

PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN EDO AND DELTA STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study adopted the survey research design to assess the procurement, organization and use of unpublished projects emanating from selected colleges of Education Libraries in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. Colleges of Education Agbor, Warri and Igueben were purposively selected for the study. Secondary sources were used as necessary literature support while questionnaire was used to provide the core data. The data were analysed using simple percentage. Findings revealed that some college libraries are yet to apply professional methods of document handling in management of student's projects in addition to inadequacies in accommodation, facilities and staff. The restricted access practiced in these libraries perpetrated lecturers merchandization of their personal copies and also could not prevent theft and mutilation of these materials. Among other recommendations, lecturers who make merchandize of their copies should be seriously sanctioned.

Key words: Project management, libraries, colleges of education

INTRODUCTION

The major function of academic libraries is to support their parents' institutions major objectives in the discharge of their functions of teachings, researching, learning and community development. This function is executed by the libraries through meticulous selection of materials acquisition, processing and dissemination of information in various formats. Besides textbooks and serials, which are conventional library resources, College of Education libraries also have in their collections, specialized and unconventional materials which have both research and educational values such as students research project work.

Many names have been used to describe this work such as long essay, reports, special study, dissertation, projects and theses. Project is used in this study to embrace all unpublished materials produced by students as a condition for the award of academic certificates, diplomas and degrees in institutions of higher learning. Anuobi (2002) opined that production of original work in the form of project reports, theses or dissertation is usually a standard requirement for undergraduate or postgraduate degrees awarded by universities. Nnadozie posited that projects and theses are produced within the respective parent institutions of any type of academic libraries. Another study by Mbofung (2000) confirmed that this requirement is also true in non-university tertiary institutions.

Tertiary institutions choose different terms for treatises or research reports prepared by graduating students of their various academic programmes. However, a

common practice has become noticeable in Nigerian institutions of higher learning. In this new development, Nigerian institutions of higher learning use the term "project" to refer to such works produced in respect of undergraduate programmes while theses is used for works prepared in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of postgraduate degrees. This agrees with the submission of Prytherch (2000) and Ifidon (2006). Prytherch is of the view that "projects" refer to various categories of undergraduate programmes especially bachelors, certificates and diplomas while Ifidon (2006) opines that theses mean works based on systematic investigation with a view to earning masters and doctorate degrees.

Isah (2007) and Egona (1999) added another dimension to the argument when they reported that theses/dissertation referred to copies of research work bound together produced by graduating students in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a certificate diploma, first degree, masters or doctorate degree projects, thesis and dissertation are all semantics that are used interchangeably, and are generated within the respecting parent institutions of academic libraries. A copy is required from each student which ultimately end up in the libraries attached to such institutions. The libraries attached to institutions of higher learning are saddled with the responsibility of managing these materials. Prytherch (2000) and Kanter (1987) postulated the basic principles of systematic control of recorded information as creation, maintenance, utilization, storage, retrieval and disposition works. Okoro (2003) and Clark (1999) also give reasons for the procurement of projects and dissertations. They asserted that unpublished sources such as projects have vital intelligent information. This explains why they need adequate preservation measure management and utilization.

Johnson and Kallaus cited by Nnadozie (2006) opined that information materials are stored because information in them help in making decisions, assist in departmental communication provide a record of the past and provide data useful for legal purposes. Based on the above, this study is focused on the Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta States. These are Colleges of Education Ekiadolor, Igueben in Edo State and College of Education Agbor and Warri in Delta State. These Colleges are ideal for this study because they were set up at the same time by the same government under the defunct Bendel State led by late professor Ambrose Ali. Moreover the socio political and economic conditions in Nigeria, characteristics of users, organizational patterns, services and funding are almost the same. Libraries in charge of these projects completed the questionnaires. Since all colleges of education derive statutory regulations from N.C.C.E. The findings of this study would be a representation of management and organization of projects and theses in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The objectives of this study are: to examine the techniques used by colleges of education libraries in the management of projects; to examine the problem associated with the management of projects, and to know the users of projects in colleges of education; and to ascertain the storage and circulation methods.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design. Colleges of Education Agbor, Warri and Igueben were purposively selected for the study. The research instrument used for this study was questionnaire; copies of the questionnaire were given to the staff incharge of projects or thesis in the colleges under study. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher at different periods. This accounted for prompt response by respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section A was meant to illicit background information from respondents while section B. contained specific questions on the management and use of projects. Data were analysed using simple percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was discovered that all the colleges of Education under study used the nomenclature "project" to describe unpublished works produced by students as a precondition for graduation. The libraries do not adhere to the strict professional practice expected in the management of these unpublished research works. At the College of Education Ekiadolor, it was discovered that these materials were deposited at the serial section and they were shelved along side with obsolete journals headed by non-professional staff.

