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Abstract

The study gives an insight into awareness and use of lobbying and advocacy as strategic approach for improving library and information services in Nigeria with special reference to libraries in Imo state. A well-structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection with a sample size of forty (40). The study reveals that librarians in Imo state are aware of the place of lobbying and advocacy in improvement of library and information services. The head librarians in the various libraries were identified to be involved in lobbying and advocacy. The reasons for integrating lobbying and advocacy into library and information services is to improve provision of funds, provision of library materials and as well create awareness on the importance of library. The techniques used in lobbying and advocacy as revealed in the study ranges from face to face meeting with policy makers / legislators and using of friends of library. However, limited access to legislators / policy makers, lukewarm attitude of librarians, lack of librarians in politics were identified as factors militating against effective lobbying and advocacy. The study recommends improvement in leaderships of libraries, good rapport between heads of libraries and policy makers and change of attitude among librarians. The study concludes that lobbying and advocacy has become a pertinent instrument for creating awareness of the place of the library and improving library and information services.

Keywords: Awareness, Lobbying, Advocacy, Information, Library, Library Services, Imo state, Nigeria.

Introduction

In contemporary Nigeria Society in which library and information service is not at the forefront of government activities, the subject matter of lobbying and advocacy could be seen to be very pertinent to the information world. It is assumed that education is the key to economic development of any society , if education is the bedrock of any society suffice it to state that librarianship is hub upon which every educational activities rotates on . However it is disheartening to note that in most developed countries, in an attempt to enhance the educational system, more often than not, the libraries in our educational institution is neglected in the scheme of things. Libraries are inadequately funded, most heads of institution has a poor perception of library especially for the fact that it is not income generating avenue (IGA) for the Institutions. This above reasons among orders underpinned the necessity of the subject matter of lobbying and advocacy in library and information services.

However, depending on the context under which the term lobbing and advocacy is used, they may mean different things to different people from different background. Lobbying and advocacy is a process of influencing what others people feel , think and believe so that changes can happen the way the influencer want them to happen lobbying and advocacy can be seen as communications process.

Lobbying as noted by Berg (2007) is an accepted and legal process that allows the voice of citizen groups, association, labor union, corporations and others to be heard in the political arena. Lobbying is the practice of convincing a person or group of people to make decisions that you want them to make (Myenzi, 2008) in librarianship , lobbying can be considered to be all those activities of convincing or attempting to influencing legislative through oral

\ written communication or direct interventions with key policy, decision makers. Lobbying in librarianships can be seen as legal and acceptable activity that is often essential to creating good public policy and strong, more demo crating organization. Berg (2009) citing Edgett (2002) defines lobbying as 'the act of publicly representing an individual organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on – or accept the point of view of the individual, the organization, or the idea.

Lobbying is the art of influencing and informing an elected officer, or the government on behalf of your special interest. It is worthy to assert here that lobbying as a process is targeted at decision makers as it is seen as a systematic informal effort to influence decision makers (BBO report of the Cosecam training, 2003).

Advocacy on the other hand embraces a much broader framework and purpose the lobbying (Gitachu, 2008). Advocacy can be seen as pleading for supporting, or recommending. Advocacy is the active support of an idea or caused expressed through strategies and methods' that influence the opinions and decision of people and organization (Buckley, 2009). Lobbying and advocacy is a process of influencing what other people feel, think and believe so that changes can happen the way the influencers want them to happen.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

i. To determine if librarians in Imo state are aware of lobbying and advocacy as integral approach for improving library and information services.

ii. To know if lobbying and advocacy is been applied in their institution.

iii. To establish the personnel involved in lobbying and advocacy.

iv. To identify reasons for using lobbying and advocacy in libraries and information centres

v. To determine the techniques used in carrying out lobbying and advocacy in libraries and information centre.

vi. To identify the factors affecting effective use of lobbying and advocacy in ;libraries and information centres

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated in line with the objectives of the research questions

i. Do the librarians in Imo state have knowledge of lobbying and advocacy as a strategic approach for improving library and information services?

ii. Is lobbying and advocacy applied in libraries and information centres in Imo state?

iii. Who are those involved in lobbying and advocacy?

iv. What are the reasons for using lobbying and advocacy in library and information services?

v. What techniques are applied when executing lobbying and advocacy in libraries and information centers in Imo state?

vi. What are the factors affecting effective lobbying and advocacy in libraries?

Review of Related Literatures

There seems to be scarcity of literature in the area of lobbying and advocacy in library and information science, however, the few available ones related to the study were reviewed.

Myenzi (2008) conceptualize lobbying as the practice of convincing a person or groups of people to make decisions that you want them to make.   Lobbying in his view is not confined within the policy circles only as it can also mean strong persuasion or a person or group of people in society to support an idea that will eventually bring change in attitude or behavior patterns of the community. However the centre for lobbying in the public interest (CLPI) defines lobbying as a specific legally refined activities that involves stating your position on specific legislation to legislative and/or asking them to support your position.

