
ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY: THE SERVICES AND ROLES IN STUDENT EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Academic library usage is mostly influenced by users' awareness and resources of the library. Understanding information needs as well as how students use libraries is critical for meeting their roles and service needs efficiently. Academic libraries are social institutions created to conserve knowledge, preserve cultural heritage, and provide information for educational and research purposes. Academic libraries are established to cater to the information needs of different groups of people in society to improve educational development. The study concluded that the academic library has become vital and indispensable in providing information. An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution and serves two complementary purposes: to support the curriculum and research of the university faculty and students. In educational development, new libraries' roles and services are necessary to adjust to the changes and needs of a university. Academic libraries have a critical role and services to play in order to provide these learners with adequate library services. However, librarians accept that students encounter several problems in using the library services, including language and communication problems, adapting to a new educational development, the library system, and other cultural changes. One of the recommendations made was that academic librarians should provide information to support all key operators such as acquisition, circulation control, and serial management to enable users to find the information they want quickly and easily.

KEYWORDS: Academic Library, Students and Educational Development

Introduction

Academic libraries are social institutions created to conserve knowledge, preserve cultural heritage, and provide information for educational and research purposes. Academic libraries are established to cater to the information needs of

different groups of people in society to improve educational development. Academic libraries play a role in acquiring higher education to fulfil the objectives of their institutions. Students at university level require library facilities for mastering the subject matter, techniques, and skills, etc., which cannot be provided inside the classroom. An academic library is a collection of multiple sources and services to support teaching, learning, and research activities. In an academic institution, library resources depend on educational and research supplies (Siddiqua, Ansari, & Ansari, 2021). According to Krolak (2006), libraries help in finding, using, and interpreting information that unlocks the door for future opportunities and enduring learning; literacy enrichment; knowledgeable citizenship; recreation; creative imagination; conducting research; critical thinking; and empowerment in a progressively complex world. Stojanovski, & Papić, (2012) noted that it is of crucial importance for every academic library to present information-seeking tools through functional and user-centric information services. The educational development of new libraries' services is necessary to adjust to the changes and needs of a university. Open source content, social networks, cloud computing, and other emerging trends will have an impact on the evolution of library services.

Academic library usage is mostly influenced by users' awareness and resources of the library. Understanding information needs as well as how students use libraries is critical for meeting their roles and service needs efficiently. The academic library plays a crucial role in educational development. The importance of libraries is stressed by Wang and Shieh (2006), who maintain that libraries should be concerned with bringing satisfactory services when offering information and data to readers even though they are non-profit organizations. The role of library services is key in providing unhindered access to essential resources for economic and cultural advancement. In doing so, they contribute effectively to the educational development and maintenance of intellectual freedom, safeguarding democratic values and universal civil rights (Agboke, 2019). They encourage social inclusion by striving to serve all those in their user communities regardless of age, gender, economic or employment status, literacy or technical skills, cultural or ethnic origin, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability. Rodrigues and Mandrekar (2020) stated that libraries play an important role as a reliable and beneficial information provider in students' academic success and performance. A library is considered an integral component of any educational system. It plays a vital role in the improvement of academic achievement. However, the aim of this study is to investigate the assessment of academic libraries' services and roles in student educational development.

Concept of Library

A library refers to a place in which literary, musical, artistic, or reference materials (such as books, manuscripts, recordings, or films) are kept for use but not for sale. Any evaluation project presupposes a view of the nature and objectives of a library. Cossette (2011) sees the library as a documentation system that gathers, organizes, retrieves, and disseminates recorded information with the aim of communicating knowledge to its

users. Such a system pursues objectives in the documentation field proper corresponding to its customers' priority information needs. A library is a place set apart to contain books, periodicals, and other material for reading, viewing, listening, study, or reference, as a room, set of rooms, or building where books may be read or borrowed (Dictionary, 2022). It is also a collection of manuscripts, publications, and other materials for reading, viewing, listening, studying, or referencing. A library is a collection of information, sources, resources, and services, organised for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, or a private individual. In the more traditional sense, it means a collection of books (New World Encyclopedia, 2022). This collection and services are used by people who choose not to or cannot afford to purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research. The term "library" has itself acquired a secondary meaning: a collection of useful materials for common use, and in this sense is used in fields such as computer science, mathematics and statistics, electronics, and biology.

