Challenges and Impediments of Providing Library and Information Services for Nation Development

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ABSTRACT

The study examined challenges and impediments of providing library and information services for nation development. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study includes the two selected universities in Benue State (JS Tarka University Makurdi and Benue State University Makurdi). The population of the study comprises of 156 given the total number of library staff from the two selected universities in Benue State. A simple random sampling technique was employed. The sample size for the study was 10 from each selected university, given a total sample size of 20 respondents. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled "librarianship and journalism as a social components for ethno religious and cultural development and nation building in Benue State, Nigeria". The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for a measure of internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficients achieved was 0.77. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study concludes that professional librarians should benefit from the power of ICTs to ensure that university libraries are reorganized to be ICT-compatible and remain the center of provision, production and dissemination of ICT information. Information specialists must be well informed about new inventions in the field of ICT. The study recommend that training of academic librarians should be a priority. It also recommended that resources for staff training and development should not be manipulated at universities and should be disclosed as needed. Experience has shown that training staff are sometimes absent due to insufficient funds.

Keywords: – libraries, information services, national development, challenges of library and information service.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries and the services they offer, irrespective of their types are sensible, veritable, and thoughtful human inventions build to sway and meet up the never ending human needs and demands. Therefore, the provision of library and information services should be one of the fundamental human rights of every citizen (Aina 2004). Unfortunately the consistent failures by these human's useful endeavors, its obsolescence, dearth in innovation, lacuna or ineffectiveness amongst others, to meet the basic needs of youth are indirectly the reasons for the multiplicity of problems in our society today. Failure to meet the 'information needs', 'governance needs' and basic 'human needs' in Nigeria for instance have tweaked and aggravated absolute decay in the general governance performance to further meet the socio – economic, educational and political needs of life in the country. Library services are intangible, meaningful, useful, intrinsic values, commodities, products etc. The services libraries renders to clienteles in order to actualize its purposes in any context must have the above mentioned qualities. Libraries are therefore centerpiece for the provision of services. Every service arises from users' needs, needs in communities of like-minds, group of people, organization, and or individual personal needs. Tunde (2012) postulated that the basic rational behind the establishment of any library, is due to the needs and demands from the community members or organizations. Accordingly, Aina (2004) the services provided to users of individual libraries depends on the objectives of the present organization and the services provided in a library will therefore differ from one

library to another. Though, there are certain services that are common to all libraries. Library services are equally discussed in terms of two broad categories: public services and technical services. Any operation that involves direct contact with the library patron is considered a public service while technical services are classified as those activities that are done before users can take full advantage of the use of the library (Yusufu, 2014). Library services can equally be categorised as primary or secondary services. The primary services are in-house general services that are considered basic for the library's internally operationability. While the secondary services are specialized, collaborated, networked, extension, necessary and externally needs targeting services libraries render beyond its shores to fit and remain relevant in the society. The major types of primary services are reference services, library guides, reservation service, current awareness services, exhibition and displays, user education, information literacy programmes, lending services, inter-library loans service and document delivery, technical services and different digital services. The secondary services on the other hand could be un-exhaustive in lists. But among the regular once are literature searches, information brokering, referral services, translation services, extension and outreach services, rental of premises etc. These library services provides effective and efficiency service to nation development. Development has to do with qualitative and sometimes quantitative changes in the life of a people or an individual. At the national level, there is an improvement in the general well-being of the people while at the individual level, development implies activity, increased skill and capacity, self-discipline, greater freedom, responsibility, and material well-being. For some people, libraries are so abstract that it cannot have any impact on their practical life.

Consequently, such people believe that libraries are irrelevant to the development. This misconception persists because of people's ignorance of what libraries are all about. They fail to realize that libraries are one of the most useful enterprises ever undertaken by man. This is evidence by human development, which shows that libraries have been the greatest force that has contributed in shaping human civilization. There have been enormous advances in human knowledge since the last century. Every field of human endeavor has had a quantum leap in advancement, leading to many discoveries and inventions, two of which are the internet and cloning, with their use and abuse. Along with the

