



Implementation of Library and Information Policies in University Libraries in Enugu State

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Abstract

The study assessed the implementation of library and information policies in university libraries in Enugu State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 80 librarians from university libraries in Enugu State. Census sampling technique was used to select the entire population. Questionnaire was used for data collection. 67 copies of the questionnaire were found valid for analysis. The study was analysed using simple percentage and mean scores. The result indicates that the libraries had written policies including Library use/operations policy, Reference policy, Serials/periodicals policy, cataloguing policy, Collection development policy, Circulation/lending Policy, document reproduction/reprographic policy, copyright law and FOI Act. It also shows that information policies were implemented to a moderate extent. However, the barriers to information policy implementation were poor funding of libraries, lack of training and retraining, lack of compliance monitoring and lack of motivation or political will. The study recommended that librarians should be trained and re-trained on the process of policy implementation; enabling environment for private sector participation in the funding of libraries should be created; and compliance to Information policy adoption should be enforced.

Keywords: Policy, information, information policy, implementation, library,

Introduction

Information is the life-wire that connects every aspect of the society. It is the most important and common entity in this world in the world of communication. It moves the world. Information has the capacity to inform and reform the society. Being a much over-used term, it is least understood and there is no consensual definition of it (Satija, 2013). It is formed through sense perception in the brain but needs a physical medium for its recording and communication. Thus, information carriers include printed matter, audio materials, visual materials, audio-visual/ multimedia resources. In this digital age, Information has become a powerful factor in national development. Information refers to message or knowledge that can be



disseminated or communicated. These messages or knowledge do not exist in vacuum but are wrapped in media such as books, Cassettes, CD ROMs, social media etc. that can be transmitted from person to person directly or through a means or from one generation to another through any tangible medium. Importance of information and communication in organizations is paramount. For the right information to be available at the right time, libraries are created.

Just as mankind cannot do without information, no sector can do without libraries, which are responsible for selecting, acquiring, processing, storing, and disseminating information to its users. As a matter of fact, there is no aspect of human endeavor, be it education sector, research sector, or service sector that the library does not play significant role. Everyone that needs information, invariably needs the library. All categories of people require access to knowledge to be able to be able to make informed decisions. Even the government, the largest institutional partner in the society, too needs libraries for creating awareness in public about governmental policies, projects and programmes, decision making, promoting trade and culture, etc.

Because of the great role of information, there is the dire need to put in place a blueprint that will regulate the acquisition, processing, storage, dissemination/communication of information. This policy is better known as library and information policy. Library and Information policy may be international, national, or even institutional. The essence of institutionalizing this rule is to set standards and international best practices in information handling (Nwabueze & Anyira, 2011).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the implementation of information policy in university libraries in Enugu State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify written and unwritten policies in the library
2. Investigate the extent of information policy implementation in the library
3. Unravel the barriers to effective implementation of information policy in the library

Research Questions

1. What are the written and unwritten policies in the library?
2. What is the extent of information policy implementation in the library?
3. What are the barriers to effective implementation of information policy in the library?



Literature Review

The term “Policy” refers to a set of definite action plan or rules officially adopted by a group of people, organization, or government. Without a policy statement, abuse and personal bias are inevitable. According to the Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (2015) defined a policy as a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions. Policy decisions are frequently reflected in resource allocations. The goals of any policy may vary widely according to the organization and in the context in which they are made. Broadly, policies are instituted in order to avoid some negative effect that has been noticed in the organization, or to seek some positive benefit. Given the above scenario, the concept of policy has various meanings. A typical policy has the following attributes—a scope, a mechanism; an action. Each rule defines a scope initiating the policies; a framework or structure which embodies the mechanism of the policy implementation and the action which is the effects of the policy on national programmes and events.

