Developmental Problems and Challenges of New Multi-Campus University Libraries: The Osun State University Library Experience.

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Abstract

This paper discusses the developmental problems and challenges of new multi-campus University Libraries with focus on Osun State University Library.

Data for the study was collected through direct observations, extensive review of the University publications, speeches by pioneer Principal Officers of the University, records from the Corporate Affair Office of the University and interviews (with pioneer staff of the Library). It identifies lack of administrative head, heavy financial burden, libraries that are scattered in different towns that are kilometers apart, inadequate staff, duplication of vital library resources, problem of interconnectivity, and inoperability of some good policies as problems confronting multi-campus university libraries. It concludes that the problems notwithstanding, multi-campus university libraries are forging ahead as result of goodwill of the management of the university, sheer determination and dedication of staff members. It recommends that the proprietors of multi-campus university libraries should always get qualified university librarians for their libraries from the onset; that libraries and Library administrators should guide against actions that may make them lose good staff; and that they should be ready to support the libraries in terms of funding.

Key words: university libraries, multi-campus university libraries, Osun state, developmental problems and challenges.

Introduction

Osun State is an inland State in south-western Nigeria. Osun State University is a conventional multi-campus university established by the Osun State Government of Nigeria in September 2007. A multiple-campus university is a single university that has more than one campus. As a multi-campus University, Osun State University operates a collegiate system comprising eight colleges (reduced to seven later) in six (6) campuses in the six (6) geopolitical zones of the State. For this reason the University Library is also decentralized, there is a Library in each of the six campuses namely Osogbo, Okuku, Ikire, Ejigbo, Ipetu-Ijesa, and Ifetedo. The main Library is at Osogbo and it co-ordinates the activities of all other campus libraries and ensures that they function effectively in supporting teaching, learning and research.

There are many problems facing new multi-campus university libraries in Nigeria. Different libraries have different experiences and there is the tendency for the staff of those libraries to be thinking that their experiences (problems) are limited to their own libraries. Moreover potential proprietors of multi-campus universities would need information on risks and opportunities for multi-campuses. Librarians who are taking appointments as heads of multi-campus academic libraries would also need information of what they are into. It is against this background that this paper sets out to identify and discuss problems of newly established Osun State multi-campus university Library.

The specific objectives are:
1. To review problems and challenges that confronted Osun State University Library at inception.
2. To give recommendations on how to avoid the problems or to overcome those ones that are unavoidable in future.

Developmental problems and challenges that confronted Osun State University Library inception

The developmental problems that seriously affected the University Library at its early years are as discussed below:

1.   Lack of substantive administrative head for the Library

The principal officers (Vice-chancellor, Registrar, University Librarian and Bursar) and provosts of colleges were appointed in August 2007 before official commencement of academic activities in September 2007. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Recruitment of Principal Officers and Provost of Colleges at the inception of the University.

No.	Post	State of affairs	Date
1.	Vice – Chancellor	Appointed	01/08/20007
2.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Appointed	01/08/2007
3.	Registrar	Appointed	01/09/2007 (assumed duty 5 November 2007)
4.	University Librarian	Advertised twice, but no qualified candidate to fill the position	
5.	Bursar	Appointed	01/08/2007 (assumed duty 2 October 2007)
6.	Provost, College Sc. Eng. & Tech.	Appointed	01/08/2007
7.	Provost College of Health Sciences	Appointed	01/08/2007
8.	Provost, College of Management and Social Sciences	Appointed	01/08/2007
9.	Provost, College of Human R D	Appointed	01/08/2007
10.	Provost, College of Humanities and Culture	Appointed	1/8/07
11.	Provost, College of Education	Appointed	01/08/2007

Source: Adapted from *For the record: Osun State University, 2007 – 2012, page 22. (A publication of the Corporate Affairs Unit Office of the Vice-Chancellor).*

Table 1 above shows that a University Librarian was not appointed for the library at its inception. The Management claimed that it could not get qualified candidate to occupy the position when the Principal Officers were been recruited in the year 2007. That confirmed the finding of Hisle (2002) that recruitment, education and retention of librarians are among top issues facing academic libraries.

