THE EXTENT OF AFR1CANA RESOURCES AVAILABILITY IN VARIOUS FORMATS IN SOME NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent of the availability of the various Africana resources formats in each of the six federal university libraries with a view of suggesting ways to arouse interest in the development of the collection and its usage in these university libraries. The total population comprised of 89 Africana librarians. Descriptive survey research, questionnaire, interviews, and observation checklist were administered to a sampled population of 35 Africana Librarian. The questionnaires were appropriately validated by three persons. Interview and observation checklist were used to gain more insight into, some issues raised by the study. Mean was used to answer the research question slated for the study. The finding revealed that Africana resources are minimally available in each of the university libraries. The study revealed that theses, government. monographs and newspapers/magazines are the most available Africana formats in these university libraries.

Introduction

The university library as opined by Ode and Omokaro (2007) is established to fulfill both the needs of the instructional program of the parent institution and the research needs of the students, faculty staff members and people outside the academic community through the collection and acquisition of knowledge in all formats and to organize knowledge for easy retrieval. Africana resources are therefore essential information sources in Nigerian academic libraries. They include written and oral information by Africans or non-Africans about Africa. Africana has its origin from the rich indigenous knowledge of the Africans handed down orally from generation to generation. (Okore, Ekere and Eke 2009). This knowledge cuts across various subject areas like agriculture (food items, crops, food preparation, plants, farming, animal behavior, food preservation etc), traditional medicine (bone setting, use of natural herbs for different ailments etc). They include subject areas of cultural anthropology, folklore, history, literature, religion, politics, psychology, sociology, traditional medicine of Africa, etc. The resources also cut across different resource formats like almanacs, charts, pictures, subject files, internet information resources, CD-ROM etc.

Africana in the era of information technology has also expanded to include video recordings of some events in African countries, like the documentaries of the South African Apartheid, the African slave trade, the Nigerian Biafran war, etc. According to the South African Book Development Education Trust publications, SABDET (2004), these documentaries are in filmstrips, and VCDs. Bailg (2004) also asserts that Africana includes video conferences of

events in Africa, like Africa at 21 that was launched in April 2007 organized by the British Council Office in WindLock and Alfreton libraries in Derbyshire.

According to Fage (1987), Africana resources originated and developed through oral tradition, written documents, archaeology, anthropology, serology, astrology and culture. Written documents include European and Arabic documents like newspaper reports, magazines and books. However, African culture is the main source of Africana resources. As Etounga-Manguellen and Serageldin (1998) put it, at the background of every African history is their culture. The continent of Africa is indeed so rich and diverse in its culture.

However, before 1950 not much was documented on this rich culture because publications on Africa were controlled and directed from outside, (Fyfe, 1950). As of 1959, the number of African authors could be counted in units; this was because publishing in Africa was not strong. The publications that existed in the monasteries at Ethiopia and Eritrea were limited to religious and affiliated political activities, (Harlan and Arbor, 2006). Thus, Europeans wrote most of the materials documented in those early times on the continent. But their publications centered on social anthropology which was their major interest.

Considering the fact that there was need for Africans to awake to the responsibility of contributing more to the few writings on ground on the continent, Afigbo (1990:16), after his visit to some universities in the United Kingdom was not satisfied with what, the scanty Africana materials on ground. He reiterated the need for Africans to face the responsibility of building up their continent by developing these materials. The few Africana resources in circulation show that Africans have not much interest in the development of these materials. Thus Etounga-Manguelle (1998) attributed this low patronage of Africana resources to low availability of the resources (formats) in Nigerian university libraries. He warned that Africa will lose her unique cultural features through the intrusion of modern uses and behaviors alien to her values if Africana is not developed, utilized and preserved.

Librarians, as custodians of information, must therefore consciously make every effort to see that the various formats of Africana resources are available in the library and they get to the users at the shortest time possible. However, Afeworki and Holley (2006) are of the view that some of the challenges of the librarians include acquiring materials published in Africa, no established vendor covered the whole of African continent and that publishing environment in Africa was not strong and is still weak, the 2002 seminar on scholarly publishing in Africa confirmed this. The weak publishing environment notwithstanding, functions of the library as opined by Ode and Omokaro (2007) are acquisition, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format they appear and they cannot shy away from this. To further add to this, Raseroka (2006) observed that the role of collection of this resources by libraries has been neglected because of the difficulties in keeping track of them. Africans rather publish for their individual interest, ranging from their promotions to financial gains. If African university libraries are lacking in this then the extent of the availability of these resources in their different formats may be low in the university libraries.