new knowledge have come new challenges. And these new developments have presented to the average citizen with a spectacle of the greatest confusion. People seldom stop to ponder that it is the business of libraries to bring order, clarity, and consistency into all this confusion. Here, libraries become "an instrument used to organize knowledge, proffer a focus and then give the individual a sense of direction out of a maze of confusion" (Anyika, 2005). The role of libraries in promoting the marketing of the tourism sector cannot be underestimated. Libraries as reservoirs of information are the most reliable information reference centers where tourists can seek information on hotels, motels, national parks, mountains, and other interesting places. Libraries also play a vital role in the health sector. A vibrant health sector needs well-documented and organized health information meant for dissemination to users and potential

users in order to consolidate health records, planning and management. Libraries provide people with appropriate information on diseases and prevention measures, health care, side effects of premarital affairs, dangers of early pregnancies, and any other health related information. Another essential role of libraries "is the propounding and propagation of a political ideology for national development and cohesion" (Anyika, 2005). Effective citizen action is possible only where citizens know how to gain access to information of all kinds and have the skills to become responsible and informed participants in democracies. This is especially so as e-government evolves. Libraries offer real and virtual civic spaces where citizens can speak freely, share similar interests and concerns, and pursue what they believe are in their public interest. Ultimately, free discourse among informed citizens assures civil society and civil society, in turn, provides the social capital necessary to achieve common goals. Libraries have undergone major changes in recent years. This change, caused by Information Communication Technology (ICT), has affected the way information services are delivered. Traditional means of disseminating information have given way to electronic means of communication. In the development and application of ICTs in library operations, dissemination and access to information have improved and are also exempted from new roles in the provision, distribution and transmission of information. The librarian no longer plays a negative role in discharging their duty,

because advancement of ICT has made it easier to satisfy the information use of users irrespective of time or location. No longer a keeper of books, it is the gateway to a variety of sources of information. Haber (2011) suggested that the supply of books in recent centuries is an independent function of libraries, but that their offerings have evolved with the digital age, to meet the changing needs of their clients. Academic libraries in Nigeria are not separated from this technological revolution. As information providers, they are constantly under pressure to provide sources of information relevant to their immediate communities. People have to change the way they work and believe they work effectively in an automated environment. This means that academic libraries must integrate digital resources to be at the forefront of the provision and dissemination of information. Today, students and teachers have developed a stronger preference for electronic information than manual systems. The increasing availability of digital information has led students to find other learning and research opportunities through laptops and mobile phones. Digital technology has reduced the importance and use of libraries in developing countries. The library and information service arena no doubt has been undergoing series of transformational process as a result of the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to library service. The conservative approaches to librarianship have been demystified. A more proactive and pragmatic approach to librarianship has taken the centre stage of information services. Libraries of all types are on the move to catch up with the trends of producing ICT related information services. Omekwu and Echezona (2008) postulated that librarians and information professionals of the future must be equipped with a wide range of personal and transferable skills in order to manage the changing environment in which he or she works. The contention is that information professionals need to be ready to move with the challenge of digital technology, globalised information access, networked resources, a changing economy, new learning and research system and the demands of user communities for information that adds values to their works. Libraries are not immune to the societal forces re-shaping other institutions brought about by technology and economics. Social institutions today look vastly different than they did twenty years ago (Fagbola, Uzoigwe and Ajegbomogun, 2011). Today, the contemporary practices in 4 academic library services in the 21st century is being propelled with an information explosion, and the inclusion of ICT in all aspects of library services (Abubakar, 2011). As the traditional custodian of information, librarians in the 21st century need to be aware of these significant changes and as such employ their technological knowhow and intellectual prowess in order to retain the leading role of the academic libraries in supporting teaching, learning and research. This means that the 21st century librarian will have to be armed with competent skills that will enhance the provision of effective library services to meet client's changing information needs (Emezie and Nwaohiri, 2013). Libraries in 21st century are no longer places that just collect and lend books; those days are gone. They are now multitasking systems and institutions that provide access to information in all its qualities, therefore enables people to make informed decisions that can improve their lives. Through libraries, people of the communities can have access to a timely and relevant information and they are then better positioned to eradicate poverty and inequality, improve agriculture, provide quality education, and support people's health, culture, research and innovative developments that ensure sustainability in the country. In recent times, one of the most topical issues globally attracting both national and international debate is sustainable development. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently used definition is the one submitted by Brundtland Report as quoted in the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD, 2017) official website, stating that "it is a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (www.iisd.org/topic/sustainable-developmet). Thus, more importantly is the willingness and fain attention the library professionals globally have shown to the causes of sustainable development. There is a clear dimensional shift from traditional ways of providing library and information services to a digital dimension that is being engineered by information and communication technologies. The emergence of new demands surrounding information and its delivery and deliberation naturally dictates the need for libraries to meet these emerging user interests and desires, and to create a newer, more participatory type of user interaction (Kowalsky, 2013). The scope of library and information services is changing significantly and is moving parallel with technological developments and substantial