Akinrinade (2012) acknowledged that the difficulty in filling the position of the University Librarian initially greatly affected the development of the University Library, in its early years.
Lack of a substantive University Librarian affected the Library in the following areas:

i.   Recruitment and assumption of duty of library staff.
The pioneer library staff were recruited in year 2007 as shown in Table 2 below.
Table 2: *Recruitment and assumption of duty of library staff in year 2007.*

Position	No appointed	No. assumed duty
Librarians	10	3
Library Officer	Nil	Nil
Library Assistant	Nil	Nil
Library Porter	Nil	Nil
Total	**10**	**3**

Source: *Corporate Affair Unit Office, UNIOSUN 2012.*
Table 2 above revealed that ten (10) professional Librarians were appointed for six (6) campus Libraries of the University, no Library Officer, no Library Assistant and Library Porter were appointed. A sitting University Librarian could have advised the Management of the University better on the necessity of paraprofessional and non-professional staff.

ii.   Library Infrastructural Development
The University enjoyed rapid infrastructural growth in its early years. Hereunder are seventy-six (76) completed major physical structures of the University in its first five years of existence across all the colleges.

Table 3: *Completed projects of the University between year 2007-2012 across all the   Campuses.*

EJIGBO CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
1	College Building	7	External Electrification
2	3-Bedroom chalet	8	Block of 8classrooms
3	Block of 8 Class rooms	9	Reticulation of 2 semi-industrial Boreholes
4	6-bedroom studio Apartment	10	Meteorological Weather Station
5	College Building	11	Glass House
6	Gate & Gate House		

IPETU-IJESA CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
12	College Building	18	Reticulation of 2 semi-industrial Boreholes
13	Health Centre	19	ICT Laboratory
14	3-bedroom chalet	20	External Electrification
15	6-bedroomstudio Apartment	21	200m Block Wall Fence
16	Gate & Gate House	22	Bukataria
17	Block of 8 Class rooms		

OKUKU CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
24	College Building, MSS	32	6-bedroomstudio Apartment
25	Gate & Gate House	33	External Electrification
26	ICT Laboratory	34	Asphaltic Road
27	Health Centre	35	ICT Laboratory
28	College Building, HRD	36	Reticulation of 2 semi-industrial Boreholes
29	Block of 8 Class rooms	37	Meteorological Weather Station
30	3-Bedroom chalet	38	Bukataria
31	Block Wall Fence	39	GIS Equipment

IFETEDO CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
40	College Building	45	200m Block Wall Fence
41	6-unit 1-BR Studio Apartment	46	External Electrification
42	3-Bedroom chalet	47	Block of 8 Class rooms
43	Health Centre	48	Reticulation of Boreholes
44	Gate & Gate House		

IKIRE CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
49	College Building	54	3-Bedroom chalet
50	Gate & Gate House	55	Block Wall Fence
51	ICT Laboratory	56	6 Bedroom Studio Apartment
52	Health Centre	57	External Electrification
53	2 Blocks of 8 Class rooms	58	Sinking borehole
		59	Bukataria

OSOGBO MAIN CAMPUS

No.	Project	No.	Project
60	College Building, SET	69	Gate & Gate House
61	Administrative Building	70	Asphaltic Road
62	ICT Laboratory	71	University Auditorium
63	Health Centre	72	Animal House for H S
64	2 Blocks of 8 Class rooms	73	Anatomy Lab
65	Block Wall Fence	74	Bukataria
66	4-Bedroom chalet	75	Reticulation of 3 semi-industrial Boreholes
67	H ST Laboratory	76	External Electrification
68	6 Bedroom Studio Apartment		

Sources: For the Record: Osun State University 2007 -2012 pages 127 – 130.

