CONFERENCE PAPER

NO.8

DILEMMA OF REPOSITIONING LIBRARY SERVICES FOR QUALITY EDUCATION, ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERS ITIES

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ABSTRACT

Library services promote diversity and the only arena where wishes and needs of information resources are catered for. The objectives of the paper aimed at identifying dilemmas that preclude libraries from providing effective services. Survey research method is employed to extract information from 330 library patrons selected at random. The instrument for data collection centred on the factors capable of contributing to quality education and access to information Descriptive statistics and a decision rule were relied upon for analysis. The results revealed that major dilemma affecting repositioning of library services was inadequate funding (89%) of libraries, whereas means scores rates significant include access, retrieval and use of information resources (2.71) and slow response by university management to library plight, consequently affecting library as its vital organ (2.50). It recommends a functional feedback mechanism to collate identified dilemmas to proactively engage stakeholders to achieve the goals and objectives of the library.

Keywords: choice, dilemma, education. Library service, university

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Paper presentation at the Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Multicultural African Conference II, 2014. **Theme:** Repositioning Education for Access, Quality and Peaceful Co-existence in Africa, August, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Choice made by librarians in a university system is capable of molding the desired character, consciousness and support for mutual respect and academic pursuit. Libraries contribute and play significant roles towards better education, healthy social environment and growth in agriculture, business and industrial sectors. A librarian anticipates information that will be of interest to potential users needing its services and conforming to the realities of available courses, research thrust that also governed by professional considerations devoid of political, moral and religious views. According to Mahmood *et al.* (2006), library role in national security and other spheres of life is becoming evident as our society is transforming into information society.

Making choices by librarians for their clients are constrained by time, funds and social responsibilities that subject them to numerous dilemmas. Dilemma according to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010) is a situation which makes problems, often in which one have to make a very difficult choice, between things of equal importance. Dilemmas of library services refer to interrelated factors beclouding librarians from making the right choice and hindering them also from achieving library goals and objectives of providing information and effective services. According to Kargbo (1999), library service are peculiar and shaped by a combination of circumstances of the nature, structure, operating system and the professionals who are to constructively institute effective information service delivery deemed to be most desirable. These library services include and not limited to circulation, reference and information, referral, current awareness, selective dissemination of information (SDI), documentation, translation, inter library loan and document delivery. Others include reprographic and user education services aimed at dissemination of information (Evans, 2008).

Herold (2001) describes information as the crux of library and arguing on its virtuality and the manner in which it has the capacity to make an effect. To him, information is freedom because it exhibits a transparent quality, a window-like clarity as between source and patron in an ideal interface or a perfect exchange without bias and the most subtle form of knowledge, whether from being considered fundamental or elemental.

Librarians are the recognized professionals with the responsibilities to provide the platform on which quality of library and information services are established and attained, set out the broad objectives and goals of the library, on one part, on the other governed by standards, support the mission and vision of parent institutions, ensure and maintain professional ethics in order to foster quality of education and national development (Jika, 2009).

Simisaye (2003) defined education as inalienable right which every individual must enjoy in order to be free from ignorance, poverty and diseases; therefore fundamental basis for human freedom, peace and happiness. No country can develop in an era of war, depleting knowledge and poor access to information. Today, the world is driven by information and the library is its custodian. Even though, the library never bargained to be responsible for these tasks, it is not deterred from ensuring it disperses for the historical survival and progress of mankind. According to Aguolu (1989), the library has been able to remain a place where the dead may be said to be alive, where the ideas, knowledge and experiences of great men and women, fully documented and preserved, continue to move the world, and as repositories of information and knowledge, provide the vital underpinnings for socio-economic, political and cultural development of any civilization.

At the core of the concept of library are librarians, those who manage information and the identifiable groups of users (Aguolu and Aguolou, 2002). The librarians function as content

developers, analysers, knowledge managers, information organizers and information providers pivoting them as instruments with the capacity to actualize quality education, access to information for peaceful co-existence in all societies because of the choices they make of facilitate its making. Library is no longer characterized by wall and requiring a patron's physical presence to obtain service. Libraries today use several forms of interconnectivity, computer and telecommunication networks, especially the internet which has also change the ways it respond to its roles and act as intermediaries directing users to where to get needed information. These tasks according to Issa *et al.* (2014) on individuals is overbearing because of the increase in information sources, pressure of bibliographic control and providing the right information at the right time. However, the library and librarians have maintained the assertions by Machlup and Mansfield (1983) to date by ensuring that libraries increase the state of knowledge of a recipient, add value in decision making, provide physical surrogate of knowledge, enabled access to published and unpublished knowledge about any given subject and contributing to the body of knowledge.

Therefore, how has this unprecedented responsibility on the library for excellence and access to information for qualitative education also positioned it to contribute to peace and co-existence in a university setting? Is there any level of doubt that the choices made by a library has fail to contribute in the repositioning of education, access to information and peaceful co-existence in the university and nation at large? Has failure to fully support the library not endangered it from addressing local concerns and responsibilities for effectively contribution to and facilitating learning, teaching, research and recreational information needs in our quests for quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence? This is the crux of this paper.

