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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY AND LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the relationship of the library with faculty members' research productivity efforts. A theoretical model finding the relationship between faculty research productivities and library resources and service were reviewed, adopted and modified to draw the extent to which the relationship between faculty research productivity and library resources and services contribute to increase on faculty research productivity. The factors considered to form the basis of the relationship with academic libraries include socio-demographic characteristics, career characteristics and library characteristics. It states that a well exploited and maintained relationship ensures gain by faculty members, library status and long-term economic gains. Therefore, it is recommended that libraries must stand out to support faculty members and sustain a cordial relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries play significant roles in enhancing knowledge, work and serve also as purveyors of research activities. This category of libraries support university systems with literary inputs, processes and output for research, teaching and learning. As repositories, they maintain and sustain most valuable and essential resources for retrospection and pointers for further research, faculty member activities and role responsibilities (Lahiri, 1996; Gholamhossein, Imani and Ghashlag, 2013).

Each academic library has varieties of information resources in its collection, procured or donated to it, and has professionals and supporting staff who strive to improve the conditions of the information and work environment. At the helm, a university librarian, who is expected to liaise with the university's managements to determine and appropriate levels of funding allocations and distribution of human and material resources for library operations in line with the goals and objectives of the university.

However, it is very disheartening that in majority of academic libraries in developing and developed countries operating expenditure is hardly based as a percent of total institutional expenditure for education and general purposes. In Nigeria, this has strategically driven access, process and procurement, maintenance and sustainability of information resources into complete stagnation. Currently it depicts the trends of research and development resulting in decline in quality and productivity of tertiary academic institutions in Nigeria. Thus, raising concerns on the general wellbeing of academic libraries and the university system. Several works reported their perceptions of the trends because of its globalized implications. For instance, Whitemire (2003) opined

that the decreasing amount of allocations to academic libraries is a signal that now is the more important time than ever for academic library administrators to be able to demonstrate the usefulness of the library to its institution. Synergies have been proposed by specialists and professionals who share these concerns. Pritchard (1996) affirmed that understanding the relationship between faculty research productivity and academic library resources and services is a step in the right direction; she based her argument on the fact that the academic library is not a static free-standing unit.

The concept of faculty research productivity used by this study is based on Lindauer (1998), who defined research productivity as the number of journal articles published in refered and non-refered journals, the number of books published, and number of book reviews, the number of conference presentations, and the number of grants obtained within a specified period. Pritchard (1996) considering the roles of faculty members revealed that the library is ultimately contributing to the quality of research outcomes of institutions however they are defined. That is, a poorly funded and equipped library produced poor quality products.

The call for a relationship between faculty members and libraries is inevitable because of the role of the library in accreditation of academic courses. Wolff (1995) commenting on the role of the library in accreditation said that, the library is the only provision within academic setting that has a culture of evidence for gainful accreditation, institutional quality and faculty research productivity which he linked to library quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literatures abound on the relationships between academic library resources and faculty research productivity, all attesting to the fact that there is no way that the library can be relegated. It has been clearly indicated a very important position in research productivity and quality of academic institutions in the world.

Dundar and Lewis (1998) tested faculty research productivity using a model with variables that included individual, institutional and departmental attributes. They found that library expenditures were associated with increased research productivity for faculty in biological sciences, physical sciences and mathematics. Fairweather (1999) tested faculty research productivity with a model, he focused on background characteristics, early socialization, self-motivation, work allocation, climate/resources, rewards, etc and found out that the adequacy of university library facilities have positive relationship. Baughmann and Kieltyka (1999) examined and found a positive relationship between the numbers of publications produced by an institution in relation to its library holding.

In Nigeria, Oduwole and Ikhizama in Chiemeke *et al.* (2009) reported poor research output that is related to working experience by librarians in Nigerian agricultural research institutes. Similarly, Chiemeke *et al.* (2009) found research output from Nigerian tertiary institutions from African Journal Online (AJOL) to be low. Gholamhossein *et al.* (2013) believed that assessing productivity of faculty members is a step towards improvement of quality of higher education. Therefore, when the library engages faculty members it will facilitate the reputation of the institution, status and a long run economic condition among others.

Theoretical framework

The choice of a theoretical framework and model is in line with

other related studies which attested that the authentication of the influence of faculty research productivity must be tied to certain factors (Blackburn and Lawrence, 1995; Gholamhossein *et al.*, 2013). The factors are aimed at articulating any existing relationships as in this case with library resources and quality of service, and how it influences faculty members research productivity.