A library is a collection of materials, books, or media that are accessible for use and not just for display purposes. A library is a physical location or a virtual space that provides physical (hard copies) or digital access (soft copies) to materials. A library's collection can include printed materials and other physical resources in many formats such as DVD, CD, and cassette, as well as access to information, music, or other content held in bibliographic databases (Wikipedia, 2021). Libraries have been around for a very long time and have traditionally been seen as collections of information and services. Libraries have always played a significant role in enabling people to engage with all kinds of information and knowledge resources (Curran, Murray, Norrby, & Christian, 2006). Through the technological development of electronic resources, the means to collect, store, manage, and use widely distributed knowledge resources have become more effective, serving library users even better. However, the word 'library' is derived from the Latin word "libraria", meaning "a book place". It originates from the term "liber," which means "a book". According to Eberhart (2010), a library is a collection of formats that are organized by information professionals or other experts who provide convenient physical, digital, bibliographic, or intellectual access and offer targeted services and programs with the mission of educating, informing, or entertaining a variety of audiences with the goal of stimulating individual learning and advancing society as a whole.

Concept of Academic Library

The academic library in an educational institution also plays a part in supporting the research efforts, and this role is stronger in academic libraries than in public libraries. The library helps to conserve the research potential of the university or college. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) noted that the university library is the heart of the university. This is because the academic health, intellectual vitality, and effectiveness of any university depends largely upon the state of health and excellence of its library, which is its

lifeblood. Singh and Kaur (2009) stressed that preservation and access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of academic libraries alongside supporting the mission of their parent institutions, which is teaching and research. Academic libraries are at the forefront of providing information services to their respective communities, which are comprised of students, lecturers, and researchers, in order to support their teaching, learning, and research needs. Scholars have emphasized the crucial role of academic libraries in research and scholarship in institutions of higher learning. Many times, academic libraries are referred to as the heart or nerve centres of institutions of higher learning where all academic activities revolve. According to Fabunmi (2002), academic libraries are operationally defined as organized collections of information resources (print and non-print) that form an integral part of tertiary institutions. In essence, academic libraries provide resources to support the teaching and research activities of their parent institutions.

An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution and serves two complementary purposes: to support the curriculum and research of the university faculty and students (Curzon & Quinonez-Skinner, 2009). An academic library is a library that serves an institution of higher learning, such as a college or a university library, in secondary and primary schools. It is also a designated place, physical or digital, set aside to house scholarly research materials and materials supporting the academic, university, or college community and curriculum. According to Wikipedia (2021), academic libraries are generally located on college and university campuses and primarily serve the students and faculty of those and other academic institutions. Some academic libraries, especially those at public institutions, are accessible to members of the general public in whole or in part. Academic libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnic institutions, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology, and also research institutes (Akporhonor, 2005). The Academic Library provides an equitable approach to information for students to use in their daily work, whether their purpose is for academic success, to solve problems or to create new knowledge. However, an academic library provides a quiet and social space for meeting and studying, providing support services and circulating materials that assist academic study.

Academic Library Services

Academic library services refer to all the necessary services provided by libraries for academic success. To facilitate academic success, academic libraries must provide access to a broad range of information resources. Some of the services provided by the academic library may include:

Bibliographic Verification Services: This service involves the provision of facts about publications rather than people, events or organizations. In providing this service, the reference librarian searches his bibliographic tools, such as indexes, bibliographies, catalogues, etc., to verify that users' information about a document (i.e., bibliographic

publication) is correct and complete. This service is very important because it is evident that students, scholars, publishers, authors, and the general public sometimes miss some bibliographic information about some items they cite (Umoh, 2017). Information about publication data, correct names of authors, etc., is sometimes wrongly cited. This service is therefore provided to assist users in verifying any such information.

