MANAGERIAL VARIABLES AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the Managerial variables and the provision of Information Resources in the polytechnics in Nigeria. this study has carefully looked at the concept of library information resources, concept of provision of information resources, concept of management and managerial variables and challenges associated managerial variables and information resources provision in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: Stakeholders in Library and Information Science should sponsor research efforts on the influence of managerial variables on the provision of Library Information Resources in Polytechnic and other types of Institutions in Nigeria in order to generate more knowledge in this area which is so crucial to the effective functioning of libraries. Also, stakeholders in Library and Information Science should organize various management training programmes for Polytechnic Librarians and other Staff of the Polytechnic Library performing management functions. Stakeholders in the libraries should improve in internally revenue generation, toward sourcing for external fund even in the face of funding challenges affecting the polytechnic libraries, government should improve on funding and infrastructural resources in the polytechnic libraries, management should improve on the provision of internet connectivity, proper security for information resources, and proper implementation of information resources policy.

Introduction

Polytechnic libraries are repositories of information resources consciously acquired, preserved and made available for the use of members of the parent institution. The essence of polytechnic libraries is to support and enrich polytechnic education by catering for the diverse information

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needs to the students and staff of polytechnics. The fundamental objective of polytechnic education is the training of professionally skilled workers who are supposed to constitute middle-level manpower to drive the national economy. Abdul-Salam (2013). Hence, the services offered by polytechnic libraries are tailored towards the needs of clienteles who comprise students, lecturers, technologists and administrative staff of the institutions. Omekwu and Eruvwe (2014) stated that the services rendered in polytechnic libraries keep widening to include acquisition of books and other media, reference services serials control, cataloguing and classification and then making them available to information seekers. Polytechnic libraries ensure this by selecting and acquiring information materials in accordance with their collection development policies.

Polytechnic libraries, unarguably, remain an inseparable part of polytechnics which provide adequate information required to sustain and promote the intellectual activities of such institutions. According to Sadiq (2016) posits that polytechnic libraries are librbray/library system established, administered and funded by a polytechnic to meet the information, research and curriculum needs of its student, faculty and staff. The polytechnics have libraries whose primary objective is providing literature support for the entire academic, research and extension programmes of the parent institutions. They serve as an extension of teaching and learning activities in polytechnics by providing conducive environment for personal development and access to wide range of educational res [1] required for higher academic achievement. Consequently, polytechnic education is incomplete without the existence of functional polytechnic libraries. The objectives of polytechnic libraries include to provide opportunities for the student to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to access library resources:

To provide a supportive and stimulating environment for student and staff; To encourage all students to reach their full potential as independent learners and develop a positive attitude to

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life-long learning; To foster the enjoyment of reading as a support for a recreational activity to all members of the institution; To support the polytechnics curriculum by providing access to relevant resources for students and staff; To provide resources (as appropriate) to support and develop the recreational interests of the students; To provide opportunities for the students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to access library resources; To develop an awareness in students of the importance of books and other resources as a means of recording and sharing human achievements, failures and aspirations. (Kaduna poly readers guide, 2012).

The Concept of Library Information Resources

The term resource is seen by Noh (2012) as it is something that is available and can be used for support or help. This includes human and materials items available in an environment or in an organization. Library resources are made up of these two components – human and materials. However, the present study on library focuses on information resources available for user's educational and research needs. In line with the above view, Timothy and Katie (2013) collaborated when they defined information resources as " Information and related resources, such as personnel, equipment, funds and information technology." Adewumi (2011) further added that "Information resources are information bearing materials which exist in various format." This was on the other hand corroborated by Haruna and Oyeleka (2010) who recognize library resources as" those materials which enable libraries to carry out functions effectively. They are made up books and other information bearing media." This amount to why Alaribe (2015) Avers that currently library resources are basically sources of information. Traditionally, these resources were mostly books, journals, newspapers and other editorials, and encyclopedias, but with the advent of the internet, digital sources of information have become prevalent. These digital sources of information include, not only online libraries and journals. Online

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encyclopedias like Wikipedia, blogs, video logs like you tube et cetera, These resources are very essential in the attainment of academic institution's overall objectives which usually revolve around the development of national human resources. They are the essential commodities needed for improved productivity of all members of academic community especially the academic staff. (Ani and Edem, 2012). The library resources available in academic libraries are, therefore, expected to be able to meet the information and research needs of all the members of the academic community. Through the inter play of library resources and services, academic staff will obtain the necessary information for their teaching and research output. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) highlights the effectiveness, availability, accessibility and the use on library information resources in their study that, for effective learning process; learners must have access to necessary information materials and resources. These resources might be in tangible (that is printed resources) and intangible (such as electronic resources) format. They express that the librarian is responsible for providing the right information to the right person at the right time.

