

## Fresh Students in the Use of Library Information Resources

### Abstract

*The study discusses the contribution of academic librarians in assisting students in the use of library information resource to achieve their academic goals. The academic library which serves as a hub to all academic activities, provokes intellectual excellence, as well as provide assistant to fresh university student in gaining knowledge. Just as the vein helps to pump blood to the heart for a healthy living, so does the library serves as the bedrock by which intellectual heights are attend. The study helps one see the beautiful function of the librarian whose role is like an anchor that stabilizes the boat from going astral. The librarian through their professional skill is able to guide and support fresh student get the needed information resource to achieve their educational goal. The relevance of information resources as key factor that helps academic library provide information services was also reviewed; this study explains information resources, staffing/human resource, services rendered as well as infrastructural resources. Finally, the aspect of the assistant of the academic librarian to the fresh university student in achieving their educational career was copiously x-rated.*

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Keyword: Academic Library, Academic Librarian, Fresh Students, Information Resources.

### Introduction

Libraries play a fundamental role in enhancing the learning experiences, providing students with all the materials and services they need to improve their knowledge, that is to say no library, no university; two of a kind, inseparable entity working for a common cause. Currently, there is no single universally accepted definition of the term “academic library”. As there are many scholars in the library and information profession, so there are many and varied definitions of the concept academic library whichever way, variations in definition maintain mere differences in choices of terminology hence these various definitions maintain a common ground in what an academic library is. The in-depth meaning of academic library could be achieved by first of all having a separate understanding of what library and academic means. However, the combination of these two concepts will give a better understanding of what academic library is. The term library can be defined as follows:

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- a. A collection of books and related materials organized in a systematic order to enhance easy access and use.
- b. A collection of books, films, slides, photographs records and tapes organized in such a manner that they can be easily retrieved and use.
- c. A collection of printed materials and/or non-print media, and/or computerized information resources which is organized for use.

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In the above definitions the recurring word is “collection” and a common theme is “organization for use”. Therefore a library is a collection of information resources which is systematically

organized for easy access and use. Furthermore, the term academic is an adjective which qualifies the noun library. It tends to be applied most often to tertiary education library. The main objectives of the academic or university education is to train individuals to become specialist who in turn will transfer intellectual information to others to develop the field of specialization for the benefit of the community. Vasan (2019) said that the primary goal of tertiary or universities education is to provide broad and generalize skills to students including the ability to think, analyze and solve problem. The second objective is to provide concentrated coursework, so that the student has a firm foundation of principles in the field. A third objective is pertaining to those who want to proceed further; focus is on the student's effort to become specialized in a certain field or sub-field via participation in perhaps a graduate level program. Thus they can become specialist serving in the research/teaching field or industry.

From the foregoing, one can easily deduce the place of academic library in the institution of higher learning as it is established to cater for the information needs of members of academic of the community, staff and students alike. Academic library is usually larger in size, collection and personnel. It also services a larger number of users. The collections of academic libraries are diverse in nature to cater for the numerous programs of study available in these institutions and the divergent interests of their numerous users. More over an academic library with a magnificent building, best collection and well-mannered users might still be termed not up to standard if it does not have a crop of skilled and competent librarians to drive the collection to satisfy users' needs. So personnel matter a great deal in university libraries, if the library should be kept reasonably stable.

Hence Edom (2012), Tiwari (2013), and Attama and Ezema (2015), agree that an academic library or university library is a library established to serve academic institution such as universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, or other similar institutions. They maintain that the primary aim of establishing these academic libraries in the universities was to support and promote the complete realization of the vision and mission of their parent institution. According to Kumar (2014), the main function of an academic library is to support their parent organization in achieving organizational goals and/or objectives. What this means is that academic libraries should be involved in providing support for research and educational activities in their various institutions. This involves content development, acquisition, technical services, and users' services, providing institutional repositories, inter-library loan, and document delivery services.

