

**FUNDING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN
ACADEMIC LIBRARIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA:
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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Abstract

The content and knowledge economy defines the level of productivity of individual and sustainable funding of ICT facilities in libraries is the prerequisite for this expected enhanced productivity In today's globalized world, e-library has become a depository of various human and material resources that enhance the knowledge economy E-books and journals, online references, web-resources and web-catalogue are some of these resources This the need for sustainable funding of ICT in libraries in order for libraries to be updated with current information that approximates the global knowledge base The move towards knowledge economy requires a fundamental shift in thinking, innovation, generic and subject-specific competences that only a well-funded library can provide. This paper adapts a holistic approach to salient issues on funding of academic libraries, the challenges prospects at all levels should change their attitude towards the funding and provision of ICT infrastructures and facilities In Nigerian Libraries. More proactive and dedicated implementation of IKT policy in Libraries should be encouraged and the training and retraining of Librarians in ICT skills should be taken seriously because it is a necessity for users to benefit from library services in this globalized age

Keywords: Funding, ICT, Academic libraries, sustainability, development,

Introduction

Funding plays an integral role in providing quality library services in any academic environment. It serves as the anchor that links the building collection and staff together which enables the library to attain its set goals and objectives. As such, funds can be viewed as the backbone of the library inadequate funds can render any library ineffective. Funding of academic libraries differs greatly; it can be based on the type of institution, whether it is private or public, a particular state's budgetary regulations and funding formulas for higher education or the overall budgetary situation of each university. American Library Association (ALA) (2006) pointed out that Academic Library budgets are allocated by the central University Administration based on stipulated formulas or earmarked needs, and libraries follow their institutional policies and mandates regarding budgets. In some instances, an institution provides funding for its library through individual colleges and departments instead of centrally setting up the library budget this means that each department or University's unit decides whether or not to fund the library each year based on satisfactory library services as well as need. In most cases, academic library budgets are not allocated separately from the University budgets. For some libraries, budget is allocated partially for acquisition, while other aspects such as staff and infrastructure are part of the University budget. This arrangement does not meet the library needs (Hislé 2002). According to Emojorho (2004), Nigerian government-owned university libraries derive funds from government allocations, endowment funds, library fees, gifts and other miscellaneous sources such as the sale of duplicate materials, fines and photocopying; the bursar integrates and collates the various estimates from the various departments.

Nigerian academic and research libraries depend largely on government for the majority of their financial support. Okiy, (2005) indicated that academic libraries derive the greatest part of their funds from their universities, whose major source of financial support is the government. Among the different types of libraries in Nigeria, only academic libraries have a clearly defined policy on funding. They are allocated 10 percent of the recurrent annual budget of their parent institutions, which is a result of the Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities agreement of 1992. Funds for library and information services are traditionally derived from the library management. It can be funds received from grants donations from donor agencies or other funds sourced by the librarian through internally generated revenue (Dafiaghor, 2012).

ICT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Academic libraries can be referred to as those libraries that are established in institutions of higher learning in order to promote their teaching, learning and research. They are also saddled with the responsibility to acquire, organize, preserve and provide access to information resources to all information seekers. For this to be achieved, such information should be preserved and made available in a more convenient and accessible format. In the past, libraries were faced with the challenges of lack of space, accessibility and preservation due to the fact that many library services were rendered traditionally, that is, within the confines of a particular

location. But with the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), a wide variety of information resources are in electronic format thereby enhancing sustainable academic library services and many academic and research. Institutions are embracing it to make these information resources readily accessible to a larger clientele (Akintunde, 2003).

Any library that wants to be relevant must queue into this emerging technology that is transforming the way information is created and disseminated Nwachukwu (2004) defined ICT as the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information. In recent times, the development and availability of ICT in libraries have not only increased and broadened the operations of librarians, but also placed more emphasis on effective and efficient services. The ICT application in libraries, also known as library automation, has indeed continued to ease and promote quick and prompt access to and transfer of information resources that are found dispensed around the globe. Umebali and Nwankwo (2010), opine that ICT application to library works and services could be seen as the best means of assisting researchers to adequately solve their literature needs for effective research activities. The application of ICT to library operations greatly helps in the provision of efficient reference and information services, the utilization of network operations such as cataloguing, authority control, inter-library loans and cooperation and in the participation of international bibliographic project Dike (2000) reiterated that instant access to information from a multiplicity of the source is one of the major roles of ICT application to library services. Not only can it help in locating the materials where the required information can be found easily but ICT helps in isolating relevant information from a mass of irrelevant information.