The Concept of Provision of Information Resources

Provision of information resources in the context of this work is to provide full range of information resources and services necessary to carry out the goals and duties of the institution which the library was established to serve Gwang (2013). Information resources are the different formats of recorded knowledge, including books and journals in hard and soft copies, which libraries select, acquire, organize and then make available for their users. Polytechnic libraries hold rich collections of book, journals and other varieties of information resources in both print and electronic forms, as well as maps, manuscripts, pictures, incunabula and real objects. Provision of information resources makes possible in- house reading as well as lending for use a way from the confines of the library building. In addition, Adewumi (2011) advocated that a

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polytechnic library selects and subscribes to key date-base, a task beyond the competence and economic scope of individual users. It makes them available providing appropriate guidance as to their usage. Moreover, through linkages with other libraries near and far, the polytechnic engages cooperative acquisition and vital information resources, thus saving cost and enhancing its financial ability to purchase more with the fund available.

The Concept of Management and Managerial Variables

Based on above Griffin (2013) management is involve as a set of activities (including planning and decision making, organizing, leading, and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical, and information), with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner. Management is the process of working with people and resources to accomplished organizational goals, the process consists of planning, control, coordination and motivation Williams (2018).

As defined by Kinicki and Williams (2018), 1. The pursuit of organizational goals efficiently and effectively by 2. Integrating the work of people through 3. Planing, organizing, leading, and controlling the organizational resources. Management is the guidance, leadership and direction of a group's efforts towards organizational objectives. Management functions exercised through a set of activities are directed at the organization's human, information, financial and physical resources with the aim of attaining the organization's goals efficiently and effectively.

Without managerial variables, management would be stale and ineffective because managerial variables represent the media for management operations: management works through them. Planning is a process of setting goals for the polytechnic library. It also involves the determination of the activities to be performed within a specified period and the funding

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implications of each. In the view of Lamond (2011), planning is the fundamental management function, which involves deciding beforehand, what is to be done, when it to be done is and who is going to do it. It is an intellectual process which lays down an organization's objectives and develops various courses of action, by which the organization can achieve those objectives. It chalks out exactly, how to attain a specific goal. Planning is nothing but thinking before the action takes place. It helps us to take a peep into the future and decide in advance the way to deal with the situations, which we are going to encounter in future. It involves logical thinking and rational decision making.

Characteristics of planning according to Huimfg (2010), 1. Managerial Function: planning is the first and foremost managerial function provides the base for other functions of the management, i.e. organizing, staffing, directing and controlling as they are performed within the periphery of the plains made. 2. Goal Oriented: it focuses on defining the goals of the organization. 3. Pervasive: pervasive in the sense that it is present in all the segment and is required at all levels of organization. 4. Continuous Process: plans are made for a specific term, say for a month, quarter, year and so on. 5. Intellectual Process: it is a mental exercise at it involves the application on mind. 6. Futuristic: In the process planning we take a sneak peek of the future. Decision Making: decisions are made regarding the choice of alternative courses of action that can be undertaken to reach the goal.

Once the planning function is completed the next major function is organization which follows logically from it and involves the provision of the activities that have to be performed towards achieving the goals and objectives articulated in the plan. In libraries, the activities are usually arranged into departments or units that complement one another by their operations, while the structures of authority, power, accountability and responsibility within the library are

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clearly defined. This enables each staff to know his schedules of duty, superiors, colleagues and subordinates and how to relate to each one in the performance of his duties: in terms of collaboration, reporting or supervision, Timothy and Katie (2013).

The next step after planning is organization according to Haimman (2010). Organization is the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing authority relationships among them. Allen (2011) sees organization as a process of identifying and grouping the work to be performed, defining and delegating responsibility and authority, and establishing relationships for the purpose of enabling people to work most effectively together in accomplishing objectives. Haimman further added that Organization as function of management leads to 1. Creation of organizational structure with suitable personnel, 2. Designing specific roles to eliminate ambiguity, 3. Defining interrelationship among personnel for productive cooperation, 4. Clarifying authority and responsibility for results and logical grouping of activities.