Gitachu (2008) on her part added flavor in her definition which sees lobbying as process or persuading someone to act on one's behalf on particular issue. In other words it is an attempt to influence those with power to make decision in favor of individual or organization likely to be affected by decision. On the contrary, Sloot and Gaanderse (2010) sees lobbying as a specialized form of advocacy.

However, advocacy according Gitachu (2008) is a set of targeted actions directed at decision makes in support of a specific policy issue. In other words, advocacy are specific actions executed I order to gain support in policy issues. No wonder Myenzi (2008) sees it as an action oriented art of persuasion to bring about change in policies, recourses allocations, service delivery and or behavior that affect the public of a particular society. Looking at it from the librarianship point of view, Mlanga (n. d) defined advocacy as a sustained effort by librarians and lobbying association to keep libraries and the work they do in the minds of the people who make decisions that affects libraries.

Beneficially, advocacy can be a tool for improving service delivery (Mynezi, 2008). In other words it helps to give voice to citizens interest in the same vein, Sloot and Gaanderse

(2010) contends that both lobbying and advocacy increases the scope of influence to improve policies and achieve structural change in their areas. Mlanga (n. d) opined that the reason for advocacy and lobbying is that things are not going well in the library sector, to him, while libraries are integral units in country's welfare infrastructure, they are not immune to having their findings or programs jeopardized by changing political environments.

Geherels (2003) gave some thought on the role and characteristics of a lobbyist to include: Informer, strategy planner, initiator, stimulator and pain in the neck. Characteristically he opined that a lobbyist should be communicative, social, knows about decision making process, knows elementary facts, analytical, networker, sympathetic, knows what moves other people patient and open minded.

Technically, different techniques can be applied to lobbying and advocacy, but Myenzi (2008) identified the following as techniques for effective lobbying and advocacy which include publication of popular information and promotional education such as magazines, newsletters, posters, pamphlets, information sheet and banners, testimonies from victims of the particular problem, inviting key government officials to officiate and or attend functions organized by advocacy groups, indoor consultation forums, use of open forums and outreach programmes, use of comer system amongst others.

Concluding in the words of Sloot and Ganders (2010) effective lobbying and advocacy requires strategizing.

Research methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The first quarterly meeting of the Nigerian Library Association,

Imo State chapter, which took place on 7th of March at Imo State Library Board, was used as platform for distribution of the questionnaire in which the following libraries in Imo State were represented: Federal university of Technology Owerri Library; Imo State University Library, Owerri; Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education library (AIFCE), Owerri; Federal Polytechnic Nekede library; Imo State Public Library.

A total of forty (40) questionnaires were administered and 35 representing 87.5% were retrieved indicating a good response rate. Frequency counts and percentages were used in data analysis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of the findings were bases on the research specific objectives

Table 1: Awareness of lobbying and advocacy as a strategy for improving library services

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	32	91.4
NO	3	8.6
TOTAL	35	100

Table1 shows that majority 32 (91.4%) of the respondents claimed that they aware of lobbying and advocacy as a strategy for improving library and information services, while 3(8.6%) indicate otherwise that they are not aware.

Table2: Existence of lobbying and advocacy in respondents Institution

Option	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	32	91.4
NO	3	8.6
TOTAL	35	100

Table 2 shows that the same majority 32(91.4%) of the respondent in table 1, claimed that their institutional library carry out lobbying and advocacy, while 3(8.6%) indicates that they have no idea if their institutional library carry out lobbying and advocacy.

Table3: Who is involved in lobbying and advocacy?

Those involved in lobbying and advocacy	Frequency	Percentage
The head Librarian	26	81.3
The Library Staff	`3	9.4
Other Members of staff	-	-
Friends of the Library	2	6.3
Library Committee	1	3.1
Total	32	100

NB: *Further analysis was based on the 32 respondents who claimed awareness and existence of lobbying and advocacy in their institutions*

Table 3 shows that 26 (81.3%) of the respondents claimed that the head librarian in their institution is involved in lobbying and advocacy while 3(9.4%) indicates that library staff are involved in lobbying and advocacy, 2(6.3%) and 1(3.1%) indicates that friends of the library and library committee are involved in lobbying and advocacy respectively.

Table 4: Reasons for library Advocacy

Reasons for Lobbying and advocacy	Frequency	Percentage
Provision of funds for library	22	68.8
Provision of library materials	19	59.4
Creating awareness on the importance of library	18	56.3
Making additional budgetary allocation for the	18	56.3

library		
Others	-	

NB: Multiple options were indicated N=32

On the reasons for lobbying and advocacy, Table 4 shows 22(68.8%) indicates provision of fund for library as reason for lobbying and advocacy, while 19(59.4%) indicates provision of library materials as a reason, with 18(56.3%) indicating creating awareness on the importance of library and making additional budgetary allocation for the library as possible reasons for lobbying and advocacy.

