfunded but appear usually to be the first units to suffer reduced budgets during times of financial difficulties in their parent institutions.

IV. Demand For Higher Education

In the days gone by there used to be quite a little demand for, at least, higher education in Nigeria, due mainly to the then stable and buoyant economic situation. Of course, jobs were amply available at virtually all levels with little or no stress to get. The demand for higher education as a pre-condition for securing good jobs did not simply arise. This was so to a great extent that only a few did care and actually undertake the higher form of education. The stable nature of the economy then did not require that one must necessarily obtain a higher degree, hence, the low level of need for higher education. This is, however, in contrast to what now obtains in the entire sphere of education where the higher level of education is prerequisite for any good job anywhere in the country. We all are living witnesses to this trend as most people are literally "forced" back to schools in pursuit of higher education not really of their own will. The impact of this trend on academic institutions' libraries cannot be doubted as with it comes more and even higher demand from these libraries.

V. Digital Preservation

As digital collections mature, concerns grow about the general lack of long-term planning for their preservation. No strategic leadership for establishing architecture, policy, or standards for creating, accessing, and preserving digital content is likely to emerge in the near term. Academic libraries will "increasingly focus on distinctive and unique collections in service to regional and national scholarly audiences. James G. Neal(2011) Many of these collections, particularly those that include rare or unique content or institution-specific materials such as university records and grey literature, are or will be digitized. OCLC Research reports that 97% of the 169 research libraries in the United States and Canada with special collections surveyed have "completed one or more digitization projects and/or have an active program." Jackie M. Dooley (2010) However, local digital collections are at risk when the individual institution lacks a comprehensive preservation plan. Most institutions, according to a Portico and Cornell University Library report, are only beginning to understand that their investment in creating digital collections "must be met with a commitment and infrastructure to protect this content for its lifetime."15 There also is a lack of significant and standardized architecture and policy. James Neal predicts that the "preservation and archiving of the cultural and scientific record will remain balkanized and episodic with no leadership coordination. Ithaka S+R's 2011 follow-up study of 12 digital content projects suggests that the key to successful experiments, suggesting that online education

may provide a sustainable path forward for institutions of higher education.²¹ In December 2011, MIT announced an online certification program, MITx (which will be launched in early fall 2012), leveraged from MIT's ten-year experiment with OpenCourseWare.²² The book *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World* looks broadly at the globalization of higher education. Ben Wildavsky (2013) Not only are academic institutions from Western countries expanding their footprint into the Middle East and Asia, but universities in China and India are making their mark on the global ranking tables, offering increased competition for Western institutions. Those who are interested in tracking internationalization in higher education should monitor the World Wise blog on The Chronicle of Higher Education Web site. Peter Theil, founder of eBay, correctly predicted both the technology bust in the early 2000s and the recent housing crash. Now he asserts that higher education is overvalued and comes with an inflated price tag. Sarah Lacy (2011) The book, *Academically Adrift: Limited earning on College Campuses*, also questions the value of today's college education.²⁶ The journal *Academic Questions* devoted two issues to examining all sides of the "bubble" issue.²⁷ Further evidence that students seek value for their education dollar is reflected in the strong enrollment numbers in community colleges

VI. Information Technology

Technology continues to drive much of the futuristic thinking within academic libraries. The key trends driving educational technology identified in the 2012 Horizon Report are equally applicable to academic libraries: people's desire for information and access to social media and networks anytime/anywhere; acceptance and adoption of cloud-based technologies; more value placed on collaboration; challenges to the role of higher education in a world where information is ubiquitous and alternate forms of credentialing are available; new education paradigms that include online and hybrid learning; and a new emphasis on challenge-based and active learning. Larry Johnson (2012) The report cautions that social networks and new publishing paradigms, such as open content, challenge the library's role as curator and place libraries under pressure to evolve new ways of supporting and curating scholarship. These may include helping students develop digitalmedia literacy skills and creating appropriate metrics for evaluating new scholarly forms of authoring, publishing, and researching. The Horizon Report indicates that mobile apps and tablet computing are near-term drivers (discussed as a separate trend below); game-based learning and learning analytics are mid-term (two-to-three year) drivers; and gesture-based computing and the Internet of Things (ubiquitous computing) are long-term (four-to-five year) drivers. Other technology forecasts also highlight virtual faculty, staff outsourcing, and next generation interfaces and content. David Raths (2011) Technology trends specific to libraries include Web-scale discovery systems with enhancements such as discipline-scoped searching and customized widgets, community- source library management systems, and vending machines to handle loans of equipment.

