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Library as a Change Agent: Examining the Roles of Library in Private Higher Institutions of Learning in South West Nigeria

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Library as a Change Agent: The Invaluable Roles of Library in Private Higher Institutions of Learning in South West Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated library as a change agent: the invaluable roles of library in private higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria. The study was aimed at identifying the emerging roles of libraries; investigate the ways the emerging roles in libraries have influenced the higher institutions and examine the technological change the library has brought to the higher institutions of learning. The descriptive survey method was used for the study, the population of the study is 32 respondents from higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria. The researcher adopted the entire population as the sample size for this study using the complete enumerative sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and 32 copies of questionnaire were administered for this study. In response, 31 copies were retrieved and found useable, thereby indicating a response rate of 97%. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies). The study contributed significantly to knowledge as it was able to identify the novel roles of libraries in this digital age. The findings revealed that libraries are now performing newer roles in order to keep pace with technological advancement. This new roles currently performed by the library has also transformed learning in higher institutions of learning. The study concluded that the library has acted as a change agent in institutions of higher learning by fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community), enhancing life-long learning, improving communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries as well as supporting, managing and improving the institution's intellectual capital. The study recommended that adequate funds and resources be allocated to the library in order to improve the priceless and invaluable services rendered by the library as libraries in Nigeria are generally underfunded.

Keywords: Library, Institutions, Learning, Agent, University, South-west, Nigeria, Invaluable.

Introduction

The role of libraries is changing, and with it, the role of librarians. The main function of the library, however, is no longer to just house books much of its selection now resides digitally

and those who work within the halls of libraries, which are the librarians, are adapting to these changes as well (Carleigh, 2013).The changes in technology using electronically stored and retrieved information has changed the way patrons and students are able to access, retrieve and use information. The instantaneous access of information through the Internet has made vast amounts of information and data available to anyone with a computer, a modem and a provider (Leeder, 2013). Historically, libraries have been a research resource supported by a maintained 'physical' collection and archives. Today, the academic library is confronted with developments in technology, dramatically growing traditional collections and increased student and faculty demand.

New and more independent 'student centered' learning methods magnify the role of the library in the higher institution of learning. While the job of cataloguing and archiving of information materials remains essential in the library, newer roles have emerged such as rendering of cloud-based services, online reference services, information literacy training and a host of other services. Academic libraries now generate large amount of data using computer assisted document. Without libraries, most data would be lost or would not be retrievable for lack of an indexing scheme.

Also, with the current information explosion in different format (digital and paper), the library profession is now saddled with the responsibility of carrying out information literacy training for information seekers in order for them to be efficient users of information. In this information intensive society, libraries and librarians have recognized that the most critical divide is between those who have the understandings and capabilities to operate effectively in that society and those who do not and this constitutes the information literacy divide, of which the so called digital divide is one aspect. They also consider that more attention must be given in

institutional education to how students recognize their information need. This is because information literacy is a prerequisite for participative citizenship and social inclusion with the creation of new knowledge, personal empowerment learning for lifelong learning.

However, with the current explosion in information and information resources in different format, libraries and librarians are now faced with newer responsibilities and roles such as designing instructional programs for information access; teaching students and faculty members how to access information in different format or location; serving as consultants on information resources, issues, and problems; developing and implementing information policy; creating information access tools; selecting, organizing, and preserving information in all formats; serving as leaders and facilitators in introducing information technologies and ensuring their effective use (Virkus, 2016).

Furthermore, the library works as an integrated cultural factor (in a wider sense), which according to David (2014) distinguishes the roles, that the library have to fulfill social needs. According to David, the roles of the libraries consist of their performed functions in this changing information society which includes:

1. Repository role- storage and management of society's documents by acquirement (collecting), preserving (conserving), describing the document created by humanity;

2. Information role - dispersion of the collected data (information).

3. Education role connects the functions of the prompter of formal and informal learning, function of organizing teaching, also the educator's of civil consciousness functions, etc.

4. Social advocacy covers functions such as dispersion of library's resources in the society. This role relates to the document task of the library, effective services, inclusion of socially sensitive groups to social and cultural activities and other functions.

Similarly, Okejie (2016) noted that libraries can fulfill several roles at the same time such as:

1. The cultural center - Libraries that fulfill this role, have to carry out the functions of: support and dispersion of cultural identity, versatile cultural understanding, support of the culture of local community, inhabitants' inspiration to participate in the local society.