In line with the above, it is very important to harmonize the different departments and functions of the library if the entire library must progress smoothly toward its goals in providing resources for effective services to the library users. This important activity is achieved by means of coordination, which is a management function that is closely linked to the managerial variable of organization. Coordination represents the process of integrating all the parts and functions of an organization in order to enhance smooth and mutual operation toward the attainment of organizational goals. Hartzell (2010). The different departments of a polytechnic library like acquisition, cataloguing, circulation and bindery, which make up the polytechnic library, perform different but interrelated functions none of which, alone, is sufficient to enable the organization

achieve its set goals. The creation of departments helps to enhance specialization and organized functioning for the common good of all parts.

Another important management function is leadership, which is the function that enables the manager to persuade others to pursue the objectives of the organization enthusiastically. The leader triggers motivation in the staff and inspires them to release their potentials as they apply themselves to their tasks which he guides towards the organization's goals. According to Allen (2011) Leadership is a process by which a person influence others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills. The objectives of leadership in context of ethics are to develop the feeling of cooperation and coordination, to determine and provide the needful directions about good or bad as well as right or wrong conducts and behavior as may be applicable in society, to determine and formulate the equitable and justified behavioral norm in society, to develop new, innovative and creative ideas, outlooks and approaches among people, to determine and make the perspective visions and missions for the well-being of human life in society, to determine some learning aspects to follow the concept of truth, purity, politeness, and justifications among every people in society, to develop enthusiasms, loyalty and devotional behavior and attitudes.

Base on the above view direction is yet another management function worthy of mention. It is the totality of actions of managers relating to instructions to subordinates in the methods and procedures and to the supervision of the work of subordinates to ensure that it is being performed properly. Although directing is generally associated with line supervisors, every manager undertakes it to some degree as he rises up within the organizational hierarchy. To be effective, a

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directive must be not only consistent with the overall goals of the organization but also reasonable and clear.

Clarity of directives is related to the need for effective communication in the work place. Communication is a flow of information that people use to pass massages from one person to another. The critical place of communication lies in the fact that it is the basis of collaborative action which is the essence of organizational performance where different departments and officials have to perform different but independent tasks. When every staff has clear understanding of the expectations of his office, and other relevant information relating to the organization, this reduces ambiguity and the tendency to spread rumor. Proper communication enhances the quality of supervision in the polytechnic library because it promotes release of clear instructions and adequate flow of information up and down the hierarchy willams (2018).

Evaluation, another element of management, operationally means appraisal or assessment of functions or outputs based on the library's goals. Evaluation is aimed at assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of a library in reaching its goals and objectives. Hartzell (2010) identified three major types of evaluation: outcome (impact): process (performance), and input (administrative). Evaluation helps to determine the quality of outputs, extent of attainment of set goals and any factors hampering performance. The control function, which logically results from evaluation, is intricately linked with it, and includes all the activities the manager does to ensure that actual outputs conform to planned results. This enhances the attainment of set goals and objectives in conformity with the library's vision. Control is the ultimate reason for carrying out an evaluation and constitutes a reliable way of ensuring the organization is continuously positioned for optimal performance in the light of its established goals. The present study is focused on the managerial variables of planning, organization and evaluation. This choice was

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guided by the realization that the three management functions are the core elements of management given the fact that each of the other functions like staffing, coordinating and control is intricately linked to planning, organization or evaluation which are also more applicable to information resources.

Challenges Associated with Managerial Variables and Information Resources Provision in Polytechnic Libraries.

The library is the nerve centre of academic activities in institution of higher learning and other organization; it is a depository of knowledge with varied and useful information in different king of materials each of which has its unique way of handling (Adeleke and Nwalo 2017) maintain that, libraries in third world countries have challenges in the provision of information resources and services to support teaching, research and learning and the major indicator of a good library is quality and quantity of its collection. It is therefore necessary for libraries to acquire current and relevant information resources and services necessary for teaching, learning and research activities that institutions are known for, however there are certain factors or hindrances militating against the acquisition of current, relevant and up to date information resources in academic or any library.

The provision of library resources especially in the developing countries has not been without some problems. Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2011) have identified some of the problems to include but not limited to the following: poor library organization; lack of user skills; poor funding of libraries, lack of current information resources; lack of adequate/relevant materials; poor IT infrastructure; un conducive reading environment; poor power supply; lack of technical support; and lack of user education.

Inadequate funds According to Adenira (2013) maintained that information is one of the emerging competitive components in libraries and information communication inadequate funding in libraries had led to the deterioration in the quality of library collections. This was supported by (Gakibayo and Okello-Obura,2013) that success of academic libraries depends on the ability of users to get fast track information sources to better serve the needs of the academic community but the libraries generally are poorly funded and continue to experience budgeting set back every year. Academic libraries in Nigeria have not been able to acquire information resource comprehensively enough to meet needs of the user due to inadequate funding for the libraries.