If the history of the African continent is at all important, one wonders why the various Africana formats are not well developed in some university libraries in Nigeria. (Udensi and Dike, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Africana contains the history and culture of Africa and covers the experiences of both the African continent and the African in Diaspora. Its value transcends economic, social and cultural values. If nothing is done about its gradual disappearance and negligence in Nigerian university libraries, generations of Africans to come may not know much about the history of their origin or their cultural heritage. Studies have proved that the original documentaries of the various Africana formats are fast disappearing due to neglect by both librarians and users. (Alegbeleye, 1994, SABDET, 2005).

To what extent are Africana resources in various formats available in each of the Nigerian university libraries?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to find out the extent of the availability in various formats of Africana resources in Nigerian university libraries with a view of sensitising Nigerian university libraries on the need to develop the various formats in which they are kept in the university libraries.

The specific purpose includes:

To determine the extent of Africana resources available in various formats in each of the Nigerian university libraries

Significance of the Study

The findings will enable researchers to know what each of the university libraries has in its collection.

It is expected that the findings and recommendations of this study will help to improve the various Africana resources formats in Nigerian university libraries.

This research will also be useful to students in that it will lead them to use more of Africana materials in various formats for their assignments, examinations and research work.

The universities in Nigeria will benefit from the findings because the recommendations of this study when implemented will lead to the establishment of Africana units in the third generation universities and help the first and second generation university libraries to acquire more in their areas of deficiencies. The university libraries will also benefit from the study because it will lead to increase in library subvention to the university libraries. It is hoped that the study will arouse the interest of other researchers in other areas of Africana studies.

Scope of the Study

The study covers the various formats in which Africana materials are found in six first and second generation Nigerian federal university libraries that have Africana resources. The six university libraries studied are: University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Uyo, Uyo, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Jos, Jos and University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri.

Literature Review

The Concept of Africana

There are indeed various concepts of Africana by different writers and organizations. Some organizations see it from the point of view of the African indigenous knowledge. Such organizations include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and in this light have defined indigenous knowledge as the local knowledge unique to a given society or culture, the knowledge that an indigenous community accumulates over generations of living in a particular environment, (Echezona, 2010). Amoda, (1978), Mushlin (1998) and others conceive Africana from a cultural perspective and have defined culture as common history, language, religion, custom,

geography, literature, music and visual arts. Africana resources are works on Africa.

An Overview of the Nature and Development of Africana Resource:

According to Zell (2003), book on Africa made its first impact in Sub-Saharan Africa largely through the influence and activities of Christian missionaries. It is important to state here that during the struggle for independence, publications of nationalist newspapers and magazines flourished but when independence was achieved, their focus changed to publishing educational books essentially for primary and secondary schools.

Collections on Africana as Fyfe (1976) notes included government reports on the explosive political happenings at that time such as the Aba riots of 1929, the Upper belt disturbances of 1935, the Nigerian general strike of 1945, a whole collection of nationalist literature. These early collections included also the writings of contemporary generation of political leaders like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Eyo Ita, James Coleman, Ndabaninge Sithole, Basil Davison, Professor George Shepperson. The collections of Clarence Holt also contributed a lot to these Africana collections. He was an African American and a bibliographer who started his Africana collections right from his youth and during the 1977 FESTAC in Nigeria, he displayed them. They were finally bought over by the Ahmadu Bello university library. Thus this important information source was collected by institutions either through donations from individuals or acquired from individuals. Many can still be found in the custody of individuals like politicians and some private scholars who used or are using them for one research or the other.

The poor and low development rate of Africana is not without reasons. As Mensah (2004),puts it, the emphasis for a long time was on European literature. One of the reasons for poor recognition accorded Africana could be the fact that in those colonial years, the education system did not emphasize the African culture. Things however began to change when writers like Chinua Achebe published "*Things Fall Apart*" and many others published by Africans in the Heinemann African Writers Series.