Table 3 above shows that no library building was completed in all the six Campuses of the University in its first five years of existence. The major reason why the Library did not benefit much from the unprecedented infrastructural development of the University was lack of a substantive University Librarian. A female Senior Librarian, who happened to be the most senior staff of the Library during the first three years of the University could only but agree with any decision of the Management. The Library could best be described as an orphan at the time.

iii.   Library staff placement (Salary and grade level)

Amongst the four (4) Senior Librarian that were appointed in year 2007, only two of them assumed duty. Then the Management felt it over-rated them because they didn't have a doctorate degree. It based its assumption on the premise that no academic staff was appointed to the position of Lecturer I without a Doctorate degree. The Management, in its wisdom started deducting huge amount of money from their salary monthly. Eventually one of the Librarians resigned his appointed. But he was immediately given appointment at University of Ado-Ekiti as a Principal Librarian.

Similarly, in year 2010, the Management appointed Six (6) Library Officers for the Library (to be distributed among the six Campus libraries). They were placed on CONTISS 6. But it happened that some of them had ND/HND while others had University Diploma in Library Science. After some time, the Management came up again with the issue of "over-rating". If felt that staff with ND/HND should be given lower salary grade, it eventually down-graded them and asked them to refund the "excess" salary they had collected. But the standard is clear; the grade level of a Library Officer in a university library is CONTISS 6. Such a thing would not have happened if there were a sitting University Librarian.

2.   Heavy financial burden (of developing six libraries at the same time)

Library development requires money, more so when a university has to develop six campus libraries at the same time. Table 4 below shows costs of putting each of college libraries building in place.

Table 4: On-going library building projects and stages of completion, value, amount paid and outstanding as at year 2012.

No.	Campus	Contract Sum (₦)	Amount paid (₦)	Amount Outstanding (₦)	Stage of work
1.	Ejigbo	183,781,017.62	158,231,923.56	25,549,094.06	90%
2.	Ipetu-Ijesa	197,145,311.26	105,455,972.56	91,689,338.70	58%
3.	Ifetedo	137,942,118.30	108,897,448.36	29,044,669.94	85%
4.	Ikire	190,272,920.59	150,335,605	39,937,316.02	90%
5.	Okuku	Nil	Nil	Nil	0%
6.	Osogbo	Nil	Nil	Nil	0%

Source: *For the Record: Osun State University, 2007 -2012*, page 130.

Table 4 above shows that library buildings alone will cost the University billons of naira. Aside buildings, vital resources like furniture and reference materials (e.g. encyclopedias, dictionaries) have to be duplicated in all the College Libraries. Moreover each of the College Libraries must have enough staff to be able to run shift. Staff members from satellite campuses who travel to the Main Library at Osogbo for meetings have to be paid travelling allowance. All these place very heavy financial burden on the system. All these are in agreement with Moodie's (2012) position that hefty start-up cost and complexity of managing a multi-campus system are most significant risks to a University embarking on the multi-site path.

3.   Problem of un-even infrastructural development.

Because of cost implication, the University could not start, complete and equip all its College Libraries at once. Table 5 bellow shows stages of completion of college libraries.

Table 5: Stages of completion of College Library buildings as at February 2014.

No	College Library	State of Work
1.	Osogbo Main Campus	Foundation level
2.	Okuku Campus	Foundation level
3.	Ifetedo	Completed, 2011
4.	Ejigbo	Completed, 2013
5	Ipetu-Ijesa	Completed, 2013
6.	Ikire	Completed, 2014

Source: Survey, February 2014

Table 5 above shows that after six years of existence, the Main campus at Osogbo and the College of Management and Social Sciences at Okuku with highest population of students have no permanent Library buildings. College of Law at Ifetedo got a permanent Library building before all others though with lower student population; Colleges of Agriculture and Education at Ejigbo and Ipetu-Ijesa respectively got permanent Library building after five years of their existence, it is a case of unequal infrastructural development. College libraries with permanent Library building have enough space for their operations whereas others without permanent Library building cannot function optimally for lack of space.

