Role of Academic Libraries towards Strengthening and Enhancing Effective Knowledge Management in Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

BEING A PAPER PRESENTED

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Abstract –

The article discusses with the role of academic libraries in higher institutions in the effective management of knowledge. Four main types of knowledge are highlighted and sequenced, the paper showed that knowledge management can be achieved through a set of basic managerial functions and skills, such as interpersonal skills, information skills, and decision making skills. It also highlighted roles required or planned to improve effective knowledge management. For example, Academic libraries need to upgrade their skills needed for technological advancement, Scribd delivery, Web 2.0, social media, and electronic library automation. Some challenges were identified such as: Power outages, network problems, lack of qualified staff and funding, etc. It concluded that academic libraries should ensure the optimal use of technology to improve the effective management of knowledge. Therefore, it was recommended, among other things, that academic libraries should provide support to supplement electricity in the event of a power outage. Provision of high-powered solar systems and generators that provide stable power. Specialized ICT personnel should be recruited to assist academic libraries in the effective management of information.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Enhancement, Higher Institutions, Knowledge Management, Roles, Strengthening, Technology.

Introduction

Academic library ranks highly among all other institutions, by playing a major role in sustaining the educational and research activities of the global community through disseminating information and improving information management (Pradhan & Puspanjali, 2013). Knowledge Management and management procedures has become essential to the continued existence of academic libraries (Gourlay, 2001; in Mir Hamid, Abdulkarim & Hussein, 2016). As a result, KM has gained popularity as a management tool during the last decade, this makes knowledge now known as the engine of production and economic growth, leading to a new hub on the role of technology and learning in economic performance. Therefore, it is very essential to educate people about the services provided by academic libraries to encourage their use (Bawa, Chukwuka & Fagbemi, 2017). In Nigeria, library organization is no exception. This sector is mainly responsible for preserving, processing and disseminating information related to the cultural heritage of its community (Bawa, Chukwuka and Fagbemi, 2017). On the other hand, research in today's institution is the key to creating and disseminating knowledge. Institutions do not just make knowledge accessible to users, but manage and work with existing knowledge so that it can be used later. This makes foreign institutions today to adapt to their varying roles in a knowledge society (Singh, 2010 in Marjal, 2011). Academic librarians of all backgrounds need to ensure that users have the right knowledge anytime, anywhere to enhance their learning. These

roles must be performed very well to ensure that knowledge does not remain in the library without proper use. These tasks can be performed by a librarian who has a deep knowledge of their services and resources available to their users to ensure that the knowledge is properly managed. It should be well-known that libraries, realizing the significant consequence of KM, assign knowledge managers to create, disseminate, and use knowledge to create systems of KM. An effective mechanism will help the library to improve performance in the design and implementation of KM systems. Such a system permits precise definition of knowledge and knowledge exchange, thus improving the performance of library staff.However, the argument over the position of KM in academic libraries has turn out to be more compound over the past years, as the type of knowledge that is used and consumed daily in a particular library is also complicated by the continuous advances in technology and invention. Its complexity has become an impact on the academic libraries (Ciborra & Andreu, 2001; Dutta, 1997; Gottschalk, 2000 in Mir Hamid, Abdulkarim, & Hussein, 2016). Consequently, academic libraries and their staff must concentrate to their varying roles in today's knowledge society. Institutions must take part in a preparatory role in accessing knowledge, especially universal knowledge (Rowley, 2000). Though, the introduction of technology into the library system has added a lot to transforming and changing library dynamics towards managing knowledge in our libraries. These technologies facilitate the provision, preservation, storage, and transfer of knowledge to users. So, the institution's library also helps to provide access to these resources to its clients who cannot afford to purchase technology devices. In many cases, they visit the library with their computers to enjoy the quiet environment and library technology (Suresh, 2017). Academic libraries must transform considerably with the latest technology to make sure that the knowledge available in the library is well managed and distributed to users in a respectful manner (Pradhan & Jena, 2013). Academic libraries are libraries created within an academic framework such as universities, teacher training colleges, polytechnics etc. Its main duty is to make available resources and Information services to achieve the general objectives of the universal education and research program (Maarouf and Muhammad 2015; in Suleiman 2019). Higher institutions are post secondary schools of learning such as colleges, universities, polytechnics etc. Concepts of Knowledge Management There are two types of knowledge management: the type of knowledge that is reflected in the inner state of a person, as well as the ability of the person himself to act, and the type that is frequently expressed and recorded (Piyush & Bhubanaswar, 2002). Knowledge Management is seen as the process of converting information and intellect into sustainable worth. This allows users to know how to act whilst they require to (Kidwell et al. in Marjal, 2011). KM is about making the correct knowledge obtainable to the exact processor, i.e. human or a computer, at the exact time in the exact appearance at the right rate (Holsapple & Joshi, 1999; Aranganathan & Lakshmi, 2010 in Marjal, 2011). KM refers to the steps that are thoroughly taken to create, organize and make available the intellectual wealth of an organization. As well as to strengthen the system of teaching and lifelong (Sharifuddin & Rowland, 2004; in Seyeed & Batool, (2011)

Types of Knowledge Viewpoint Davenport et al., divided knowledge into four main types Source: Rawtani (2017)

In addition, knowledge management has a sequence that follows six steps Source: Rawtani (2017) Roles of Academic Libraries towards Strengthening and Enhancing Knowledge Management In light of current developments, some prospective areas of library activity require the use of modern administrative techniques and methods. The important point is that, library administrators and staff should develop an attitude and approach towards university administration and inculcate a culture necessary for good library management.

Library information management is carried out through a set of essential administrative skills and functions. This includes

1. Interpersonal skills

2. Information skills

3. Decisions skills Nevertheless, library professionals need a different mix of managerial skills to properly manage information. These skills are

1.Technical skills used in the knowledge, methods, processes, and practice techniques specific to performing a job.