changes are taking place in library and information centres as well as products and services offered therein. These changes however are being engineered by the waves of ICT with the potential of placing higher demands on library and information science professionals (Anyanwu, Uche and Ossai-Onah, 2014). To them there is need for re-designing and transforming library and information centres and its services to meet the demands of contemporary societies. As it is now, we cannot afford to use the same old methods and strategies of offering services to library clientele and expect them to be effective. The new information age has brought about improved knowledge delivery, processing of information, precision, good time management and improved network system. Furthermore, information is also called data and databases are created and made accessible online via the Internet and other machine readable formats. Search engines are made accessible to the public. In view of this, conventional libraries seem to be giving way to hybrid and virtual libraries. (otherwise called libraries without walls or paperless libraries) accessing or developing digital collections alongside print-based collections Onuoha, Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah, & Amaechi (2015) argued that if we must innovate and create avenues for successful change that will culminate in efficient library service delivery, we must embrace information and communications technology. The era of confining ourselves to ancient forms of librarianship are gone, if there must be a shift in services offered, there must first be a shift in our professional mind-set. Library and information professionals must be ready for change. Demands for change are both external and internal and as we have seen, outside factors include legislation, technology, socio-economic forces, the political agenda, etc., while those from inside include re-orientation, the new function of libraries, leaders and reorganization (Tam and Robertson, 2002). They further buttressed that however, change does not happen by itself; people make it happen. To be successful, change has to incorporate the mission, goals and objectives of the organisation. Simultaneous changes in structures, systems and people will lead to a change in the culture of the organisation. This study seek to examine the challenges and impediments of providing library and information services for nation development in Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of the study is to examine the challenges and impediments of providing library and information services for nation development. The specific purposes are to:

1. Examine the kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria.
2. Examine the kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria.
3. Determine the effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria.
4. Determine the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria.
5. Explore the strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research guided the study

1. What are the kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria?
2. What are the kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria?
4. What are the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria?
5. What are the strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and

information services on nation development in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. A total of seventy five (75) comprising of ten (10) professional and support staff and sixty five (65) current registered users of the library under study formed the target population of the study. The reason for the researcher using the entire population for the study was due to the small number. This is in line with the accretion of Bernard (2012) which states that if a population of a study is less than two hundred (200), the entire number of the population should be used. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Questions 1: What are the kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria

S/No	Item	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Textbooks	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
2	Handbook	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
3	Directories	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
4	Dictionaries	4.50	0.50	**Agree**
5	Magazines/Newspapers/Bulletins	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
6	Atlases	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
7	Encyclopaedias	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
8	CD Rom	2.75	0.50	**Agree**
9	Computers	4.00	0.57	**Agree**
10	E-library	2.50	2.57	**Agree**
11		3.50	0.57	**Agree**

Source: **Field survey, 2022.**

Table 1 shows mean response of the kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria. From table 1, the respondents indicated that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 are kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria. In essence all

the items were identified by respondent as kinds of library and information resources available for national development in Nigeria.

Questions 2: What are the kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria

S/No	Item	$\overline{X}$	Std. Deviation	Decision
12	Reference services	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
13	Serials services management	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
14	Bibliographic services	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
15	Circulation Services	4.50	0.50	**Agree**
16	Technical Services	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
17	Acquisition Services	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
18	Marketing of Library Services	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
19	Bindery/Maintenance Services	2.75	0.57	**Agree**
20	ICT Related services	4.00	2.57	**Agree**
21	Inter-Library Loan Services	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
22	Reprographic services	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
23	Management of Thesis / Dissertation	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
24	Provision of special collection services	4.50	0.50	**Agree**
25	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
26	Institutional Repositories Services	3.50	1.00	**Agree**
27	Research and Training Services	3.00	0.57	**Agree**
28	Embedded Library Services	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
29	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	3.50	0.50	**Agree**

Source: **Field survey, 2022.**

Table 2 shows mean response of the kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria. From table 2, the respondents indicated that items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,

20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 are kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria. In essence all the items were identified by respondent as kinds of library and information service available for national development in Nigeria.