Cycling and Lending Services: One of the most important services provided by academic libraries to their patrons is cycling and lending. These services are offered to the library's thronging user community, which consists of students, staff, and other potential customers who are beyond the academic setting, such as the local residents in the area where the library is located. The academic library provides these services by way of providing information resources that can cater for their endeavours.

Reprographic Services: Photocopying is the most frequently requested element of user services in academic libraries. Information resources such as reference works, rare books, theses, periodicals, or heavily used items which are not normally loaned may be photocopied (Umoh, 2017). Adhering strictly to copyright laws and supplies to students, some even permit the photocopying of personal documents or private notes. In addition, certain libraries, especially academic libraries, are responsible for giving binding services to their users provided that the binding unit is not overburdened with the library's official work.

Reference Service: Academic libraries provide qualitative services to their users by means of answering questions over the telephone, responding via the web or by email, and answering reference questions by means of meeting face-to-face. Connell (2009) noted that academic libraries also play some important roles with regard to reference services for their users, e.g., to assist users, to help readers make the best selections from the universe of recorded information, and to justify the existence of the library by demonstrating its value to those who support it. Reference services for library users often involve not only answering specific questions but also personalized instruction in the methods of identifying and locating research information resources (Umar, 2008). Databases, bibliographies, and other aids are designed to introduce library users to the information resources the library provides and to guide them in finding the research resources to further enrich the pool of available information resources. Referral services provided by academic library staff introduce the wide variety of information resources in the library system and beyond, connecting the users with branch or specialized libraries and other campus supportive services including academic, financial, writing, and counselling services.

Concept of Educational Development

Educational development refers to a key lever for ensuring institutional quality and supporting institutional change. It is a growing and vibrant field of helping colleges and universities function effectively as teaching and learning communities (Felten, Kalish,

Pingree, & Plank, 2007). Educational development is described as being broader than faculty development in that it encompasses instructional, curriculum, organizational, and some aspects of faculty development. In another sense, the term was narrower in that it focused on the teaching domain, as opposed to all aspects of academic career development (Bédard, Clement, & Taylor, 2010).

Educational development has been remarkably enhanced by academic libraries. Libraries serve social and intellectual roles in bringing together people and ideas. This is distinct from the practical role of sharing resources in that libraries provide a physical place for teachers and learners to meet outside the structure of the classroom, thus allowing people with different perspectives to interact in a knowledge space that is both larger and more general than that shared by any single discipline or affinity group (National Library, 2017). Browsing a catalog in a library provides a global view for people engaged in specialized study and offers opportunities for serendipitous insights or alternative views. In many respects, libraries serve as centers of interdisciplinarity—places shared by learners from all disciplines.

Roles of Academic Libraries in Student's Educational Development

The role of the academic library is to serve the mission of the system under which it has been created, which includes community colleges, technical colleges, junior colleges, 4-year colleges, and universities. The support of teaching requires material for class readings and for student papers. In the past, the material for class readings, intended to supplement lectures as prescribed by the instructor, has been called reserves. In the period before electronic resources became available, the reserves were supplied as actual books or as photocopies of appropriate journal articles (John, 2013). Traditionally, one copy of a book was made available for each 10 students—this is practical for large classes only if paperback copies are available and the books are reused from term to term. Another role is to provide a service of reference and lending materials appropriate to the needs of the staff and students of the institution. The academic library provides education, and this means that it should be used as a dynamic instrument for explaining and expanding the horizons of knowledge. Khanna (2007) notes that it exists to feed and nourish the intellect of students and staff and also invites all those who enter its portals to fully participate in its intellectual and cultural life. Modern academic libraries range from conserving knowledge, teaching, research and development, publication to promote academic visibility, extension services, and interpretation. Beenham and Harrison (1990), as cited by John (2013), the main objectives of an academic library are to serve the needs of the academic community, to provide reference materials at appropriate levels, to provide study areas for users, to provide a lending service appropriate to the different types of users, and to provide an active information service.