Table 5: Techniques used in lobbying and advocacy

Techniques used in lobbying and advocacy	Frequency	Percentage
Using insiders working with policy makers / legislators	17	53.1
Press releases	8	25
Personal letters	17	53.1
Face to face meeting with policy makers	20	62.5
Using of friends of the library	16	50
Others	-	

NB: multiple options indicated N=32

On the techniques used in lobbying and advocacy, Table 5 shows that 20(62.5%) indicates face to face meeting with policy makers as the most likely techniques for lobbying and advocacy. Following this is 17(53.1%) indicating using of insiders working with policy makers / legislators, personal letters as techniques. Furthermore, 16(50 %) indicates using of

friends of the library as techniques used in lobbying and advocacy. Next to this, 8(25%) indicated use of press release as techniques for lobbying and advocacy.

Table 6: Factors affecting effective lobbying and advocacy in libraries

	Frequency	Percentage
Lukewarm attitude of librarians	18	56.3
Limited access to legislators/ policy makers	20	62.5
Lack of friends of the library (NGOs)	11	34.4
Ignorance in terms of existing laws	7	21.9
Leadership problem	16	50
Lack of librarians in politics	17	53.1

NB: multiple options indicated N=32

On the factors affecting effective lobbying and advocacy, table 6 shows that 20(62.5%) indicates limited access to legislators/ policy makers as factors. Following this is 18 (56.3%) who views lukewarm attitude of librarians as a factor affecting effective lobbying and advocacy. Furthermore, 17(53.1%) indicate lack of librarians in politics with 16(50%) indicating leader4ship problem as a factor.

Table 7: Solutions to the Problem of Lobbying and Advocacy

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Positive attitude of librarians	17	53.1
Librarians joining politics	8	25

Forming of friends of library groups	17	53.1
Improving leadership of libraries	20	62.5
Meeting policy makers and those close to them	16	50

NB: multiple options indicated N=32

On the solutions to the problem of lobbying and advocacy in libraries, table 7 shows 20 (62.5%) indicates improving of leadership in libraries. 17 (53.1%) indicates positive attitude of librarians forming of friends of library groups as a solution with 16(50%) indicating meeting policy makers and those close to them as solution and 8(25%) indicated that librarians should join politics.

Discussions of Findings

Findings in table 1 reveals that librarians in Imo state are aware of lobbying and advocacy as a strategic approach for improving library and information services and that it is being carried out in their institutions library as indicated by 91.4% in table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 3 reveals that head librarians (University Librarian, Polytechnic Librarian, College Librarians, Director of Public Library, etc) in Imo state involved in lobbying and advocacy.

In table 4 reveals that lobbying and advocacy is used as a strategic tool in order to ensure that funds and library materials are provided for the libraries. Besides, all the reasons identified were deemed to be significant because they were all indicated at most by average respondent.

Face to face meeting with policy makers, using of insiders working with policy makers / legislators, use of personal letters are the most popular techniques used in lobbying and advocacy in libraries in Imo state as revealed in table 5.

Limited access to legislators /policy makers, lukewarm attitude of librarians, lack of librarians in politics and leadership problems were identified as factors affecting effective lobbying and advocacy in libraries.

Improving leadership in libraries, positive attitude of librarians, forming of friends of library groups and meeting policy makers and those close to them were recommended as solutions to the problem of lobbying and advocacy in libraries.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was revealed that librarians in Imo state are adequately aware that lobbying and advocacy can be used as a strategic approach for improving library and information services and the libraries in Imo state has been using it. Lobbying and advocacy can be used to attract funds for provision of library resources and as well create awareness on the importance of library, thereby changing the perception of the publics about librarians and libraries.

The techniques used for lobbying and advocacy were revealed in the study and the challenges of lobbying and advocacy were identified and how to solve the problem. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1   **Improvement in leadership of libraries and information centre:** there is need for leadership of libraries to improve their leadership styles by using their salient position to

project the image of the library when this is done; they would have succeeded in paving the way for easy lobbying and advocacy.

2   **Good rapport between Heads of libraries and policy makers:** various heads of libraries should ensure they maintain good relationship with policy makers in their institution, good relationship between both parties can also pave way for successful lobbying and advocacy.

3   **Change of attitude among librarians:** librarians should change their attitude towards library services. We should embrace the fact that we as librarians are of noble profession because you cannot lobby and advocate effectively in an environment where you display poor images of yourself and the library profession. When librarians change their attitude, the society at large will change their perception of librarians and library services.

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