The model by Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) is adopted but modified to suit this current study, its adoption is based on the fact that it contains elements that embrace socio-demographic characteristics, environmental conditions, social knowledge, environmental response, self-knowledge, career, behaviour and social contingencies found to affect and dictate the relationship between academic library resources and service and faculty members' research productivity. The modified model is given below:

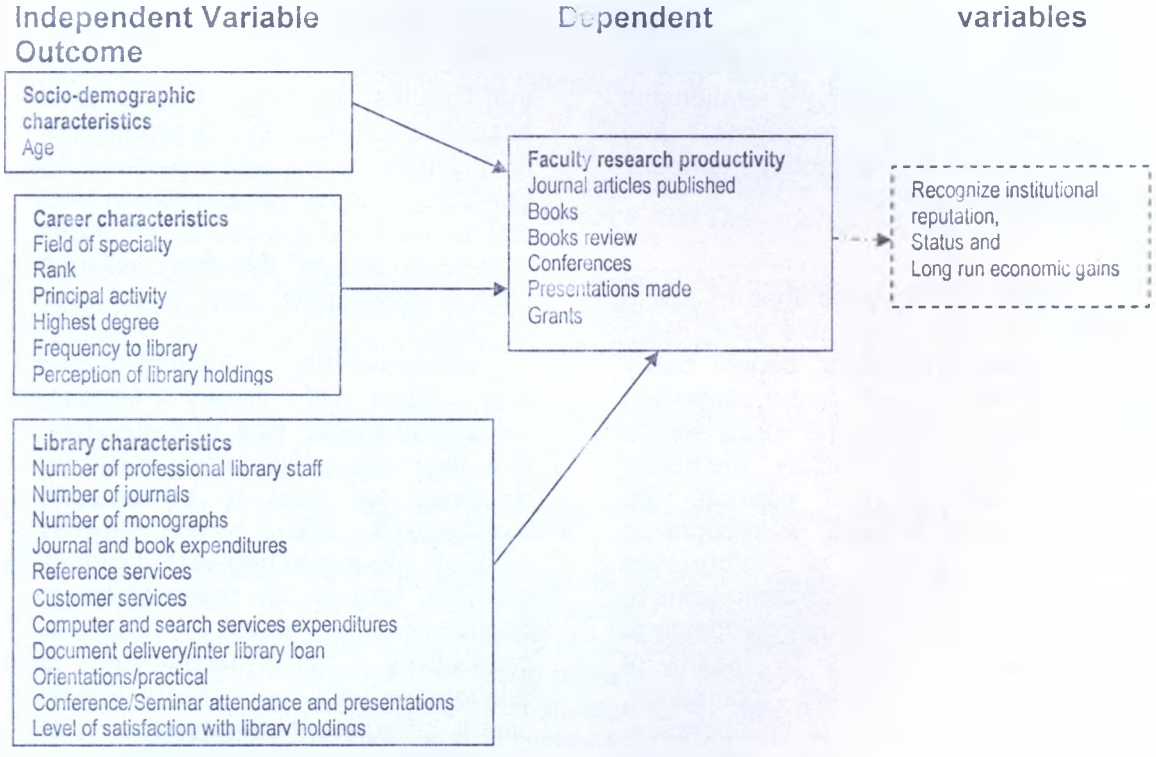


FIGURE 1: Modified theoretical model
Source: Blackburn and Lawrence (1995)

Independent Variables

The independent variables comprise of three characteristics sets; socio-demographic characteristics, career characteristics and library characteristics. Each has been proved empirically to influence relationship between library resources and services and faculty members' research productivity. For instance, age of a faculty member in the system or exposure to academic activities and responsibility has been shown to influence relationship with the library. It was also observed that the older a faculty member the more strong he is pulled to library resources and services. Gender exploits also show effective and efficient influences on research productivity. The mediating

role of the library is very clear and intimidating especially after the recognition and partnership with this group of faculty members who can support the holding of the libraries with their articles, reading lists, notes and anticipations.

Dependent variables

The faculty research productivity is the dependent variable which attainment hinges on the actions or inactions of academic library resources and services to fulfilling the goals and objectives of the parent institution. This also forms the basis of testing and establishing a relationship between library resources and services and that of faculty members' research productivity.

Outcome

Academic libraries that establish and maintain a workable relationship with faculty members' benefit easily from donations, gifts and a committed friendship; it means the library will be very mindful of faculty members' status, support and promote the institution to a level of recognition through visibility of information resources, long run economic gains to faculty members through campaign to the faculty members by means of sensitization, seminars, orientation, etc, on the benefits of collaboration, patronage and friendship. The library must also not relax as it should be able to market its services, and undertake consultancy services in its areas of comparative advantage of indexing, information delivery, ensuring access to institutional repository to mention but few.

IMPLICATION OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIBRARY AND FACULTY MEMBERS

The library, no doubt, can ascertain and examine the conditions of their faculty members when they establish a relationship to facilitate access and retrieval of information in identified major areas of research in faculties, faculty members course designation, research areas by students and allied research programmes.

CONCLUSION

The paper in conclusion reveals that libraries can dictate the status of academic activities and by-products of an institution even when plagued by operating funds. The call to act dominates the discourse by librarians who have revealed that this challenge affects developed and developing countries.

Recommending solutions to the poor state of library funding, Rosenblatt (1998) was of the opinion that the roles of librarians must be redefined for them to be able to overcome the difficult terrain that they work on. He suggested that librarians can set targets for themselves to contribute to faculty research productivity by maintaining a relationship with their clients that is clearly articulated; strengthening, can add value and pull faculty members to the library.

The action that will yield results to academic libraries is when they are also found to establish and maintain relationship with their faculty members. Identifying with faculty members must be specific and targeting, so that each component can be fully exploited for use of available information resources, acquisition of new ones and also encourage faculty members to deposit to the library for transmission in print and non-print formats.

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