2. Education and the local learning center - Libraries that fulfill this role support formal and informal education by supplying useful and the newest information, by supporting and stimulating grownups to learn for their whole lives, by providing opportunities to study, by organizing gatherings and by providing an environment suitable for learning;

3. General and special information service - In this role, libraries fulfill these functions: they support and stimulate activities of local business supports the local government and authorities, carry out the activities of research and education;

4. A shelter - Libraries take the function of public space, in which socially vulnerable groups like children from problematic families and homeless people, etc., can find a place to be in.

In addition, Liam (2013) observed that libraries (especially those in higher institutions of learning) now provide an environment with physical and virtual services supporting professional activities of the users at their workplace from the discovery of information to the manipulation and analysis of the delivered resources. It also provides services in a mixed-mode, electronic and

paper, environment, particularly in a co-coordinated way. The libraries more often than not now have a section department called 'eLibrary' which is focused on exploring the issues surrounding the retrieval and delivery of information in the virtual environment and also the integration of different electronic services so that single search approach could be offered to the End user (liam, 2013)

According to Verma (2015), the changes brought about by information and communication technology (ICT), has not only transformed the medium through which libraries disseminate information, but has also affected every section of the library. This is due to the fact that the library being the main stay of information and knowledge has been made virtual such that library and information services extend beyond walls and physical buildings. The illustration in figure 1 explains how much the roles/functions of the library have changed.

Changes in the Role of Library in New Information Age	
From	To
Information resource in one medium	Information resource in multi media
Library has its own collection	Library without wall
Procurement of information sources by individual library	Procurement of information resources through consortia
Service in good time	Service just in time
in-sourcing of all activities	Out sourcing of all activities
Local reach of resources	Global reach of resources through networks
User's want print resources	Users want print, non-print, online resources
Users goes to library	Library come to users
Local users	Users from any place

Figure 1: Changes in Library Roles (adopted from Verma, 2015).

Furthermore, the library has continued to perform one of the most important roles in this information age which involves print-on-paper world: to organize the universe of resources in such a way that those most likely to be of value to the user community are made most accessible

to this community, physically and intellectually. Although, the complexity of information resources in this digital era makes it difficult for users to fully explore information in these sources, libraries are now tasked with the responsibility of offering instructions in a variety of formats (including Web based instruction and online tutorials). In this digital era, libraries/librarians are now faced with the responsibility of managing the Digital Information System as this encompass the overall competencies (knowledge, know-how, skills and attitudes) necessary to create, store, analyze, organize, retrieve and disseminate digital information (text, images, sounds) in digital libraries or any type of information.

Conclusively, the change in the roles library plays in higher institutions of learning has put the library in the driving seat of acting as a change agent in these institutions. The library since the proliferation of ICT has become a catalyst for change in education. It is on this premise that this study sought to examine the invaluable roles of library in private higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries generally serve as a tool for intellectuals development which in turn to economics, political development and social happiness and survival. Intellects in its various dimensions mean the absence of ignorance of situations. Lozano (2002) agreed that the general library's role is to provide information about its community. The acquisition of knowledge dispel ignorance, therefore the general objective of library is to serve as a centre for information where people acquired the needed knowledge to reduce their ignorance about their environment. Libraries in higher institution of learning is established to take care of the information need of students, lecturers, researchers and other community of scholars. The library continues to bring man in contact with the word in the fulfillment of its function as a repository of knowledge in all

forms and shapes. It has also become over the years a dynamic centre for literacy training especially in the area of digital and information literacy.

By adapting to the rapid changes in information storage and delivery and providing teachers and students with appropriate new tools, libraries have continue to make an important impact on the education process in the future. Technologically-based learning, which is currently one of the novel roles of libraries in higher institutions of learning serve to prepare students for independent and continuous learning. Until learners are able to afford their own technology, libraries have made it a point of duty to be a fundamental resource for the economically disadvantaged.

In a well-established higher institution of learning, the library, which continue to act as a change agent is an integral part of the institution and should be regarded as the "Life-Wire" of such institutional learning. The role of libraries in higher institution of learning in this digital era therefore calls for examination.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the library as a change agent: the invaluable roles of library in private higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. identify the emerging roles of libraries in private universities in South-west, Nigeria;

2. investigate the ways the emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community; and

3. examine the technological change the library has brought to the university system

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are the emerging roles of libraries in private universities in South-west, Nigeria?