Specifically, information policy refers to a set of interrelated principles, laws, guidelines, rules, regulations, and procedures guiding the oversight and management of the information life-cycle: the production, collection, distribution/dissemination, retrieval, and retirement. It also embraces access to, and use of, knowledge. Collectively, policies form a framework that profoundly affects the manner in which an individual in a society indeed a society itself, makes political, economic, and social choices (Pinker, 2020). Information policy can also be seen as is any law, regulation, rule, or practice (written or unwritten), that affects the creation, acquisition, organization, dissemination, and/or evaluation of information. The term information policy has been used to refer to policy initiatives that promote the use of tools and concepts associated with global information society with a view to realizing their potential in achieving national, social and economic development goals. This means that information policy approaches vary (James, 2001). It is concerned with identifying, delivering, and managing internal and external information resources needed by employees at all levels of the organisation to perform their jobs as competently and efficiently as possible in order to meet business objectives.

There are different guidelines but all have the aim of guiding how information should be managed (Mutongi & Marume, 2016, Mmejim & Nsirim, 2023). For instance, they specify the kind of information to be created, acquired, collected, created, organised, stored, accessed, disseminated



consumed, used retained and reused. It indicates the authorised people to use the information, whether it is free information or is not for free. It indicates where that information can be obtained and how. BCLA (1998) posit that information policy also establishes the rules within which private information providers and the media operate. According to BCLA (1998), National information policy captures; literacy, privatization and distribution of government information, freedom of information access, protection of personal privacy, intellectual property rights, retention of archival copies of material, information rights. Furthermore, Mutongi and Marume (2016) identified areas typically covered in an information policy to include guidelines for: identification and evaluation of internal content repositories, publishing and dissemination of internal documents, web site publishing standard, archiving and retention of information, external content acquisition, use of external (including internet) information, access levels, security and permission procedures, networks and systems architecture development, training requirements. Although there are various types of information policies, Rowlands (1996) identified three types of information policies which are: infrastructural policies, vertical information policies and horizontal information policies.

Infrastructural policies deal with the development of national (or more recently regional) infrastructure required to support an information society (James, 2001). The absence of infrastructural policies and implementation strategies would make it virtually impossible to deliver on any other vertical or horizontal ICT-related policies. It is thus a prerequisite for progress in other areas (Mutongi and Marume, 2016). A typical example is the National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy by the Ministry of Communication Technology, June 2012, which has the following policy focus areas: Legal, and Regulatory Framework; ICT Infrastructure; Internet and Broadband; Capacity Building; Universal Access and Service; Transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting; Community Broadcasting; ICT and Youth; Local Content Development; Hardware Production; Safety and National Security; Coordinated ICT Development across All Sectors; Research, Development, and Innovation; Investment and Funding; Public Private Partnership; Outsourcing; Management of Scarce Resources; Regional / International Cooperation and Collaboration; ICT and the Environment; ICT and the Consumer; ICT and the Civil Society; Open Data and ICT (Ministry of Communication Technology, 2012).



Vertical information policies include sectorial policies such as education, tourism, manufacturing, health. A typical example is the National education Policy by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (2004) which has the following policy focus areas: Early Childhood; Pre-Primary Education; Basic Education; Primary Education; Secondary Education; Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education; Science, Technical and Vocational Education; Tertiary Education; Open and Distance Education; Special Education; Educational Services; Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education; Financing of Education

Horizontal information policies refer to those policies that impact on broad aspects of society, for example, policies relating to freedom on information, tariffs and pricing and the use of ICTs by government internally and in its relationships with for example citizens, business, labour, academia. A typical example is the Freedom of Information Act 2011, which has the following policy focus areas: Rights of access to records; Information about public institution; Request for access to records; Time for granting or refusing application; Record keeping and maintenance of records; Destruction or falsification of records; Exemption of international affairs and defence; Exemption of law enforcement and investigation; Training of officials on the right to information and on the effective implementation of this Act; Exemption of personal information; Exemption of third party information; Exemption of personal or other privileges conferred by law; Exemption of course or research material; Denial by a public institution to disclose records; Documents under classification.