To preserve these resources that describe and virtually personify the African man, his culture and traditions for use by the present and future generations is a task that must be done. Thus, librarians as information providers and custodians must not shy away from this responsibility.

Research Method

The study was carried out under the following subheadings: design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of the instrument, and method of data analysis.

Design of the Study

The design of this study is descriptive survey. The choice of a descriptive survey is because it is appropriate for a study that investigates an existing condition or event in relation to a population, (Nworgu, 2006). This study is therefore designed to gather information on the extent availability of various Africana formats in some of the university libraries in Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised 89 Africana librarians in the thirteen first and second-generation federal university libraries involved in the study. They are as follows: University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, University of Benin, Benin, University of Calabar, Calabar, University of Uyo,Uyo, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, University of Lagos, Lagos, Obafemi

Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria, University of Sokoto, Sokoto, Uiversity of Ilorin, Ilorin, University of Jos, Jos and University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size comprised of 35 Africana librarians. The researcher used all the 35 Africana librarians from the six selected universities because the total population is small. The study made use of multi- random sampling technique. This stems from the fact that the researcher intends to study a heterogeneous population since it intends to provide results from the samples drawn from the sub-groups. The sampling procedure adopted comprised three stages. The first stage involved the selection of the federal universities whose library staff (Africana staff) would participate in the study.

From the list of the 13 first and second generation federal universities in Nigeria that have Africana collections, one university was randomly selected from each of the six geo-political zones in the country. This was done so as to have a good coverage of all the federal universities that have Africana collections. The process resulted in the selection of six universities used for the study and this was the second stage.

The third stage of the sampling technique involved the identification and selection of the respondent group. Library staff included all professional librarians and all the library officers in the Africana unit. This was because only a few staff works in the unit. The Africana staffs were selected because they have direct dealings with Africana and are responsible for information delivery in the unit.

Instrument for Data Collection

Librarians' questionnaire, Observation checklist, Interview schedule were used to elicit information from the respondents.

Librarians' Questionnaire: The questionnaire included personal information and questions on the extent of Availability of Africana resources (in various formats) and it was made up of 17 items. Questionnaires were used to encourage the respondents to express their opinion freely.

Observation Checklist: The use of direct observation was very essential in this study because it helped the researcher to know the actual situation concerning the issues raised by the study.

Interview Schedule: An interview schedule was used by the researcher for this study to elicit answers to some of the issues raised by the study. The answers given were used to buttress some issues raised by the research in the discussions of the findings.

Validation of Instruments

The questionnaires for the different categories of the respondents were validated by three persons: two professional colleagues and one expert in test and measurement/evaluation and their corrections and suggestions were included in the final draft.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to trial testing using 29 librarians of Bayero University, Kano and the University of Ilorin who were not used for the study. Responses of these librarians to the items of the instrument were analyzed to determine the degree of internal consistency of the questionnaire items using the Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient formula. (Uzoagulu, 1998, Borg & Gall, 1999 and Frisbie, 1988). Another reason for the use of this method is that it requires single administration of the instrument to establish the internal consistency estimate of the items.

The results of the analysis show high reliability coefficients on the Cronbach Alpha scale respectively that are considered high enough for the study.

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly by the researcher and two trained research assistants. The research assistants were personally trained by the researcher. The researcher and the assistants administered and collected the questionnaires from the respondents in the six universities that were used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher used mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research question stated for the study. The researcher used a 4 - point rating scale and therefore for research question, limits of real numbers were used to make decision on the extent of quantity availability of the Africana formats.

RESULTS

To what extent are the Africana resources available in various formats in each of the Nigerian university libraries?

Table 1 displays the results of the analysis in respect of the responses of the Africana librarians in the university libraries as regards the extent of the availability of Africana resources in different formats in Nigerian university libraries.