4. Inadequate Staffing

Staff is core component of a library. Table 6 below shows distribution of Library Staff amongst the six campus libraries of the University.

Table 6: Distribution of Library Staff amongst the six Campuses as at February, 2014.

No.	Campus	Librarian	Library Officer	Library Assistant	Library Porter	System Analyst	Total
1.	Osogbo	5	1	5	4	1	**16**
2.	Okuku	1	Nil	3	4	Nil	**8**
3.	Ikire	1	1	1	3	Nil	**6**
4.	Ifetedo	1	1	2	Nil	Nil	**4**
5.	Ipetu-Ijesa	1	1	2	2	Nil	**6**
6.	Ejigbo	Nil	1	2	3	Nil	**6**
	Total	**9**	**5**	**15**	**16**	**1**	**46**

Source: Survey, February 2014.

Table 6 above shows that the Library has nine (9) Librarians, five (5) Library officers, fifteen (15) Library Assistants and sixteen (16) Library Porters, distributed in six campus Libraries at different locations. This is grossly inadequate. The distribution of staff is even more critical. The Main Campus has five (5) Librarians whereas Okuku with highest number of student population has only one librarian. Ejigbo campus Library has no Librarian presently. Ifetedo Library has no Library Porters; it means that the only two Library Assistants on ground will be combining the duties of Porter with theirs. For a single campus library, the above staff strength is fairly alright for a new university. But the multi-campus nature of the University makes the staff situation critical.

5. Problem of job mobility among librarians

It is not healthy for a library to be losing its staff, especially the good ones. But job mobility of librarians is well documented in literature. Table 7 below shows Attraction, recruitment and retention of librarians in the Library.

Table 7a: Attraction, recruitment and retention of librarians 2007-2014

No. recruited	No. retained	No. lost
18	9 (50%)	9 (50%)

Source: Personal interview, 20th February 2014.

Table 7b: Relative period spent by the Librarians that left the Library

No disengaged	Period stayed < 1year	<2years	<3years
9	6 (66.67%)	2 (22.22%)	1 (11.11%)

Source: Personal interview, 20th February, 2014.

Table 7a above shows that with the first six (6) years of its existence, the Library recruited 18 professional Librarians but lost nine (50%) of them.

Table 7b shows that out of nine (9) Librarians that disengaged from the Library, six (6) (66.67%) did not put in up to one year. eight (88.88%) did not wait for confirmation of their appointment before disengaging. It is clear from the two tables that the Librarians are highly mobile. It is also clear that the staff situation (Inadequate) was aggravated by percentage of recruited Librarians that disengaged from the Library. This is in line with the finding of Strothmann & Ohler (2010) that "retention of excellent professional staff while hiring good caliber librarians is hard, retaining them is harder".

6.   Lack of and too much of space

The campus Libraries at Osogbo and Okuku that have no permanent building really have space problem. The Libraries have desks, chairs, books and shelves in abundance, but there were no space to keep them. As the University continues to mount new programmes, students population continues to increase, books are coming into the Library but no space to accommodate them. Whereas campus libraries in Ejigbo, Ifetedo, and Ikire with permanent building have more space to the extent that faculty members wanted to force themselves into the libraries to occupy some of the offices.

7.   A Library with six (6) College Libraries at remote locations in the State.

The five satellite campuses at Okuku, Ikire, Ifetedo, Ipetu-Ijesa and Ejigbo are kilometers away from the Main Campus at Osogbo. Staff from the satellite Campuses will have one thing or the other to do at the Main Campus. For example, meetings, collection of resources and stationery, etc. This comes with cost to both the Library and the staff members. Staff members do go from the Main Campus to teach the Use of Library course in various Colleges. There are a lot of risks involved. The University will also pay transportation allowance.