2. Human skills used to successfully interact with others.

3.Conceptual skills deal with abstract ideas and relationships. It is a mental capacity to understand abstract or general ideas and apply them to a specific situation (Pradhan & Jena, 2013). In addition, knowledge management is vital to the development of the academic library. These roles must be provided to further enhance effective knowledge management.

They roles are

1. Academic libraries need to update their skills related to technological advancement. They must have the skills to do their daily work. Therefore, they must be changed through the acquisition of additional skills that will play an important role between technology and physical materials, given that they are from time to time overwhelmed by overwork and other tasks (Sura, 2017).

2.They are expected to provide Library 2.0 to improve knowledge management by creating a meeting place online or in the physical world where the needs of library users are met through information and communication (Pandey, 2017).

3. Another way to improve knowledge management is implementing Scribd. Scribd is a new development technology in Silicon Valley that makes it easy to share documents online. Scribd

is a great online library where the library can publish their original content. The idea is that in the library there are many documents on their computer that only they can read.

4.Web 2.0 technologies are used by academic libraries and university librarians to provide services, transfer information, interrelate with users, and communicate with age group on a global scale. Boateng, Mbetika and Thomas (2010) in Junaid (2017) put forward that Web 2.0 is a series of trend and tools for Internet use. They further stated that these social and technological innovations allowed for interaction and knowledge gathering through experience and practice on a global scale. Collaboration, social media, and ease of use of this app have dramatically changed the way knowledge is managed.

5.RSS, also known as Rich Site Summary, is the most accepted and simple tool among Web 2.0 technologies. In essence, RSS is XML encoding that allows users to receive website updates without visiting the website. It is an effortless tool used by academic libraries to manage knowledge by sharing the latest stories and updates from newsgroups, magazines, newspapers, journals etc. (Junaid, 2017).

6.The digital library provides a variety of electronic resources and related technical functions for creating, searching for, and using information. This knowledge can be accessed by electronic means to provide users with the greatest possible benefit in terms of accessibility and accuracy for many at the same time, in the shortest possible time. With the digital library, users can access it quickly and easily, enhance information sharing, save storage space, and support multimedia content etc. (Babita, 2017).

7. Automation helps improve knowledge management by using computer technology to collect, organize and share information quickly and accurately as possible using databases and library software such as KOHA, VTLIS, ALICE for Windows, AGORA, HINARI, GREENSTONE, TEEAL, SOUL, etc. These programs and databases help spread knowledge to users and the wider community, for example, around the world (Suleiman, 2017). Networks achieve optimum results with minimal effort. Networking is unavoidable in all academic libraries because users can find resources from other libraries (Mamta, 2017).

8. Social media is used to describe the innovative educational program curricula and display it in many libraries, in order to improve their services. For example, university libraries take advantage of the opportunities provided by these social media tools to spread information, promote new publications, through Facebook, Twitter, Academia.edu., Youtube, Flick, researchgate e.t.c. (Shweta, Jaya & Verma 2016; in Suleiman 2018).

Challenges Faced by Academic Library towards Enhancing Knowledge Management Some of the issues hindering KM were highlighted as follows

1.Blackouts: Power cuts or failures are a major challenge for academic libraries across the country. Most libraries rely solely on electricity to provide their services, especially when using

technology to share or transfer knowledge to users around the world, and because of the corruption the industry faces. The country's electricity has not been friendly to academic libraries for users to use.

2.**Lack of experienced personnel**: The shortage of qualified personnel to manage technology that would improve knowledge management is a major problem. Some of these technologies have made their way into the library, but the right people to administer these technologies are not there because they lack experienced personnel or they do not want to pass their knowledge on to others so that they can't benefit from it.

3. **Network problems** - Most network installations are weak. Bandwidth is low in terms of speed, which makes it particularly difficult to use and to properly transfer large amounts of knowledge to users around the world.

4. **Funding:** Finance is a very important issue, especially in the context of funding our academic libraries to improve knowledge management. The funds for most libraries are small, so using this money to cover their library expenses is a big problem. Sometimes, this money is not sufficient to add the latest technology to the library or to subscribe to resources that would improve knowledge management.

5. **Inadequate Staff Training:** Staff should be trained in the latest technologies used to improve KM in the library. However, inadequate training of these staff from time to time hinders the library's performance towards improving KM.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is pertinent to know that knowledge management is a significant factor in academic libraries, as the knowledge accumulated in the library cannot be considered useful until the end user effectively uses it to meet his needs, and this can be only done through appropriate implementation of KM. Therefore, academic libraries must ensure that technology is optimally used to improve effective knowledge management. Finally, the management of higher institutions is expected to assist academic libraries in promoting and improving knowledge management to assist them in their daily activities.

Some recommendations were made to address the challenges facing academic libraries to effectively improve KM. They are:

1. Academic libraries should provide a backup to replenish energy in the event of a power outage. In addition, they should to provide high-precision solar systems and generators that provide stable power.

2.Expert in Information and Communication Technology personnel should be recruited to assist academic libraries in the effective management of information.

3. A fast, high-bandwidth network should be provided, ensuring rapid knowledge transfer to users around the world.

4. Government and management of academic institutions should endeavor to allocate or provide adequate funds to libraries to effectively improve KM. Libraries should also look inside to see how they can generate money for the library, whether through solicitations from highly placed members of the society who are library enthusiasts, provision of photocopying machines, binding and printing services for commercial purpose.

5. Staff should receive regular training from time to time through workshops, in-service training, seminars, conferences, etc. This would give them the opportunity to be well equipped with advanced technology that matches world standards.

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