Table 1: Method of acquisition

Methods	Libraries	Total	%
Legal deposit Ekiadolor	Igueben Warri Agbor	4	100
Purchase	Nil	Nil	Nil
Donation	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: Field work 2009

These libraries obtain projects strictly through one method as shown on table 1. The libraries under study acquire projects through a compulsory practice imposed by the management of an academic institution of higher learning on graduating students to submit to the library a copy of their research project as legal deposit. This practice is mandatory to all graduating students. None of the libraries made direct purchase of project work. None of the libraries agreed that they receive copies of projects from staff on further studies. At the college of Education Ekiadolor, it was discovered that, the college library undertake the binding of project at a price of N1000:00 per set of four and therefore withhold a copy for the library use. Obviously, most unpublished projects in academic libraries of these nature were procured through legal deposits. Though this method is effective, it does not lead to the procurement of the research reports produced in other institutions of higher learning. Diversity of this category of information offering in the respective libraries is therefore questionable.

Location of Project: At the College of Education Igueben there was no collection of project. The college library was involve in a serious fire disaster in 2006 hence the total collection was burnt. The College was defunct and reopen in 2006 hence students are yet to be graduated. At the college of Education Ekiadolor, projects are

kept at the serial department of the library only Agbor and Warri house these materials at the Reader's Services Department (R.S.D). The R.S.D is the proper location for these materials since the section is easily accessible to the public. Beside this, it has part of its brief, the responsibility of ensuring optimal utilization of library resources.

Mode of Processing and Organization Pattern: Several methods of processing were noticed in the management of projects in the libraries investigated. All the libraries stamped and accessioned their projects before allowing them to go into circulation. However, it was discovered that College of Education Ekiadolor stamp twice. This respectively indicated that the binding was done in the library and as a mark of ownership. Stamping also provides a measure against pilferage. It was observed that all libraries investigated stamp on the preliminary pages and specific pages of the main text known only to library staff for security reasons. Accession numbers are written only on the verso pages. None of the libraries studied actually indexed their projects.

It goes to prove that an appreciable number of libraries do not practice this mode of processing for projects. This invariably leads to the problem of access and retrieval in Warri and Ekiadolor College Libraries. The libraries created files where project titles are entered in an arithmetic progression according to subjects and departments. The files are given to users on request to know what is available in this regard. On the other hand circulation and usage of these materials are enhanced when they are indexed. The most important activities of the library: Cataloging and classification were not adopted in the understudied libraries, which goes to show that these activities were unpopular in most libraries as regards to processing of projects. It was discovered that 75% of the respondents adopted the same mode of arrangement of projects. The system adopted was one that would not stand the test of time. Projects are arranged according to department and arithmetic number assigned to them. The number functions as the call number or classmark. Records of the projects and the numbers assigned to them are filed according to subject.

No doubt, the pattern for organization of materials adopted by any library will either help to facilitate or frustrate users in the access, retrieval and use of such materials. Whereas every organizational method has its merits and demerits, arrangement of projects on the basis of departments either alphabetically, serially or chronologically makes for easier access and retrieval of materials.