8.   Problem of Interconnectivity

There is a necessity for Internet connection in the Library to be able to share resources. The Central Library Server is at Osogbo. Once there is Internet problem at Osogbo, none of the Satellite Campuses will be able to access the library's database. This is a serious challenge for the Library.
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HOW THE LIBRARY OVERCAME ITS INITIAL CHALLENGES

The Library overcame its numerous challenges through:

i. Good-will of the University Management and Council

In the year 2010, three years after the inception of the University, the Management team and the Council started to demonstrate goodwill, real passion for the university Library. The Pioneer Council Chairman will come to the Library personally to get first hand information about the problems and need of the Library. He will lead other management team to the Library. The Management attracted a Principal Librarian from Lagos State University (on sabbatical) by the time he left; the management appointed a Deputy University Librarian from Obafemi Awolowo University who really moved the Library forward. The Management was ready to give her all the support she needed. The University continued to release funds for construction of Library buildings in satellite campuses, purchase of books, journals and shelves. When the Deputy University went back to Obafemi Awolowo University to become the University Librarian, the Management attracted a former University Librarian of Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State. The Library Services was automated during 2009/2010 session, KOHA Integrated Library Software was installed, the Library was connected to the Internet and many online data bases were subscribed to. As the Library continues to enjoy the good will of the Management of the University, the Library collection grows from about 520 volumes to about 35,000 volumes. In June 2013, the

Library attracted a substantive University Librarian and the problem of not having a university librarian was solved once and for all. The University Librarian is a great scholar by all standards with requisite experiences, commitment and dedication.

ii. Dedicated staff

At inception in 2007, the three librarians that were allowed to assume duty did virtually all jobs (activities) of libraries – they were the porters, cleaners, security personnel, labourers (carrying loads of books, shelves etc). In the year 2008 more Librarians were allowed to assumed duty, some of them were sent to the College Libraries to start the Library from the scratch – each of them was the cleaners, porters, security personnel, Acquisition Librarian, the catalogers, serials Librarian for respective Libraries. But the joy of it was that they weathered the storm and succeeded. They move the Library forward by the support of the University Management. Some of them will sleep in their Libraries in year 2010 and 2011 during a Nigeria's National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation exercise to make sure the resources that were being bought got to shelves for the NUC visiting teams. They spent their personal money, used their personal vehicles for the works of the Library, just to make sure that the University get full accreditation for all the programmes mounted by the University.

iii. Staff training and development

The Management of the University really helps the Library by developing the capacity of the Library staff through training and retaining.

Library staff attended conferences, workshops and seminars at the expense of the University. Some staff members were sent overseas to attend conferences. The Management brought ICT experts to train Library staff on how to manage and use Integrated Library system. The Management of the University encouraged Library staff to go for further studies. And many of the staff have started their doctorate degrees. These really helped the Library.

National University Commission Accreditation Visit

Indeed, it was the National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation of year 2010 that really turn around the fortune of Library.

The first set of academic programmes of the University was due for accreditation by the NUC in late 2009. The then University Council and the Management having realized the centrality of the Library to a successful accreditation of programmes, were ready to give all that it takes to put a befitting Library in place in all the Colleges. Real funds were released to buy library resources, and other facilities were provided. More staff were appointed. But the money expended on the Library worthies it. The University, till date has full accreditation status for all the programmes it presented.

Recommendations

Based on the problems highlighted above, the following recommendations are made:
1. Potential proprietors of universities should have plans for a university library right from inception.
2. A University Librarian should be appointed for the Library when other principal Officers are being appointed. He or she should be part of the process.
3. Library should have its own budget.
4. Libraries should attract, develop and retain competent professional staff.
5. Libraries should ensure education of newly hired librarians
6. Library administrators should guide against situations that may make them lose good staff.

Conclusion

The Osun State University Library really had great challenges as a multi-campus university at its inception, but the good will of its proprietor and the dedication of its staff sustained it.

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