

Best Practices for Repositioning, towards Global Competitiveness in Academic Libraries of Privately-Owned Universities (ALPUS) in Nigeria

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Abstract

Information is a bed rock of any developing society and that is the core purpose of university libraries. This enables staff and student to learn and teach students not just in theory but in practice. However, without well-established libraries the above role may not be implemented. Therefore, there is need for globally competitive libraries in academic institutions especially in privately-owned academic libraries where the cost of tuition is relatively high compared to federal and state owned universities. This is to ensure that lecturers gain access to relevant up-to-date information to teach students and for graduates to meet the demands of dynamic work environment. This paper seeks to examine the various bottlenecks in meeting the above by academic libraries of private owned universities and proffers the way forward.

Keywords: academic libraries, private universities, modern libraries, ICT for libraries

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is the bed rock of any developing society and that is the core purpose of university libraries. In this 21st Century, information has received a widespread acceptance as the essential feature of production, consumption and exchange (Okoye, 2012). This aids teaching, learning and research not just in theory but in practice. However, without well-established libraries the above roles may not be implemented. Therefore, there is need for globally competitiveness POALs in order for lecturers to gain access to relevant, up-to-date information to teach students and for graduates to meet the demands of dynamic work environment.

The Library occupies a central and primary place serving the functions of teaching, learning and research in the creation of new knowledge, promotion of current information in professional practice and transmission to posterity of the learning and culture of the present and past age, (Lawal, 2004)

In repositioning private owned academic libraries for the 21st century, there is the need to look at the characteristics and features of an academic library that stands a chance in effective service delivery in this 21st century.

Going by the increasing impact of information and communications technology in the different activities of our everyday life especially as it concerns the growing need for information by academic researchers and others, the 21st century academic library is a library environment that has fully integrated information and communications technology in functions and service delivery.

The 21st century academic library is a multimedia hub of information resources which has the three core functions of library practice: information acquisition, organization and dissemination fully automated.

In order to reposition privately owned academic libraries towards achieving excellence in our global village, ALPUs must seek to follow global trends for effective service delivery.

2. FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR REPOSITIONING

- 2.1 SOFTWARE/HARDWARES:** constant upgrade of software and hardware i.e. processing, content management and hardware devices technology advances with each passing day. There is urgent need for infrastructural (software and hardware) upgrade as those acquired by the universities often become obsolete.
- 2.2 FUNDING:** increased funding, revised and improved budget for acquisition and maintenance of library resources. Budgetary provisions should be respected to meet with incurred expenditures. It is recommended that 15% which is higher than the prescribed 10% of recurrent annual budget by parent institution.
- 2.3 INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE:** in the face of dwindling finances especially in private owned universities with less capital investment than the government owned institutions, there is need for administrators of ALPUs to look within and strive to generate revenue to aid them in meeting the demands of running such institutions effectively. Nigerian academic libraries derive the greater part of

their funds from the government (both Federal and State; Yetunde, 2008)

- 2.4 **STAFFING:** there is need for employment for adequate number of professional that is highly skilled in the use of ICT for library services. Such staff should be constantly trained in the engagement of ICT for relevant library services
- 2.5 **INTERNET CONNECTIVITY:** the current provision of internet connectivity for library functions and service delivery is far below what is expected of most university libraries due to cost of bandwidth procurement. Bandwidth management should be integrated into the core objectives of the university in other to optimally distribute the available internet resources. Also, there should be increase in internet infrastructure.
- 2.6 **LIBRARY PORTAL:** in other to effectively disseminate information to library users to facilitate teaching and learning, there is need for institutional library portals that would hold all the electronic resources of the university library where users can access information 24/7
- 2.7 **READER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT:** in other to ensure that the library remain and integral part of the institution, the organizational pattern of environment for study and research has to change in other to effectively cater to various study and research needs of its different users. Functional cooling systems, the right lighting for a study and research environment, window blinds, group reading and discussion areas, audio visual study units, e.t.c.
- 2.8 **ELECTRONIC RESOURCES SUBSCRIPTION:** in other for staff and student to take advantage in the growing resources available for academic research, there is need for subscription to more resource databases. This will ensure that the users are up-to-date with latest information and technological advances.
- 2.9 **CENTRE FOR ENGAGEMENT:** The library should be equipped to organize readers club or forum that will facilitate engagement and collaborations among students. This would not only boost students' reading culture but ultimately improve grades.
- 3.0 **ELEARNING:** The library has a huge role to play in facilitating lecturer-student collaboration towards facilitating electronic learning which has become the new shift in pedagogy globally. This will help to produce more knowledgeable graduates in light of learning differences amongst undergraduate and graduate students.

3. CONCLUSION:

The role of libraries in teaching and research can never be over emphasized as libraries are the bed rock of effective teaching and research. Therefore institutions should seek to embrace the use of ict and integrate fully into the various sections of library practices. This will enable such libraries to gain from the vast pool of academic information and resources available globally and will also make scholars up-to-date in their various fields of study.

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Biography

Aghama, Eghe-Ohenmwem (B.Sc. M.Sc. Computer Science) is an assistant librarian in the research and selective dissemination of information unit of bells university of technology, electronic library. She was born

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