In addition to these, Adomi (2008) identified various in-house library policies that fall within the purview of information policy. These are discussed under library policies such as collection development, cataloguing, circulation among others. They help define the values of the library as an organization, and they help librarians and other library staff to translate those values into service priorities. These policies establish a standard for services that can be understood by library users and parent institutions. When policies have been adopted by a given library in a formal process and are consistent with local, state, and federal laws, they will be easy to implement. Library policies are as follows: Collection development policy, cataloguing policy, circulation/lending policy, reference policy, serials/periodicals policy, document reproduction/ reprographic policy.

The collection development policy sets goals for the collection that reflect the library's mission. The purpose of a collection development policy is to create a collection of library materials that



supports the library's mission (Simmons, 2024). . All decisions about the kinds of materials to be collected or accessed should be made with the mission statement in mind. The collection development policy provides information to the library's stakeholders about how the collection is chosen, and it explains who is responsible for making decisions about the collection. The scope of coverage of a typical collection development policy include: Mission statement; Purpose statement; Responsibility statement; Material selection criteria; Material Formats; Foreign language materials; Collection maintenance; Archives and special collections; Gifts and donations; Digital resources; Consortium memberships; Intellectual freedom policy; Library bill of rights; Freedom to read statement. The purpose of this policy is to guide the description of library materials and to provide intellectual access to these materials. The scope of coverage of a typical cataloguing policy include: Overview of the policy; Purpose; Cataloguing Software; Items to Catalogue; Standards, controlled vocabularies and guides; National and International Cooperation; Sources of Bibliographic Data; Cataloguing Treatment; Language and script of cataloguing; Levels of Cataloguing; Classification; Cataloguing Procedure; Catalogue maintenance priorities.

According Anyira, (2021) the circulation/library lending comprises the regulation of activities around the registration and lending of library materials for in-house consultation or for home reading. The scope of coverage of a typical circulation/lending policy include: Eligibility for Library Services; Materials for In-Library Use Only (Non-Circulating); Loan Policies – General; Loan Policies - Specific Material Types; Overdue Library Materials - General Policies; Overdue and Replacement Charges for Specific Material Types; Summit and interlibrary loan materials; Appeal of Library Charges; Persons with Disabilities. A reference policy defines the goals and philosophy of reference services in a Library. This policy also identifies for patrons the levels of service which the library provides, based on the resources available. The scope of coverage of a reference policy include: Service Philosophy; Purpose of this Policy Statement; Position Statements; Goal of Reference Services; Specific Objectives of Reference Services; Service to Non-patrons; Services for Persons with Disabilities; Types of Reference Service; Restrictions on Reference Service; Ask A Librarian Service; Document Delivery Service; Library Instruction and Orientation Service; Referral and Cooperation; Reference Materials; Circulation of Materials in General Reference Collection; Location and Circulation of Other Types of Materials; Shelving of Materials; Ethics.



Periodicals are magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, and newsletters. They are publications that are published at regular intervals. Daily newspapers, weekly magazines, and quarterly journals are all periodicals (Olubiyo & Yemi, 2020). The scope of coverage of periodicals policy include: Purpose; Influencing Factors; Selection Plan; Closed Stacks; Microforms; Restrictions; Conditions of Circulation; Retention and Weeding; Acquisition / Cancellation; Binding. Reproduction is an integral part of the activities of libraries. Document reproduction policy outlines the principles and general approach to the reproduction of material for both publication and research purposes. The scope of coverage of a reprographic policy include: General Regulations; Copyright; Photocopying; Photography; Microform Printouts; Image Prints; Film; Sound; Acknowledgements and References In Publications

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 80 librarians from university libraries in Enugu State. They are Enugu State University of Science and Technology (28) and Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka (52). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the two university libraries and census sampling technique was used to select the entire population. Questionnaire was used for data collection. 67 copies of the questionnaire were found valid for analysis. The study was analysed using simple percentage and mean scores.