Poor management of funds allocated to academic library management through library administrators and librarians to maintain proper acquisition and provision of library information resources are most of the time mismanage which give rise to inadequate collections. There is this problem of lack of accountability in financial management of these institutions and their libraries. It is required that every amount of funds made available should be managed judiciously (Tetteh 2018). Ekere (2010) also posits that, poor financial management and accountability have often resulted in government giving much power to governing council board. It is not wise to place decision on allocation and utilization in the hands of those bodies which are too bureaucratic. This is because they can lead to huge losses and embezzlement consequently; the library is handicapped when it comes to increasing both the stock and staff strength Ekwelem (2018).

It is very difficult to provide information resources from overseas without obtaining foreign currency. Presently, getting foreign exchange in the country posses a lot of problems as a result of exchange restrictions and when one succeeds, the rate is very high. The implication is

far fetching. It means that, libraries especially academic libraries that want to acquire foreign materials or information resources must have to pay at least thrice the publisher's price.

Another challenges according to Ameyaw, Kwaye, and Asante (2016) is lack of adequate steady power supply not only makes the library unconducive for users to effectively utilize the online resources and internet but also affects some of the resources which require certain level of temperature to function effectively. Other problems affecting effective provision of library resources as identified by are lack of awareness on the availability of certain library resources, bibliographic obstacles and inadequate user education.

One the problems affecting the provision of electronic resources, internet connectivity as identified by Akpohpnor and Akpojotor (2016) found in the context of users in Nigeria are lack of user skills, lack of technical support and insufficient spare parts as some of the major constraints to effective provision of electronic resources in many libraries in the developing countries including Nigeria. As a result, many of the e-resources in these libraries are under-utilized or not utilized at all. Again due to poor technical support and insufficient spare parts, some of the ICT equipment easily broke down and are hardly replaced.

Strategies for Enhancing Managerial Variables for Efficient Information Resource Provision in Polytechnic Libraries

Finance is the bedrock of any organization including polytechnic libraries to achieve its objectives of which they are established. Therefore, funding of polytechnic libraries should be government priority Government should show strong commitment in keeping with the policies and programs that affect library system. Furthermore, libraries should not only depend on

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government alone for funds, but venture into some commercial activities such as indexing and abstracting services, lamination of vital documents, photocopying services, among others which will enable the library to meet some of its financial obligations locally (Temenge and Kashimana 2019).

The Nigeria government should as a matter of urgency improve information and communication technology (ICTs) services in libraries to boost internet connectivity. This will facilitate the acquisition of information resources in libraries. With the information and communication technology facilities in place, polytechnics library can computerize their operation such as circulation, cataloguing, acquisition Nok (2010). More so government should establish and encourage publisher or authors for their book publishing as it will help in terms of quality production, with the standard and high quality production of local book or library resources.

In view of the problems confronting effective provision of library resources for publication output, some strategies have been suggested. Gakibayo and Okello-obu (2013) observed that there is lack of ICT skill technical know how in Nigerian educational institutions especially in the polytechnics. This according to them is a major hindrance to effective provision of library resources. They suggested that remedies of training patrons and expanding ICT facilities and a general improvement in infrastructural facilities especially ICT infrastructure to ensure enhanced utilization of the nation's information resources. Similarly, Salaam and Adegbore (2010) considered equipping the nation's academic libraries with ICT facilities as a major step for improving effective provision of the resources. They further suggested the training of Nigerian technicians on the maintenance of ICT infrastructure to ensure their regular maintenance and prevent these facilities from breaking down easily. Other measures they

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suggested include provision of alternative power supply for libraries attached to academic institutions and inclusion of user education in the educational curriculum. On the other hand, consider lack of user skills as one of the major constraints to effective provision of library resources. They were of the view that improved user skills through user education, current awareness services and public enlightenment on the resources available in the library will go a long way in enhancing effective provision of the nation's libraries.

As a result of rapid changes that occur in the information environment today, academic staff and most other library users prefer online resources and the internet as sources of information. Agaba (2010) shared this view and pointed out the importance of these resources to academic staff. As a result, he suggested the provision of electronic resources, internet facilities and ICT networks in academic libraries as ways of attracting users to these libraries. Baro, Oni and Onyenania (2009) supported this view and further called for the creation of conductive reading environment in these libraries through regular supply of electricity. In her own view, Okafor (2010) suggested the equipment of academic libraries with relevant books, journals e-journals, internet facilities and other necessary resources as major strategies for enhancing provision of library resources for publication output.

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