2. In what ways have the emerging roles of libraries influenced the university community?

3. What technological change has the library brought to the university system?

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was employed for this study. The population of the study is thirty-two (32) respondents. The total enumerative sampling technique was used to select all librarians in six selected higher institutions of learning across the six states that make up the South-west region of Nigeria. The institutions comprised of two private universities, two private polytechnics and two private colleges of education all in South-west, Nigeria. The selected higher institutions for this study are Wesley University, Ondo, Ondo State; AjayiCrowther University, Ibadan, Oyo State; Crown Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State; Grace Polytechnic, Surulere, Lagos State; Assanusiyah College of Education, Osun State; and Awori District College of Education, Ogun State. The total enumerative sampling technique was adopted because the population is not large and the researchers had enough time and fund to conduct the study. This is in line with Osuala (2008). Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Thirty-two (32) copies of questionnaires were administered, and thirty-one (31) copies were retrieved and found usable thereby giving a response rate of 97%. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Research Findings

Gender distribution of the Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Male	11	35
Female	20	65
Total	31	100.0

Table 1 shows that the female respondents 20(65%) in this study are more than their male 11(35%) counterparts. This implies that female librarians participated more in the study than their male counterparts.

Age of the Respondents

Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30 years	5	17
31-40 years	11	3
41-50 years	12	39
51-60 years	2	6
61 years and above	1	3
Total	31	100.0

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents in this study are within the age range of 31-40 years and 41-50 years. The table also shows that only 1 librarians representing 3% of the total respondents is within the age range of 61 years and above. This implies that majority of the librarians are young.

Staff Designation of the Respondents

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Staff Designation

Staff Designation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Assistant Librarian	5	16
Librarian II	11	35
Librarian I	6	19
Senior Librarian	4	14
Principal Librarian	2	6
Deputy University/Polytechnic/College Librarian	-	-
University/Polytechnic/College Librarian	3	10
Total	31	100.0

Table 3 shows that there are 11 respondents (representing 35% of the total respondents) and 6 respondents (representing 19% of the total respondents) in the Librarian II and Librarian I designations respectively. Also, the table shows that there are only 3 respondents (representing 10% of the total respondents) in the University/Polytechnic/College Librarian designation**.**

Answering of the Research Questions

Research Question One:What are the emerging roles of libraries in private higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria?

Data in Table 4 provide answers to this question.

Table 4: Emerging Roles of Libraries in Private Higher Institutions of Learning

ITEM	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL	
Emerging Roles of Libraries	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Advocacy	19	61	12	39	31	100
Organizing training on how toaccess information	26	84	5	16	31	100
creation of new knowledge	21	68	10	32	31	100
Individual/personal empowerment	24	77	7	23	31	100
Enhances life-long learning	28	90	3	10	31	100
specialized information service	27	87	4	13	31	100
co-operate with other libraries at appropriate levels for improved information services	30	97	1	3	31	100
Improved communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries	18	58	13	42	31	100
Foster the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community)	22	71	9	29	31	100
Support and manage the institution's intellectual capital	20	65	11	35	31	100
Become more assertive in helping their institutions define strategic purposes	17	55	14	45	31	100

Table 4 shows the emerging roles of libraries in private higher institutions of learning. From the table, it was gathered that advocacy (61%), Organizing training on how to access information (84%), creation of new knowledge (68%), individual/personal empowerment (77%), enhancing life-long learning (90%), rendering specialized information service (87%), co-operating with other libraries at appropriate levels for improved information services (97%), improving

communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries (58%), fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community) (71%), support and manage the institution's intellectual capital (65%) and becoming more assertive in helping their institutions define strategic purposes (55%) are some of the emerging roles of libraries in private higher institutions of learning in South-west, Nigeria. This implies that there are numerous emerging roles of libraries in private higher institution of learning in South-west, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: In what ways have the emerging roles of libraries influenced the university community?

Data in Table 5 provide answers to this question.

Table 5: ways emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community

ITEM	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL	
Emerging Roles in Libraries	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Improved communication between students and the university	29	94	2	6	31	100
creation of new knowledge	31	100	0	0	31	100
Improvement in digital literacy of members of the university community	24	77	7	23	31	100
Granting users access to millions of research work all over the world	25	81	6	19	31	100
Enhances life-long learning	19	61	12	39	31	100
Provision of specialized information service	17	55	14	45	31	100
Fostering co-operation with other institution and libraries at appropriate levels for improved information services	18	58	13	42	31	100
Improved communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries	19	61	12	39	31	100
Foster the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community)	23	74	8	26	31	100
Support, manage and improve the institution's intellectual capital	27	87	4	13	31	100
helping their institutions define strategic purposes	20	65	11	35	31	100

Table 5 shows the ways emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community. From the table, it was gathered that improved communication between students and the university (94%), creation of new knowledge (100%), improvement in digital literacy of members of the university community (77%), granting users access to millions of research work all over the world (81%), improved communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries (61%), fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community) (74%), and support, manage and improve the institution's intellectual capital (87%) are some of the ways in which emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community. This therefore implies that there are numerous ways in which emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community.