VII. Mobile Environments

Mobile devices are changing the way information is delivered and accessed. An increasing number of libraries provide services and content delivery to mobile devices. According to the 2011 EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) study of undergraduate students, 55% of undergraduate students own smartphones, while 62% have iPods, and approximately 21% have a netbook, iPad, or other tablet. More than two-thirds of these students use the devices for academic purposes. Fifty-nine percent use smartphones to get information on the Internet, and 24% use them to access library resources. A comparison with the 2009 ECAR study—in which less than 15% of students said they would likely use mobile library services if they were available—shows how quickly the environment is changing. Also of note is the 2011 Pew Internet Project finding David Rapp (2013) that 25% of U.S. adults with smartphones use them as their primary information source.³² Industry leader EBSCOhost has apps for the iPhone, iPod touch, and Android as well as a mobile interface. Ron Burns (2013) Many other vendors, including JSTOR, Elsevier, and Thomson Reuters, have mobile interfaces or apps. Samuel Liston (2013) SirsiDynix and Innovative Interfaces integrated library systems offer mobile access to library OPACs, while OCLC provides mobile access to Worldcat. Samuel Liston (2013) Self-service features such as renewing books, placing holds, and finding recommended titles are among the apps library users want. Lisa Carlucci Thomas (2012) Horizon Report reviews ways higher education institutions are using apps and tablets to enhance learning inside and outside the classroom. Some schools have replaced print textbooks with tablets preloaded with course materials while others use them for lecture capture, tutorials, orientations, and interactive publications.

Patron Driven E-Book Acquisition

Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) of e-books is poised to become the norm. For this to occur, licensing options and models for library lending of e-books must become more sustainable. A report on the future of academic libraries identifies PDA as an inevitable trend for libraries under pressure to prove that their expenditures are in line with their value. Johnson (2010) It notes that academic libraries will jettison "large

collections of physical books in open stacks with low circulation,” in favor of licensing agreements with e-book vendors that will enable libraries to purchase only those books that are in high demand. Although PDA is partly about efficiencies, it also is about aligning a library’s offerings with the demonstrated needs of its constituencies. PDA makes it possible to present to those constituencies a much larger set of titles than would otherwise be possible. Joseph Esposito (2012) ALA identified sustainability as a core principle for e-book collections. Sustainability requires secure and ongoing funding, technology solutions that are appropriate to the longevity of the cultural record and long-term management capabilities. ALA (2011) New licensing options and standards must be adopted to facilitate library lending of e-books, provide COUNTER compliant statistics, and allow for portability between devices and platforms.

VIII. Enrolments

The trends in educational enrolments at all levels have significantly affected academic institutions as well as their libraries in quite a number of ways. Observations have shown that higher institutions have not changed a bit infrastructural for what they used to be decades back at their inceptions. Some goes for their libraries in terms of materials collections, number of qualified personnel, and their level of education all of which combine to negatively impact on their services performance. A cursory look at the situation will quickly reveal that all of these other factors still boil down to the gloomy financial positions of academic institutions in the country generally and their libraries in particular.

For instance, according to the Commonwealth University Yearbook 1994, vol. 2, the A.B.U., Zaria students’ enrolment in 1992/93 session was 25,303 for full time and 7,887 for part time. The income for that period was only ₦56,900,820.

Arts as Opposed to Science and Applied Sciences

The Federal Government’s Policy has a formula for admission of students for the various courses. 40% of students admission should be in the Arts subjects while 60% should be for science subjects such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry etc and Applied Sciences like Architecture, Computer Science, Engineering etc. This is due to the emphasis the government lays on Science and technology for the rapid development of the country.

This has also affected academic libraries in the sense that they cannot provide the relevant materials to meet the needs of the students, the lecturers and research programme.

IX. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to comment that the 10% recurrent expenditure allocated to university libraries is appreciated but it is still not enough to meet the demands of the library users. It should still be reviewed upward because of the devaluation of the naira.

Furthermore, the following suggestions should also be considered.

- (a) There should be library cooperation and resource sharing;
- (b) There should be greater persuasiveness in getting the relevant authorities to liberalize library funding; and
- (c) More effective pursuit of external assistance should be encouraged.

It is after these have been done that academic libraries according to Davinson (165) will be in a position to play their role as “the soul” of the university, the sun around which all research and teaching revolves.

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