Accommodation, Facilities and Personnel: All the libraries studied do not have adequate accommodation for their projects. 2008/2009 sessions of graduating students from College of Education Ekiadolor added about 1,820 projects to the collection. This is repeated yearly unlike other library materials faced with inadequate funding for procurement/acquisition, effective management and utilization of these materials depends, to a very large extent, on availability of ample accommodation for both users and staff. Shelves, reading tables and chairs are the basic facilities in the libraries studied. The current projects are shelved while in two cases the obsolete ones are kept on the floor beside the shelves however, reading chairs and tables are provided

for users. Only Ekiadolor allows the photocopies of the table of content and reference pages for users while Agbor allows the photocopy of at most five pages of the project. The projects section at the College of Education Ekiadolor is manned by 4 staff, one of which is MLS holder while staff of other sections are clerks and a library attendants while Agbor and Warri are manned by higher library officers.

Circulation System: All the libraries studied practiced restrictive access to their projects, this method is used to curb the incidences of plagiarism which is common amongst students in tertiary institutions. However, this practice is against Rangana 3rd law of librarianship which states that "Books are for use" it is not enough to acquire materials but adequate provision must be made to ensure circulation and utilization of these materials.

Table 2: Users of projects in Colleges of Education

Users	Responses	%
Students from within	4	100
Students from other schools	3	75
Lecturers	-	-
Non academic staff	3	75

Source: Field work 2009

Table 2 shows that students are the main users of projects in academic libraries. Students from the institutions studied are the greatest users of project works in the libraries. However an ample number of users are actually affiliated to other institutions of higher learning. This can be explained from the high incidences of plagiarism amongst students of higher institution of learning and other researchers. Only a few non-academic staff also makes use of projects. Most of them junior staff that also running N.C.E. part time programme.

Terms of Availability

The four libraries studied work morning and afternoon shift. Patrons could only access projects between 9am and 3pm. The procedure is almost similar in all the libraries. Students identify themselves with the use of the library identity card which they have previously obtain for a fee from the library. Non-students establish their identity before they are attended to by the officer in charge. For those from other institutions, they must obtain a letter of introduction from the parent library. The identity card and introduction letters are deposited with the desk officer for scrutiny. The staff on duty normally ascertains the patrons research topic and then provide matching or related projects. Verbatim reproduction is normally prohibited in all the libraries. In the case of college of education Ekiadolor, the patrons are allowed to make photocopy of the table of content and the reference pages. This services is rendered free of charge.

Table 3: Problems in management of projects.

Problem	Frequency	%
Inadequate accommodation	4	100
Shortage of staff	4	100
Lack of facilities	4	100
Test	3	75
Mutilation	3	75

Source: Field work 2009

All the libraries studied had accommodation problems, shortage of staff and inadequate facilities. Most of the project rooms/units operate in adhoc spaces that have been turned to permanent accommodation. Theft and mutilation of the vital materials are still rampant despite the restricted access practiced in all the libraries. It was also found out the staff of this unit sell or give out project for a fee. These problems lead to search failure and user frustration, which affect the quality of service delivery. Inadequacies in terms of number and qualifications of staff of projects sections coupled with the poor funding of academic libraries, indexing and abstracting services unavailable. Necessary tools and facilities that can facilitate the management of projects are beyond the reach of these libraries.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No thought that projects have numerous values that can satisfy users information needs. They have research, academic and archival values. They are acquired through statutory legal deposit. It was observed that the libraries understudied had inadequate accommodation, personnel and working facilities, the organization and circulation of these materials were rather lethargic. This situation hinders efficiency in service delivery. To help remedy the situation and enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the management and utilization of projects in academic libraries, Libraries of colleges of education should be well funded, since the procurement of working tools, facilities and design and implementation of information service are dependent on availability of funds. Colleges of Education Libraries can go into exchange programmes with other academic libraries. This is to ensure that projects produced that are relevant to these other libraries are exchanged for other kind of materials.

Projects with multiple topics (over flogged topics) can be given to other institutions as gift to create accommodation for more current well written ones. By their very nature, they are prone to deterioration; hence adequate provision should be made for their maintenances and preservation. As a result of their specialized nature, restricted circulation and high demand, adequate provision should be made for the accommodation, facilities and personnel for the management of projects in academic libraries. Severe punishment should be meted on staff and student who sell, steal and mutilate projects. Severe sanctions should be imposed on lectures who make merchandise of past projects in the guise of supervision.

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