Questions 3: What are the effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria

S/No	Item	$\overline{X}$	Std. Deviation	Decision
30	Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
31	Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing.	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
32	Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
33	Make certain that headlines, news teases and promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites and quotations do not misrepresent.	4.50	0.50	**Agree**
34	Never distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity is always permissible.	2.75	0.57	**Agree**
35	Avoid misleading re-enactments or staged news events. If re-enactment is necessary to tell a story, label it.	4.00	2.57	**Agree**
36	Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public.	3.50	0.00	**Agree**

Source: **Field survey, 2022.**

Table 3 shows mean response of effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria. From table 3, the respondents indicated that items 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 are effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria. In essence all the items were identified by respondent as effects of library and information services provided to enhance national development in Nigeria.

Questions 4: What are the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on national development in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on national development in Nigeria

S/No	Item	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation	Decision
37	Inadequate fund	3.00	1.00	**Agree**
38	Inadequate awareness of the library	3.50	0.57	**Agree**
39	Inadequate man power	3.50	0.00	**Agree**
40	Poor staff welfare	4.50	0.50	**Agree**
41	Lack of staff training and development	2.75	0.57	**Agree**
42	Inadequate power supply	4.00	2.57	**Agree**
43	Lack of functional E-library and internet facilities	3.00	1.00	**Agree**

Source: **Field survey, 2022.**

Table 4 shows mean response of the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on national development in Nigeria. From table 4, the respondents indicated that items 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43 are challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on national development in Nigeria.

Questions 5: What are the strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation responses of respondents on the strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria

S/No		x (Mean)	Std. Deviation	Decision
44	Provision of adequate funding	3	1	Agree
45	Provision of relevant and functional ICT facilities	3.5	0.57	Agree
46	Attendance to conferences relevant to the profession	3.5	0	Agree
47	Formulation of viable library policies	4.5	0.5	Agree
48	Mentoring / coaching of younger librarians by their seniors	2.75	0.57	Agree
49	Passionate approach to library services	4	2.57	Agree
50	Formulation of viable ICT policies	3	1	Agree
51	Retraining of Library and Information Practitioners	3	1	Agree
52	Introduction of Training the Trainer programmes	3.5	0.57	Agree

Source: **Field survey, 2022.**

Table 5 shows mean response of the strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria. From table 5, the respondents indicated that items 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52 are strategies that will address the challenges confronting the provision of library and information services on nation development in Nigeria

CONCLUSION

The emergence of information and communication technologies has taken a leap forward for academic libraries. ICT has improved access, research and innovation. This means that it has become a very useful tool in academic libraries whose role is to support teaching, learning and research. As a result, professional librarians should benefit from the power of ICTs to ensure that university libraries are reorganized to be ICT-compatible and remain the center of provision, production and dissemination of ICT information. Information specialists must be well informed about new inventions in the field of ICT. This profession leads a number of people from different fields such as engineering, telecommunications, computers, electronics and other fields. The major problem hindering the provision of library and information services were inadequate fund, irregular power supply, inadequate infrastructure like photocopier, computers, air conditioner for the marketing of library services, unavailability of staff, low computer literacy among staff, lack of professional training in marketing, under staffing, limited media access among others. Librarians can partner with other professionals to develop new technologies. Libraries need more than ever to become more important in the digital society
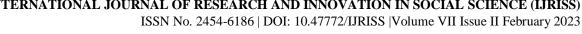
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made

1. Training of academic librarians should be a priority. This is because the success or failure of the library service depends on the staff.
2. Resources for staff training and development should not be manipulated at universities and should be disclosed as needed. Experience has shown that training staff are sometimes absent due to insufficient funds.

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