These make library services to be multi-dimensional and subjecting librarians to dilemmas challenging them from delivering the utmost and effective information service capable of supporting an individual, the society and nation to grow and develop. The paper will highlight the distinguishing characteristics of a library, background information on repositioning of library service for quality education, objectives of the study, literature review, methodology and presentation and discussion of findings. Finally, conclusion, recommendations and acknowledgement of resources consulted as references.

Distinguishing Characteristics of a Library

The library remains a uniting organ of any university because it provides an unprecedented information provision services to all stakeholders, economic and human development. In the university, library services are open to all and undertake facilitation of research and study through access, retrieval, preservation and conservation of documented human endeavours. It also acquires and operates in line with the objectives and aims of establishing parent organization.

The non-discriminatory characteristics and virtue of library is adjudged to support co-existence, embedding respect and mutual understanding as its first code of conduct during facilitation activities and whenever the opportunity abounds to satisfy the information needs of patrons. As a bridge to knowledge, the library remains the major confidence builder and centre of excellence. It subject resources to evaluation, suitability by authenticating that it meets the standard for educational, recreational and communal consumption that is devoid of prejudice and rancour.

Background Information on Repositioning Library Service for Quality Education

The World Trade Organization General Agreement on Trade in Services (WTO-GATS) agreements on the commoditization of education mounted pressure on IFLA to support quality education through quality library service. This necessitated the IFLA Berlin conference of 2003 which themes recognizes the right of members to regulate, and to introduce new regulations, on the supply of services within their territories in order to meet national policy objectives and, given asymmetries existing with respect to the degree of development of services regulations in different countries, the particular need of developing countries to exercise this right (Paul, 2013). Tammaro (2005) revealed the outcome of the 2003 Berlin Conference to comprise quality model covering quality criteria/processes/definitions to describe, specify and understand critical properties, characteristics, and matrices of quality in Library and Information Science profession. The position of the library is no doubt the heart beat of every academic institution (Popoola, 2008).

Dike (2014) arguing on repositioning of library service point to the fact that libraries are still grappling with the issues of relevance even to employers, provision of resources (human and materials), incorporation of newer technologies, training, standards, quality assurance as well as broader issues of information management for knowledge societies, it has nevertheless stop to support all programmes and the smooth academic transition; a great virtue of peace and tranquility.

The proliferation of libraries in all economic sectors as well speaks about it most relied roles, but sad to report that it is the most underfunded sector. It is worthy to note that poor funding conceives serious concerns about sustainability, maintaining standards and quality of service. There is no denying the fact that the emphasis on providing quality education in any

institution has been reported to be influenced by the quality of its library. The library has also been able to project the economic power of the society in its bid to promote peace and sense of belonging by raising information-literacy, empowerment, consciousness, knowledge and meeting the information needs of the people it serve - a force for democracy, enlightenment and patriotism.

All of the aforementioned arguably showed that library service when well articulated and administered improves the quality of education, facilitates access to information and peaceful co-existence in universities and the nation at large. However, the library is faced with dilemmas, bewailing it from contributing to quality education, access to information and the peaceful co-existence daring even the foundation of Nigeria as a country.

Objectives of the Study

The following forms the objectives of the paper:

i. What are the dilemmas daring the library services to contribute to quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence in the university?
ii. How have dilemmas stampede library services from attainment of aims and objectives?
iii. How can the library overcome these dilemmas to foster access to information, peace and co-existence in the university?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dilemmas Daring Effective Library Services

Du Mont (1991) argued that, the ethical dimension of librarianship represents a generalized concerned for the improvement of quality of library service and professional conduct, therefore, ethical behaviour in librarianship does not mean that one should take no action or avoid certain actions as an idea to keep out of trouble.

Macke and Bach (2012) reporting on incapability of libraries to make right choice maintained that budgetary constraints were responsible for the untimely disappearance of University of Cincinnati first year experience (FYE) librarian who reported to be incapacitated and psychologically felt irrelevant. They revealed that the disappearance affected service and an apparently unsolved dilemma as their absence affected library instruction to professors, students and other stakeholders.

Rankin (2012) opined that university that failed accreditation is attributable to failing to support the library because it is the only organ that can institute ownership to information resources, formed arrangements or agreements that provides and support students and faculty access and user privileges to adequate information resources and provide services consistent with the degree offered. Basically, library collections, resources and services are sufficient to support all educational, research and public service programmes. However, the library environments suffer limitations which are threatening the systems from effective dissemination of information. According to Martin (1989) these limitations include physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers.

Stampeding Effective Library Services by Dilemma

Libraries as organization must fulfill certain goals in the society and have people that enable the accomplishment of those goals not mindful of its size and complexity, human relation, staff consultation and participation. This is done effectively by setting aims and objectives, organization, communicating, motivating and the development of people. Dilemma have been reported to deter the effective execution of responsibilities that have direct bearing, and enforcing the acceptance of alternative decisions (Du Mont, 1991). Logically, choice targets all

activities and the energies expended are related to the aspiration of what the library must do to further the work of the organization to which it is a part (Wambugu, 1987).