The university can never achieve these objectives single handily or independently without the assistance of the university library and the functional assistance of the academic librarian. A competent academic librarian assist the fresh students to become stabilize in his search for the right information resources for his educational course, (Unagha and Igwe 2015).

### **The Functions of Academic Library to Fresh Student**

The contribution of university library to the overall objectives of the university, to say the least is immeasurable, especially as both the university and the library are inseparable in their symbiotic dependence and interaction to actualize the main objective of seeing to it that its product i.e. (student) excel in both character and in learning. It is in this sense of commitment to quality product that Lisbdnetwork (2022) posit that the library system has to shoulder the onerous responsibility of delivering a wide spectrum of services, by helping students with textbooks, parallel studies, references, books and periodicals. This could be achieved by providing a large number of bibliographic tools and up to date literature on every subject for students, teachers, researchers and scholars as well as maintaining an efficient reference and information services.

The objectives of the university library can be summarized thus

1. Provides facilities for all teaching, learning, educational and research programs of the university,
2. Creates the information needs of the teachers, students researchers associated with the university.
3. Provides facilities for the users for intellectual development, the means of power of acquiring ideas through individual effort which is a conservation of knowledge to us for research purpose.
4. Provision of current knowledge to teachers in their fields for effective teaching.

Academic libraries play a significant role towards the achievement of the goals of tertiary Institutions, and hardly would academic institutions be able to provide for the academic needs of staff and students without the services of a functional library, (Online Journal of Education and practice 2013). This is because a functional library and information services have been noted as essential ingredients for successful research, teaching and learning, (Banting *et al*, 2008).

According to Agyen-Gyasi, Lampley and Frempong (2010) academic libraries are essential contributors to knowledge generation and serve a wide spectrum of knowledge seekers. Lesikarwhile Petit (1995) noted that in conducting a research the natural place to begin an orderly search for secondary information is the library. This makes educational institution without this all important facility “the library” worrisome. Aina (2004) observed that the services provided by university library reflect the quality of the university teaching staff and students. Furthermore, Bozimo (1983) as cited by Adetona (2010) revealed in a study that overwhelming majority of Nigeria university academics had urgent need for library resources that were unavailable in the past. Ugwuanyi, Okwor and Ezeji (2011), therefore posited that the abundance of information resources provided by libraries make them a potential learning environment in the university. They advocated that a good academic library should provide multifunctional environment within the library which would create a platform for individuals to achieve set goals. Also Adeniran (2011) posited that academic libraries serves two complementary purposes, which are to support the universities curriculum and to support research of the faculty and students information needs, which must at all times reflect the constantly changing needs of their users. Proper planning backed up with good information resources will help students to achieve

this aim; nowhere can this be achieved well than in the library. A library is not a luxury but a gap filling of the necessities of life. Truly a university without a library is bereft of all hopes towards attaining a successful career in education. It is therefore pertinent that university libraries meet up with the level of assistance the fresh student requires.

### **The Relevance of Academic Librarians in Assisting Fresh Student**

According to Abrarian (2021), a librarian is a person who is in charge of or works professionally in a library and is responsible for its management and services. The librarian takes care of the library and its resources. Typical job of a librarian therefore includes managing, library collection, development and acquisitions of resources, cataloging and classification of information resources, collections management, circulation control and providing a range of services such as reference, information, instruction and training service etc. Today's librarians do not only have for use what is within their physical building, but the existence of inter library loans is a tremendous assets to them as they seek to make their collections more readily available. While the concept and practices of inter library loans had been around for a few decades, technology is working to improve the efficiency of the process through automation.

Halder (2022) corroborating the necessary assistance that should be given to fresh students observed that libraries have changed, so the role of the librarians have assumed the role of educator to teach their users how to find information both in the library and over electronic networks, librarians have expanded their roles by providing local community information through accessible computer systems. Some librarians are experts about computers and computer software others are concerned with how computer technologies can preserve the human cultural records of the past. Hence, Editorial team (2021) opined that some librarians now carry the title of "information manager" because the kinds of material they manage are more than just information presented in books. A librarian may work for a large public library or a small college computer library but their main duty is always to maintain, store and facilitate access to the information they keep.