The use of ICT in academic libraries has impacted positively the following library operations: Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) which is a computer-based library catalogue for accessing materials in the library, the user of a digital library need not go to the library physically so long as or her computer is connected to the internet, digital libraries have the potential to store much more information since it requires very little space to contain it with the aid of ICT, database of print and audio-visual materials can be easily created and indexed. Also, ICT has made it possible for information seekers to conveniently access a wide range of library-produced abstracts; the quality and content of information can be preserved because the original copy can be duplicated severally without any alteration: through the use of emails or fax. Libraries that are connected can share resources in an instant and such documents can be delivered to user immediately after the request is made. Also internet-based resources such as electronic journals, reference sources; books etc, can be easily accessed. (Igbeka 2008, Adebisi 2009 and Uwaifo2010)

ICT provides a means by which a library can access information from other libraries in the world and facilitate the ongoing revitalization of the information acquisition and dissemination process. These cannot be achieved without the library being adequately funded for sustainable development in this era where a wide variety of information resources are in electronic format. For sustainable development to be achieved in the operations of academic libraries; there is a need for library management to look into some issues that can help them in this regard. Sustainable development has to do with putting things in place to meet needs of the present

generation without jeopardizing the needs of the future generation. Many factors are hindering Nigerian academic libraries from taking full advantage of these technologies to provide easy access to information since technologies enable the visualization of library materials innovatively and realistically using ICTs. A careful consideration of these factors can awaken the consciousness of the stakeholders in library operations to come up with an approach that will ensure the sustainable development and implementation of ICTs in Nigeria libraries this research would improve the consciousness of funding ICTs in academic libraries in Nigeria to promote the integration of ICT in the service delivery of librarians. It would also enable academic libraries to improve the quality of acquisition of e-resources to make it available to library users.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Academic Library sustainability is an effort toward ensuring adequate maintenance of the library resources and services for an effective and continued operation. It involves adequate provision and use of finance-relevant and current information, human and physical resources for the continuity of the library services.

University library sustainability is the ability of a library to meet the users' needs now, in the future and remain relevant. Sustainable development can be seen as a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (World commission on environment and development, 1987). Sustainability as a concept deals with continuity and further process rather than stagnation and decline. For information and communication technology to be sustainable in any university library, it follows that such libraries must meet the demands of the teaming users by acquiring new technologies and information gadgets to advance library services at all times. The technological infrastructures must be and in line with currents in technology.

The purpose of sustainable development especially in ICT in any library that has gone digital or is automated, is to provide a means of configuring quick, adequate information so that the community the library serves and others can meet their information needs and also express their greatest. Potentials through the information made available to them via the library. The emphasis on sustainable development is always on future gains that begin with the present.

Information and communication technology in libraries cannot be sustained without funding; this is because without funding it will be impossible for libraries to procure ICT equipment, gadgets, and facilities that will enhance the utilization of ICT in libraries. This is in line with the report of Odusanya and Osimulu, (2004) who studied the Impact of ETF Funding on Nigerian Academic Libraries: A Case Study Approach the survey focused on Olabisi Onabanjo University, one of the third-generation state-owned universities in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study evaluated the support of the Education Tax Fund (ETF) towards the acquisition of information technology equipment and other learning facilities for the library. The findings reveal that before the intervention of the Education Tax Fund (ETF), budgetary allocation to the library was abysmally low, and hence the library was not able to perform many of its functions satisfactorily. With the intervention of FTE, the library was able to purchase

computer equipment and library-processing tools needed for the effective functioning of the library

Finance is the life wire of any library especially digital libraries that utilize ICT, when funds are not made available, the library is handicapped and this makes the library system not to function effectively and efficiently but when the is adequately funded, the information resources and technological infrastructure needed is put in place for the advancement and sustainability of the library. Until libraries are sustained to the extent that users do not have to complain about getting required information we cannot say that the library is sustained.

CHALLENGES IN THE FUNDING OF ICT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

The following issues are affecting the effective use of ICT in Nigerian academic libraries in general in their service delivery due to lack of funding in areas.