Table 1: Mean of the responses of the Africana Librarians on the Extent of the Availability of Africana Resources in Various Formats Across the Universities

Where 'HE'=High extent, 'ME'=Moderate Extent

Items	Jos	Uyo	Ibadan	Nsukka	Maiduguri	Zaria	Total	Decision
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1. Theses	3.00	4.00	4.0	4.0	3.43	3.80	3.65	HE
2. Government Documents	3.67	4.00	4.0	3.67	3.43	3.30	3.50	HE
3. Monographs	2.67	4.00	4.0	2.67	2.86	3.20	3.08	HE
4. Magazines\news papers	4.00	4.00	4.0	2.00	3.71	3.00	3.31	HE
5. Journals	2.67	3.00	4.0	2.00	3.43	3.00	3.00	ME
6. Charts	1.67	4.00	4.0	1.33	3.14	2.10	2.46	ME
7. Pictures	2.33	4.00	4.0	1.33	3.29	2.46	2.62	ME
8. Maps	3.33	4.00	4.00	2.33	3.14	2.30	2.85	ME
9. Almanacs	2.00	4.00	4.00	1.33	2.86	2.00	2.53	ME
10. Subject Files	2.67	4.00	4.00	1.33	3.00	2.70	2.77	ME
11. CD-ROMs	1.67	2.00	1.0	1.67	2.71	3.30	2.58	ME
12. Video Recordings	2.33	1.50	4.0	1.33	3.71	3.40	3.00	ME
13.Internet Information Resources	2.00	1.00	2.0	2.33	3.43	2.70	2.62	ME
14. CDs	2.67	1.50	2.0	1.33	3.71	2.40	2.58	ME
15. Slides	1.67	3.00	4.00	1.33	3.71	2.30	2.62	ME
16. Projected Films	2.33	1.00	4.00	1.33	3.71	2.50	2.61	ME
17. Microforms	3.00	1.50	4.00	1.33	2.86	2.80	2.62	ME
18. Overall	2.57	3.0	3.59	1.92	3.30	2.79	2.85	ME

The table shows the mean of the response of the Africana librarians on the extent of the availability of Africana resources in various formats (print and non print formats) across the university libraries as well as general availability in all the university libraries put together (overall mean). Print items such as theses (3.65), government documents (3.50), magazines (3.31) and monographs (3.08) are highly available with mean of (3.65, 3.50, 3.08 and 3.31) respectively while item like Journals (3.0), maps (2.85), subject files (2.77), pictures (2.62), almanacs (2.53) and charts (2.43) are moderately available in Nigerian university libraries. In the same vein, all the non print formats are moderately available in the university libraries. For instance items like Internet information resources, slides, monographs, projected films, CD -ROMs and CDs are all moderately available in all the libraries. The availability of Africana resources also varies from one university library to another. For instance theses are highly available in University of Uyo, University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, University of Maiduguri and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with mean of (4.0, 4.0 and 4.0) respectively and also highly available in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (3.80), University of Maiduguri (3.43) but moderate in University of Jos (3.0). It is worth stating that theses are available in University of Uyo, University of Ibadan and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the collection is weak in the university library in Jos.

The Africana collections on government documents are very strong in University of Uyo and University of Ibadan. The Africana collections in monographs are also very strong in Uyo and Ibadan but weak in Jos and Nsukka libraries. Ahmadu Bello university library has the highest collections in CD-ROM while the university library, Ibadan registered the lowest collection of this resource but very strong in video recordings. However, University of Uyo and the University of Nigeria, have the weakest collection of this resource. University of Jos, University of Uyo, University of Ibadan, University of Maiduguri are rich in Africana collections on magazines while the University library Nsukka and the University library Zaria have very weak collections of this resource. The responses also show that the Africana collections on journals at the University library, Ibadan is strong while the collection at Nsukka is weak. The internet resources collections are strong in Maiduguri and very weak in Uyo, while Uyo and Ibadan have very strong collections on charts, Nsukka and Jos have very weak collections of this resource. Pictorial collections on Africana are very strong in Uyo and Ibadan but Nsukka has the weakest collections on pictures, CDs, projected films, subject files, and microforms. However, the responses revealed that while theses and government documents are the most available in the universities studied, print media items like charts, pictures, subject files, maps, almanacs and non print media like internet information resources, slides, microform, projected film, CD-ROM and CDs are generally weak across the university libraries.

The responses of the Africana librarians interviewed are also a further confirmation of the above revelations on the availability of Africana resources in various formats in the university libraries.

DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion on the Findings

Extent of Africana resources available in different formats

From the responses of the Africana librarians in the different university libraries the Africana collections in print media like theses, government documents, monographs and news paper/ magazines are very high in all the university libraries. Journals are moderately available while maps, almanacs, charts, pictures and subject files are low across the university libraries. Specifically the University libraries in Nsukka, Zaria, Jos and Maiduguri are weak in monographs, magazines and almanacs. However charts, though available, stood out as the lowest Africana collection across the University libraries.

The responses also revealed that Africana collections on CD-ROM, video recordings, internet information resources, CDs, slides, projected Films, and micro forms are all available in different degrees in all the university libraries used for the study. Microforms, projected films, CD-ROM, CDs and slides Africana collections are low in different degrees across the university libraries. The finding revealed that Jos, Uyo, Ibadan and Nsukka have the weakest collections of CD-ROM in their Africana resources. One other disturbing revelation from this research is that Nsukka is consistently weak in the following Africana formats, CD-ROM, video recordings, journals, charts, pictures, CDS, slides, maps, projected films, almanacs, subject files and microforms.

It is also clear from the findings that all the formats of Africana resources exist in all the universities used for the study, but it is also true that their availability in various differ in strengths and weaknesses from one university library to another. The research also revealed that in all the university libraries used for the study, theses have the highest availability. In the overall, Ibadan has the most extensive collection on Africana formats, followed by Maiduguri.

These findings are consistent with the responses of Africana librarians to the question on the availability of Africana formats in the university libraries. They are of the view that most of the collections are in bad shape because they are not kept in the appropriate room temperature. This also confirmed the research findings of Alegbeleye (1990) and the Co-operative Africana microform project (CAMP, 2004) that limited facilities exist for collecting and storing the Africana resources and that there is not much interest in the preservation of these resources in Nigerian university libraries. This accounted for the diminishing and scanty volumes in the different forms of the collection in the university libraries. For instance, as old as the university library, Nsukka is, it is weak in most of the Africana formats.

Summary of Major Findings

The study revealed that theses, government documents, monographs and magazines are highly available in the university libraries. The findings of this study show that video recordings and journals (non print and print media) are moderately available in Nigerian university libraries.

Print media like charts, pictures, subject files, maps and almanac are also found to be very low in the university libraries while non print Africana resources like

CD-ROM, internet information resources, CDs, slides, projected films, and microforms are also very low in Nigerian university libraries.

Implications of the Study

The implication of the absence of Africana unit in some university libraries is a sign post of a gradual dearth of the information resource that contains the history and culture of the African continent. The implication is that the youth and the future generations will not find documents to read about their culture and heritage. They will be influenced by foreign culture and the African history and culture will become a thing they will never know anything about. More Africana units should therefore be created in Nigerian university libraries that do not have the unit, be they universities of technology or conventional universities.

In the same light, the none availability of the different formats in the university libraries implies that users will not be interested in the usage of the few that exist. A clarion call should therefore be made to the federal government to increase the subventions given to the libraries and a reasonable amount should be used for the purchase of Africana resources for a period of four to five years. Increase in the subventions given to the libraries also implies that more Africana librarians will be employed and trained for the Africana units. Increased library fund will also help in equipping the Africana units with ICT tools which will facilitate information retrievals in the unit.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the research:

There should be increased funds for the library so as to accommodate the purchase of more of the various formats of Africana in the university libraries.

The library management should vigorously pursue the establishment of different marketing or awareness strategies so as to create awareness of the usefulness of Africana resources in university libraries in Nigeria. It will also make users to be aware of the Africana resources that are available in the library.

The Africana unit should be equipped with ICT information retrieval tools and Africana staff should be trained and retrained in the knowledge and use of ICT in the Africana unit. Apart from improving the quality of service offered, ICT will greatly reduce the amount of time spent in retrieving information in the unit.

Africana collections should be developed in all university libraries in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The Africana resource contains a wide coverage of information ranging from the arts and the sciences valuable to carry out any form of research in the universities. Moreover and importantly, Africana resources contain the various indigenous knowledge of the culture of the African continent and Africans in Diaspora. But despite its importance, various Africana formats are fast disappearing from Nigerian university libraries. It is more disturbing to observe from the findings of this study that old universities like the University of Nigeria Nsukka, University of Ibadan, Uyo etc are very weak in the various Africana formats.

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