So the obvious thing the librarian would do for the fresh student on arrival at the library is to assist the fresh student migrate to the volume of literature that abounds in the library and assist them to understand the very essence of the library as house of abundant knowledge, where information of all kinds and format could be accessed. Barbour (2022) advocates that librarians make a variety of books accessible to students they also champion reading and develop strategies to help the librarians act as a guard and guide. They jealously guard the resources in the library and guide users into information resources. Librarians following one of Ranganathan laws of library science are trained to save readers time and find alternative source of information. The librarian in this regard should lead the fresh student to information they require which they may not even know existed. Chigwada (2020) posits that librarians are now part of research teams in research institutions as they assist researcher's access relevant and current materials for writing and publishing their research work. However, that should not necessarily be because the librarian might be invited to be a part of the researcher team depending on the scope of the research work.

So collaboration, research and synergy between librarians and researchers must be encouraged and promoted for a robust and result oriented research endeavor.

In recent years, the librarians' role as a teacher has been discussed in library research, now research support is emerging as a new focus. As library services are made more available to the users, the librarians can take on a new role as part of research environments and research groups. Librarians takes on a new position away from the traditional arm chair sitting at the circulation desk where the users have to seek out the library, now information is brought to the users wherever they are located even in their various homes. Studies like Olsen (2012) shows that this can be a fruitful way of working. The librarian's role therefore is undoubtedly changing taking a stronger, more visible part of research, thus becoming an important part of the universities in a new way.

An examination of the required qualification for a librarian in an academic institution to enable him/her function effectively in the task of providing assistance to fresh student includes

- a. A minimum of first degree in library and information science or a first degree in another discipline with master in library and information science
- b. Certification with librarian's Registration Council of Nigerian (LRCN).
- c. Evidence of publication of scholarly works.
- d. ICT competencies and literacy
- e. Regular training and retraining. Librarians and other professional staff should possess, in addition the qualifications, the needed skills and academic training to meet the academic needs of the institution. The library support staff should be assigned responsibilities appropriate to their experiments training and capabilities (Ifidon and Ifidon, 2004).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2022) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advances in the means of collecting, organizing and retrieving information has changed the focus of librarians enabling a great variety of institutions and organizations as well as individuals to conduct their own searches for information, without the involvement of a library or library staff. As a result universities began to offer combined graduate programme in library science and information science. These programs usually provide more advance degree including doctorate however, particulars for admission and course requirements vary from school to school.

In the United States and Canada for instance, the appropriateness of graduates programme in Library and Information Science in preparing students to become professional librarians still ensured by accreditation by the ALA, however graduate of these programs are finding themselves qualified for a variety of professional positions in other parts of the information industry. The services, the librarian provide to the fresh student in need of information can be seen as assistant. This information assistant include, document delivery and inter-library loan services, end-user training, market research providers, alerting services, help desk services, consultancy services, financial and business information services, entertainment services and complex services (Rowley, 2006). In addition to the above assistants, university libraries also provide selective Dissemination of information services (SDI), Current Awareness

Services (CAS) Referral services (Rs), Advisory Services (AS) etc. It is in relation to this Aju and Ape (2011) note that library is concerned with the acquisitions, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, study and consultation. Conventionally, information services include bibliography compilation, indexing, abstracting, selective dissemination of information, current awareness services etc which makes it possible for researchers and fresh students to access required information from the printed and electronic information, resources without delay. With the availability of ICT in libraries the above mentioned assistant are provided with relative ease through the internet facilities (Okiy, 2011). That is why it becomes mandatory for all academic libraries with the assistance of the university librarian to combine the provision of both conventional and modern information resources, so as to meet today's information demand of the university fresh students lecturers and their researchers. To this end the university librarian services are the key to the university warehouse of information resource for the fresh university students.