ICT Infrastructure

Academic Libraries in Nigeria are not adequately landed. The finding of academic libraries comes largely from their parent institutions and ETF, now TET-Fund, has not been sufficient. As the purchasing power of revenue accruing to different levels/tiers of government in Nigeria continues to diminish, the responsibilities and obligations of these governments continue to expand. This has severely limited the amount of money available for the capital and recurrent expenses of the country's academic libraries, amongst other educational and social services. It is, therefore, very clear, as captured in Nigerian library literature that academic libraries in the country cannot continue to rely on the present sporadic and insufficient budgetary allocations by government through their parent institutions. In Line with the foregoing, some income-generating ventures have been identified, which if implemented, would yield the additional financial resources required to meet the increasingly complex demand for library services in 21st-century tertiary institutions (Nnadozie, 2013). Without funding, the acquisition of various ICT infrastructures (hardware, software and network infrastructure) necessary to run the library cannot be sustained.

Lack of comprehensive ICT policy

ICT policy is an official statement that clearly states the objectives, goals, principles, strategies, etc. that guide and regulate the development, operation, and application of information and communication technology in any institution. Even when promulgated as a distinct policy statement. ICT policies must take into cognizance of other policy areas, such as education policies, Information policies, trade and investment policies, and cultural and linguistic policies. The mere establishment of written national ICT policy, however, has no value in itself, IT conveys, to a large extent, the message that the government intends to pursue the utilization of ICT in society, Government can actualize these policies by putting the policy content into actual practice in their administration and services becomes a welcome development (Idowu, 2011).

An ICT policy framework is recognized as an important step in creating an enabling environment for the deployment of ICTs and their uses for social problems. The lack of an ICT policy has been attributed as a key factor behind the poor infrastructure and of ICT's in many developing countries in Africa, especially in Nigeria. While many developing countries in Africa have moved ahead and formulated an ICT policy, very little progress has been recorded in policy implementation (Sarkar, 2005). ICT policies and strategies are vital tools to tackle the challenges of globalization and to nurture the emergence of a Nigerian information society. This is especially important given the rapidly growing international focus on ICTs and development, (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2001). No library can function effectively without a policy. Elisha (2006) indicated that although most libraries have plans to develop ICT policies, this also showed that the use of ICT policies by researchers is quite recent and that they started investing on ICT facilities functional policy statements. Also, there is the need for a national ICT policy for Nigerian academic libraries upon which both the private and the government-owned academic institutions should improve on the funding of ICT and operations of their libraries services. Lack of this ICT policy has resulted in nothing being invested in the development and use of ICT in most academic libraries in Nigeria.

Poor ICT knowledge

The low level of computer literacy in Nigeria has greatly affected the use of ICT facilities by library users (Okly, 2005). This problem is further increased by the "shortage of technology literate staff in library, the lack of skilled human resources to install and manage technology networks and poor funding to attract such staff or develop such skill in existing staff (Ashcroft and Watts 2005). The poor ICT knowledge among both users and professionals in Nigeria makes it difficult for most information resources in electronic format to be adequately utilized. Most libraries lack resources and technical support and staff needs to continuously acquire appropriate training to deliver up-to-date services and troubleshoot equipment. Without the relevant ICT skills, ICT professionals are unable to guide library patrons to maximize the utilization of the available ICT facilities and explore the opportunities they offer (Elisha, 2006).

Poor Electricity Supply

The existence of low supply of electricity in most parts of Nigeria has been a major challenge to the digitalization efforts of academic libraries in Nigeria Zakari (2009), was of the view that academic libraries in Nigeria are greatly affected by epileptic power supply among others in their efforts to connect their libraries to the internet. The serious nature of the epileptic power supply in academic libraries was also captured by Jagboro, (2007) as follows:" Another major is power supply. Computerization and digitization became unrealizable in an environment of epileptic power supply. For instance, the H.O. library (OAU-Ile-Ife) suffers from acute power supply disruption from the national grid. Institutions, companies and individuals are forced to procure alternative power which has prohibitive initial financial outlay and running the issue of power supply has to be given priority by any library aspiring to attain global visibility."

It is pertinent to note that to date, the Nigerian government has been unable to provide even the much-promised 6,000 megawatts of electricity generation in Nigeria. Currently, power supply still fluctuates between 3,600 and 3,700 megawatts of electricity generation (Anuforo & Olayinka, 2010). With this poor level of electricity supply in Nigeria, the populace is under pressure to provide electricity for most of their activities through the use of electric generators. Generally, this is rather inadequate and very expensive.

Poor Maintenance of ICT Equipment

The costs of maintaining ICT equipment are very high due to lack of funds poor maintenance culture, this equipment is not put into proper use. Moreover, most libraries lack conducive environments for keeping an effective management of ICT equipment. The institutions should provide means of maintaining these facilities so that they do not become obsolete.