The library is the principal instrument for the conservation of recorded knowledge. Proper fulfilment of this role provides a sound basis for the transmission and advancement of

knowledge. A library is a house of knowledge that stores various information materials and supports the academic programs of its users through the provision of relevant reading materials. The library has to collect materials published and unpublished, print and non-print, and in some depth and globally in almost all fields of knowledge. The value of the records of human communication lies in the information they contain (Ojedokun 2007). As a learning organization, libraries should provide strong leadership in knowledge management. Unlike those business organizations whose goal for knowledge management is competitive advantage, most public, academic, and research libraries, with the exception of company libraries (which may be known as corporate libraries, special libraries, or knowledge centers), have a different orientation and value. Instead of competition, internal use only, and little sharing of knowledge with others outside, the most important mission of public, academic, and research libraries is to expand access to knowledge for their users. Libraries, charged with this mission, should set a high goal for knowledge management.

A library is fundamentally an organized set of resources, which includes human services as well as the entire spectrum of media (e.g., text, video, hypermedia). Libraries have physical and intellectual components such as space, equipment, and storage media; intellectual components such as collection policies that determine what materials will be included; organizational schemes that determine how the collection is accessed; and people who manage the physical and intellectual components and interact with users to solve information problems. At least three roles in learning are played by libraries. First, they serve a practical role in sharing expensive resources. Physical resources such as books and periodicals, films and videos, software and electronic databases, and specialized tools such as projectors, graphics equipment, and cameras are shared by a community of users. Human resources—librarians (also called media specialists or information specialists) support instructional programs by responding to the requests of teachers and students (responsive service) and initiating activities for teachers and students (proactive services). Responsive services include maintaining reserve materials, answering reference questions, providing bibliographic instruction, developing media packages, recommending books or films, and teaching users how to use materials. Proactive services include selective dissemination of information to faculty and students, initiating thematic events, collaborating with instructors to plan instruction, and introducing new instructional methods and tools. In these ways, libraries serve to allow instructors and students to share expensive materials and expertise (National Library 2017).

Libraries serve a cultural role in preserving and organizing artifacts and ideas. Great works of literature, art, and science must be preserved and made accessible to future learners. Although libraries have traditionally been viewed as facilities for printed artifacts, primary and secondary school libraries often also serve as museums and laboratories. Libraries preserve objects through careful storage procedures, policies of borrowing and use, and repair and maintenance as needed. In addition to preservation,

libraries ensure access to materials through indexes, catalogs, and other finding aids that allow learners to locate items appropriate to their needs.

Digital libraries extend such inter-disciplinary by making diverse information resources available beyond the physical space shared by groups of learners. One of the greatest benefits of digital libraries is that they bring together people with formal, informal, and professional learning missions. Because of the exponential growth in human knowledge in a variety of formats, libraries need to develop their resource access and sharing strategies from printed to electronic and digital resources. Restricted by limited funding, technology, staff, and space, libraries must carefully analyze the needs of their users and seek to develop cooperative acquisition plans to meet these needs. A great amount of expert knowledge should be possessed by library staff so as to serve their users, both inside and outside the libraries. The knowledge and accumulated experience of library staff members form the intellectual assets of any library and should be valued and shared. An organizational culture for the sharing of knowledge and expertise should be established with appropriate rewards and incentives. Those staff members who share their explicit and tacit knowledge and experiences through writing, publishing, lecturing, tutoring, or mentoring should be appropriately recognized and rewarded. According to Lawrence and Giles (2009), knowledge must be renewed and expanded to prevent it from becoming stagnant.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the academic library has become vital and indispensable in providing information. An academic library is a library that is attached to a higher education institution and serves two complementary purposes: to support the curriculum and research of the university faculty and students. In educational development, new libraries' roles and services are necessary to adjust to the changes and needs of a university. Academic libraries have a critical role and services to play in order to provide these learners with adequate library services. However, librarians accept that students encounter several problems in using the library services, including language and communication problems, adapting to a new educational development, the library system, and other cultural changes.

Recommendations

1. Academic librarians should be made to provide information to support all key operators such as acquisition, circulation control, and serial management to enable users to find the information they want quickly and easily.
2. The government should improve academic library guides with resources and reflection questions to support the improvement of educational development.
3. Academic library services should be planned to cater to the present and future users' needs, demands, and expectations for the development of education.

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