### **Fresh University Students**

Fresh university students as defined by American Dictionary (2022) is a student in the first year of a program of study at a university, college, or high school, or and a school for students aged 14-18 years. Abudulmin (2022) says at the beginning of a new session, usually from this period that many schools release admissions, fresh students often in the euphoria of the admission have their optimistic bar in full scale. Fresh students come to meet arrays of tutorial that they have to choose from. The school associations such as departmental, faculties, or states deem it as their responsibility to provide headway for the new comers. A freshman, first year, or fresh student is a person in the first year at an educational institution, usually a secondary school or at the college and university level, but also in other forms of post-secondary educational institutions (Wikipedia 2016).

For a fresh student to achieve his aim of coming to study at a university he or she need to plan well and be equipped with the right materials that will suit into his or her course at the university to do this better the student need the library and information resources this is in line with Arie (2007) who defined the library as a repository of information materials that is professionally organized for easy retrieval. He further stated that library is where learned men communicate with learners books. It is rightly said that knowledge is power; this power is transferred through print and non-print materials especially when they are made available. No wonder Norman Cousin (2001) in his quote see library as the delivery room for the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life. A fresh student who is a novice in the field of information materials needs the assistance of the university librarians. In this vain the librarian now acts as a guard and guide. The librarian guard the resources in the library and as well as guide the fresh students into information resources. Librarians are trained to find alternatives sources of information for the fresh student. When the fresh student fail to plan at the first year the fresh student definitely plan to fail, as a result oriented study start with preparation. Plan is vital be it for examination, lecturing or whatever venture. In line with Andrew (2005) who agreed that for

an effective study to take place it is necessary to make adequate preparation to ensure success. Meaning that for a fresh student to achieve his aim he must abide by the basic rules guiding the use of the library and submit to the instruction and guidance of the university librarian. No matter how well trained and skilled a builder is, he needs a ladder for his support to climb as he build, so likewise the fresh student, no matter how intelligent he is, he needs assistant of the academic librarian to achieve his educational goal and success. All these assistants are provided to the fresh students to ensure that they have easy access to their information needs with dexterity. Librarians in University libraries as a matter of necessity should imbibe the culture of making sure that the fresh university students are provided with these assistant with a view to ameliorating their information seeking problems.

### **Resource tools for Academic Librarian's effective Job Performance**

Just as the vein cannot keep the heart going without blood so likewise the academic librarian cannot assist the fresh student in the university library without the information resources in their educational pursuit. Resources of the university library are examined from three perspectives viz: information resources, staffing/human resources and services infrastructural resources. Popoola and Haliso (2009) define information resources as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats, such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD ROM/Database, the internet/Email, video tapes/Cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computer, micro forms and so on. These information materials are the raw materials that libraries acquires catalogue, stock and make available to their patron.

Alaribe (2022), Library resources are basically traditional information resources; 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 includes, but not limited to online libraries and journals, online encyclopedias like the Wikipedia, blogs, video logs like the YouTube, etc. Even movie clipping especially from history have played a large role in modern research and hence are classifiable under library resources. Aghe 2022, Library resources are materials held in a library for use by library patrons. They cater for information, academic or even entertainment needs of library users. They are usually categorized into books, journals, manuscripts magazines etc. They can also be paper based or in digital formats.

Even in the face of the new demands on libraries brought about by the changing needs library users still expect libraries and librarians to fulfill the same role as in the past: provide access to information when needed and to preserve human knowledge/records for posterity (Friend, 2014).

1. **Information Resources:** This can come virtually in two different format print and electronic resources (Aniebo, 2004).

**A Print Resources:** Printed library materials/resources are made up of all items that are printed on paper such as text book, references, sources and serial publication.

- **Books:** A book is a set of written or printed publications fastened together to hinge at one side.
- **Reference Books:** Reference books are designed for accessing specific facts or information. Examples include General Encyclopedias –subject Encyclopedias. Dictionaries, Almanacs and Year books. Hand books and Annuals – Bibliographies and Atlases.
- **Periodicals:** Periodicals are any type of publication that is published in a series, periodically or on a regular basis (i.e. daily week, monthly such as:  
Newspaper: presents the main facts or highlights of an event on daily basis or weekly.
- **Magazine:** Magazine are intended for general interest reading, it is a collection of article and images about diverse topics of popular interest and current events.
- **Journal:** Journals have collections of articles written by experts in academic or professional fields.