Inadequate Technical/Skilled Manpower

In many academic libraries in Nigeria, there is lack of technical manpower in the area of ICT. As a result, this equipment has become obsolete in some libraries because there are no knowledgeable staff to operate them. Lack of ICT competencies by many Librarians according to Gbaje. (2007), has some implications on the way they perform their duties. This is because the transition of library services from the traditional way to the online environment can pose a challenge for Nigerian academic libraries in this digital age, especially with the dynamic nature of digital technology which is constantly creating the need for new skills, work environment and work methods. Hence, librarians and information professionals must constantly learn and retrain to be very versed in web technology to be effective in the discharge of their duties. Some areas where these librarians are expected to be proficient are: basic knowledge of computers and their capabilities; electronic search engines, internet facilities; e-mail, Internet navigator tools, web browsers and web file formats, database software and Internet development and management among others.

Academics should be ready to face the new challenges of ICT competencies so that they can render more effective services to their library patrons in this electronic environment. Okorie and Ekere (2008) were of the view that if information professionals do not keep abreast with the changing technologies, they will be unable to manage the different types of information resources and cope with the ever-growing information needs of the users in this electronic age. There should be regular training of the librarians for them to be able to manage successfully electronic library services.

Lack of Internet services for E-Resource sharing

Electronic Library approach for resource sharing is becoming a common request among academic and research institutions, Libraries are responding to this request by putting up efforts to make available to a wider audience the resources in an electronic format (Akintunde, 2003). Awareness of the opportunities provided by developments in information dissemination and exchange made possible by ICT, some libraries in Nigeria are attempting to digitize their collections to make them available to the world. (Felin 2009) These efforts are not sustained

due to the non-connectivity of many libraries that need the resources. The cost of acquiring and maintaining internet services is enormous; as such it requires a lot of funds to be able to have a viable e-resource sharing among academic libraries in Nigeria.

The Way Forward

For sustainable development to be achieved in the operations of academic libraries in terms of ICP, there is need for library management to look into some issues that can help them in this regard. Based on the foregoing, the following are hereby recommended as the way forward:

- ❖ Government at both the federal and state levels in Nigeria must be more proactive and regularly monitor the implementation of the national policy for ICT and Information Infrastructure and Facilities;
- ❖ There should be an increased injection of funds from both the Nigerian government and other donor agencies both locally and internationally for the effective globalization of library services in academic libraries in Nigeria;
- ❖ There should be a regular training programme for practicing librarians to frequently update their knowledge of ICT competencies needed for them to effectively manage the resources in the academic libraries towards globalization of their services;
- ❖ The Library schools in Nigeria should incorporate ICT competency training into their curriculum. The library schools would be required to have viable ICT laboratories to ensure appropriate hands-on ICT training for the students. The lecturers would be required to be effectively ICT literate to be able to impart the appropriate ICT know-how to the students of librarianship;
- ❖ The problem of epileptic power supply and poor telecommunications infrastructure should be doggedly addressed by the Nigerian government by injecting the necessary funds and technical expertise
- ❖ Academic libraries in Nigeria will need to be effectively involved in interconnectivity to facilitate resource sharing. They should work at forming a consortium that will eventually progress towards their active involvement in the globalization of their services. The efforts of the National Universities Commission of Nigeria in this direction should be intensified;
- ❖ There should be a collaboration between experts in ICT know-how in the computer centers in the higher institutions and their academic libraries to fast-track the active participation of academic libraries in Nigeria in the globalization of their services. The collaborative efforts of the libraries and some ICT experts from the ICT centres in University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Lagos, University of Port-Harcourt and the University of Ibadan should be maximized and emulated by other academic libraries in Nigeria,

Finally, Momoh (1999) stated that developing countries of the world seem too relaxed to take the first giant step toward sustainable technological development. What then is that giant step? It is simply putting ICT in place and effectively implementing the Nation's technology policies. Failure to do so will be their undoing and this lapse will continue to widen the gap between the developing and developed Nations.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to discuss how funding ICT in academic libraries can enhance the application of ICT in the services rendered in these libraries to tap from the benefits derivable from globalization of library services. It also pointed out the problems inhibiting easy implementation of globalization of academic library services. Academic libraries and librarians in Nigeria will be required to do a lot more for them to adequately bring the benefit of globalization of libraries to their clientele. Government should change its attitude towards the funding and provision of ICT infrastructure and facilities in Nigerian libraries, at both federal and state levels. They should be more proactive and dedicated in the implementation of ICT policy in libraries. The training and re-tooling of librarians in the necessary ICT skills is a necessity for the benefits of globalization of library services to impact academic libraries and their users in Nigeria.

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