Research Question 1: Which of the following written or unwritten information policy exists in your library?

Table 1: Summary of simple percentage on written and unwritten information policy document available in the library?

Item	Written	Unwritten
Collection development policy	70%	30%
Library use/operations policy	82%	18%
Cataloguing policy	76%	24%
Circulation/lending Policy	66%	34%
Reference policy	81%	19%
Serials/periodicals policy	76%	24%
Document reproduction/ reprographic policy	73%	27%
Copyright law	62%	38%
FOI Act	60%	40%



The result from table one above indicates the response on the availability of written and unwritten policies in their libraries. The response shows that Library use/operations policy (82%), Reference policy (81%), Serials/periodicals policy (76%), cataloguing policy (76%), Collection development policy (70%), Circulation/lending Policy (66%), document reproduction/reprographic policy 73 %, copyright law (62%) and FOI Act (60%) were written policies available in university libraries in Enugu State.

Research question 2: What is the extent of information policy implementation in the library?

Table 2: Summary of Simple Percentage on the Extent of information policy implementation in the library

Items	Mean	Decision
Collection development policy	3.0	High Extent
Library use/operations policy	2.6	Moderate extent
Cataloguing policy	3.3	High Extent
Circulation/lending Policy	3.2	High Extent
Reference policy	2.6	Moderate extent
Serials/periodicals policy	2.5	Moderate extent
Document reproduction/ reprographic policy	2.1	Low Extent
Copyright Law	2.5	Moderate extent
FOI Act	2.5	Moderate extent
Weighted Mean	2.6	Moderate extent

The result from table 2 shows that cataloguing and classification policy, collection development policy and circulation/lending policy were implemented to a high extent. Library use/operations policy, Reference policy, Serials/periodicals policy, Copyright Law and FOI were implemented to a moderate extent while document reproduction/ reprographic policy was implemented to a low extent. The weighted mean of 2.6 indicates that information policies were implemented to a moderate extent.

Research Question 2: What are the barriers to effective implementation of information policy in your library?



Table 3: Summary of Mean on Effective Implementation of Information Policy in your Library?

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Opposition from key stakeholders,	2.3	Reject
2.	Inadequate skilled human resources	2.2	Reject
3.	Poor funding of libraries	2.5	Accept
4.	Lack of training and retraining	2.6	Accept
5.	Lack of clarity on operational guidelines	2.2	Reject
6.	Conflicts with other existing policies	2.1	Reject
7.	Lack of compliance monitoring	2.5	Accept
8.	Lack of motivation or political will	2.6	Accept

The result from table 3 indicates that barriers to information policy implementation were poor funding of libraries, lack of training and retraining, lack of compliance monitoring and lack of motivation or political will. On the other hand, opposition from key stakeholders, inadequate skilled human resources, lack of clarity on operational guidelines, conflicts with other existing policies were not regarded as challenges faced in the implementation of information policies.

Conclusion

The role that information plays in the society is so crucial that it requires some set of standard rules and regulations to guide its creation, selection, acquisition, processing, storage, preservation, retrieval and dissemination. These set of rules and regulations are known as information policies. Non-implementation of information policy has grave consequences such as inconsistency in the way information is managed, and personal biases (religious, ethnicity, social class etc) in information service delivery. This study has established that university libraries in Enugu state have written information policy statement, and were moderately implemented but the barriers to effective implementation of information policies in Nigerian libraries were poor funding of libraries, lack of training and retraining, lack of compliance monitoring and lack of motivation or political will, not opposition from key stakeholders, inadequate skilled human resources, lack of clarity on operational guidelines, conflicts with other existing policies were not regarded as challenges faced in the implementation of information policies.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Training and retraining of library staff on the process of policy implementation should be the priority in university libraries.
2. Government should also create an enabling environment for private sector to participate in the funding of libraries in Nigeria.
3. Information policy implementation activities should be regularly monitored in the library to ensure compliance.

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