**B. Electron Resources:** Internet is like a window in the world. Library on the other hand help mankind in seeing the world through knowledge provided by the library. The provided access to information in a digital format are found as databases, websites, a wikis, audios and videos materials (tapes, DVDs, photographs, slide).

- **Databases:** A database contains abstracts or brief summaries of the articles, while other data contain complete, full text articles. They may also contains citation to podcasts, blogs, videos and other media types.
- **Websites and wikis:** the web allows you to access most types of information on the internet through a browser. One of the main features of the web is the ability to quickly link to other related information. The web contains information beyond plain text including sounds, images, and videos.
- **Audio and video materials:** includes tapes, CDs, VHS tapes, DVDs, photographs, slides. The importance of audio visual as an informational media cannot be underestimated: they serve as facilitation of information transfer and communication for they make teaching and communication more comprehensive.

**2. Staffing/Human Resources:** For effective and efficient service delivery, it is required that the academic library be staffed with different categories of relevant personnel's which includes professional (academic librarians), Para-professionals, and support staff.

According to Scott and Karren (2012), the academic libraries should have appropriately qualified and adequate staff commensurate with the academic programs offered. The institutional population, the number of service points and the hours during which services are offered. The composition of the library staff shall constitute professional librarians 35%, para-professionals; technical and clerical staff 65% with certification by the librarian's registration council of Nigeria (LRCN) 2014). The number of library staff depends on the range of operations and services provided by the library and upon its total workload requirement.

**3. Furniture and Equipment:** Academic library should provide adequate facilities for students, lecturers and other authorized users at convenient and conducive place for study and research. Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN, 2014) emphasized the need to provide furniture and equipment for academic libraries and should be made to promote the use of the furniture and equipment with local content, but with regard for international standards. The professional body in encouraging minimum standards stresses that adequate equipment should be provided for computer laboratories, e-learning facilities and resources rooms. It is recommended that the following library furniture and equipment should be provided in adequate measures: Shelves; Journal display racks; Circulation desk ; Reading tables and carrels; Reading chairs Catalogue cabinets; Cabinets; Kardex; Kiosks –steps; Trolleys; Pick up vans/trucks; Periodical racks; OPAC; Translators etc.

### **Conclusion**

It is beyond all reasonable doubt that a university with an academic library is of utmost value to the fresh student, just as the farm land without manure cannot yield its best. Without an academic library the educational function of the fresh students will be malnourished. Again, the university with a standard library cannot boast of having it all, without the position of a well-trained academic librarian whose duty is to guard the library and its content and guide the clientele of this academic library to achieve their goals. No matter the standard of the university and its academic library, if there are no students to use the library, it will be liken to a well prepared meal without a consumer. More so, the fresh students in tertiary institutions are the main recipients of the professional training of librarians. We would agree that the university has tried by establishing an academic library with well-trained librarian who affords a good number of fresh students that are ready to use the library the opportunity to achieve their academic goals and this journey will be incomplete without information resources, so the librarian must make sure that the parent institution (the University) provides these resources. Even in the face of the new demands on libraries brought about by the changing needs, library users still expect libraries and librarians to fulfill the same roles as in the past. It is better and safer to say that time is changing and for academic libraries to best serve student and faculty, corresponding changes must be made. The study has truly shown that no-library-no-university because the university no matter, cannot flourish without an academic library. University libraries invest a huge amount on collection development, processing and storage of information resources. Librarians should

now be aware that they are no longer the sole link between these students and the online store of knowledge as these students are able to independently search the internet and the web themselves. Hence librarians in university libraries should adopt strategies that will enable them to assist these fresh students to see the usefulness of information resources in this digital era.

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