Research Question Three: What technological change has the library brought to the educational system?

Data in Table 6 provide answers to this question

Table 6: technological change the library has brought to the educational system

ITEM	AGREE		DISAGREE		TOTAL	
Emerging Roles in Libraries	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Virtual storage system (cloud storage)	29	94	2	6	31	100
Provision of E-learning/E-library services	31	100	0	0	31	100
Improvement in digital literacy competencies of members of the university community	25	81	6	19	31	100
Creation of virtual gathering system	22	71	9	29	31	100
Rendering of online search services	21	68	10	32	31	100
Foster the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community)	24	77	7	23	31	100

Table 6 reveals that virtual storage system (cloud storage) (94%), provision of E-learning/E-library services (100%), improvement in digital literacy competencies of members of the university community (81%), creation of virtual gathering system (71%), rendering of online search services (68%) and fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (77%)

are some of the technological change the library has brought to the educational system. This implies that there are numerous technological change the library has brought to private higher institution of learning in South-west, Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

The result of the study is discussed under the following sub-heading as follows:

Emerging Roles of Libraries in Private Higher Institutions of Learning

The study revealed that there are numerous emerging roles of libraries in higher institution of learning. Some of the emerging roles include organizing training on how to access information, creation of new knowledge, individual/personal empowerment, enhancing life-long learning, rendering specialized information service, co-operating with other libraries at appropriate levels for improved information services, improving communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries, and fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community). This revelation is support of David (2014) assertion that numerous roles have been added to the traditional library roles since the advent of information and communication technology (ICT). Ajagun noted that more recently, libraries have started the creation of virtual community for interaction among users, as well as improving communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries. This finding also conform to Okejie's (2016) assertion that over the years, newer roles have emerged for libraries in higher institution of learning in a bid to keep pace with the technological advancement in the information world.

Ways Emerging Roles of Libraries Have Influenced the University Community

The finding from this study reveals that there are numerous ways in which emerging roles of libraries have influenced the university community. Some of the ways new roles of libraries have influenced the university community include improving communication between students and the university, creating new knowledge, improving the digital literacy of members of the university community, granting users access to millions of research work all over the world, improving communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries, fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community), and supporting management and improvementof the institution's intellectual capital. This revelation is in agreement with Virkus (2016) that library roles in this digital age have greatly influenced the members of the university community positively. The finding also corroborates the study conducted by Liam (2013) which revealed that the digital literacy training (which is one of the emerging roles of libraries) have influencedthe perception of members of the university community towards digital technology.

Technological Change in the Library and the Educational System

The study reveals that virtual storage system (cloud storage), provision of E-learning/E-library services, improvement in digital literacy competencies of members of the university community, creation of virtual gathering system, rendering of online search services and fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus are some of the technological change the library has brought to the educational system. This revelation is in conformity with Virkus (2016) that the technological innovations in the library have acted as a catalyst for technological change in the educational system. This technological change in the educational system includes bit not limited to e-learning, use of e-books, and having an online or virtual interactions with librarians.

Conclusion

The new educational paradigm has created the need for a reconceptualization of the invaluable roles and responsibilities of libraries in higher institution of learning. In this context, the library is a catalyst for change or an agent of change especially in the area of digital and information literacy among members of the university community. The issue of E-learning and E-library services has become an issue in many academic libraries and much work has been undertaken to deliver information literacy education. This is also in addition to other roles the library perform such as fostering the creation of new academic communities on campus (virtual community), enhances life-long learning, improve communication linkages and consultations between policymakers, policy analysts, and policy beneficiaries as well as support, manage and improve the institution's intellectual capital. These emerging and new roles of libraries have transformed the library from being just a department in the institution to being a change agent in the institution.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendation were made

1. More funds and resources should be allocated to the library in order to improve the priceless and invaluable services rendered by the library.

2. Adequate staff development programme should be provided for library staff in order for them to adapt to the emerging roles and responsibilities of the library.

3. More awareness and sensitization program should be organized for library users in order to increase their knowledge on the emerging roles and services of the library.

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