Dilemma was reported in university, for instance, to stampede library contribution to the teaching role of a university, supporting learning and research activities and stimulating creativity and intellectual development among staff and students. Dilemma has also displaced staff from undertaking and understanding their functions, relate their work and devote their time to the fulfillment of the library aims.

Library objectives are tasks oriented that operates within specified methodologies and timelines, dilemma affects the commitment because professionals find it difficult to achieve the set objectives and quickly erodes morale and initiative thereby working only to fill in the day.

Overcoming Library Dilemma

The call to overcome library dilemma cannot be overemphasized because libraries contain and provide valuable information on national issues, cultural heritages and intellectual resource centre that defines a nation richness status. This signifies that the library in any educational sector cannot be allowed to deteriorate in facilities, technologies, trained personnel and networking. Mahmood *et al.* (2006) support budgetary allocations to enable it take responsibilities that fulfill the vision and mission of its parent organization. They were also aware of the contending issues like information explosion and user demands for a kind of new library services that increases pressure on already stretched library barely surviving the exponential increase in the cost of books, audio, licenses for on- and off-line databases.

In Nigeria, for instance, the business of education must be adequately funded and prioritized by the three tiers of governments so that it can cater for the payment of operations and infrastructural costs. Khan (1981) and Mahmood (2006) opined that now is the better time to

operationalize acquisition of alternative funding for libraries through donations, endowments, fines, fees, rentals and sales. Libraries are encouraged to cooperate among themselves by welding into complex as well as employ cost recovery in the case of university based library. Cost recovery has been reported to improve the efficiency of both public and private sector institutions because it increases effective competition between the two to invest and make something in return which may not necessarily be profit (Koenig and Gofforte, 1993).

Librarians in university settings can approach corporations to site their social corporate responsibilities in their universities which they can oversee and manage for a period of time. This has tremendously impacted in Nigeria information provision, infrastructural acquisition, access and subscription to current, authentic and relevant resources that supports teaching, research and learning.

Several opportunities on how libraries can overcome delimmas is not exhausted as numerous initiatives are opening to libraries of developing countries, therefore, challenging librarians to undertake research, write proposals and participate in numerous competitions on rebates, acquisition of technologies, participation in trainings, conferences and seminars that can facilitate them act outside the box for the improvement of the library services to achieve its goals.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research methodology was adopted for the study because it enables the gathering of data and representation of variables from a diversified population (Osuala, 2005). The populations of the study were total patrons who were administered questionnaire at random for one week at the point of entrance. A total of 360 were administered the questionnaire in only four selected libraries that constitute the Ahmadu Bello University library complex. The libraries

comprise, Kashim Ibrahim Library, The President Kennedy Library, Congo; The Agricultural Library, IAR and the Pre-clinical Library, Department of Medicine. Of the duly filled questionnaires 330 where returned and found analyzable. This also represents 92% response rate. Descriptive statistics (table, frequency and percentage) (Table 1) and decision rule on mean scores (Tables 2 and 3) were employ for analysis. The mean scores greater or equal to 2.5 is significant, however when less than 2.5 it is insignificant and rejected The choice of the two methods employed for analysis and presentation guarantees the coherence and explicit interpretation of findings in line with the objectives of the paper.

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

TABLE 1: Dilemmas deterring the library from making choice to attain quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence

	Characteristics of Dilemmas (N = 330)*	Freq	%
1	Inconsistencies with the application of rules and regulations	312	87
2	Insufficient and poor signs to guide resource access, use and choice making	318	88
3	Unaware of the different library services available	320	89
4	Outdated information resources	320	89
5	Poor shelf arrangements and resources	204	57
6	Poor sanitary conditions	294	82
7	Insufficient loaning periods	304	84
8	Rampant cases of theft and pilfering of resources	306	85
9	Long processing periods	311	86
10	Poor communication of new holdings	315	88
11	Obsoleteness of equipments	316	88
12	Inadequate funding (specified by respondents)	321	89
13	Inefficient and incompetent staff (specified by respondents)	307	85

*Multiple choices

Descriptive analysis of the 330 respondents revealed that several dilemmas are responsible for deterring the library from making the right choice. Of the thirteen identified dilemmas outlined, only poor shelf arrangements and resources scored lower than 80%, however,

unaware of the different library services available, outdated information resources and inadequate funding (independently specified by respondents) were at par and conform to earlier study by Martin (1989) who lamented that dilemmas caused physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers to effective library services. Other barriers comprised of insufficient and poor signs to guide resource access, use and choice making, poor communication of new holdings and obsoleteness of equipments with response of 88% each; inconsistencies with the application of rules and regulations were not very distant with 87%. Rampant Complain on long processing periods scored 86%, 85% for rampant cases of theft and pilfering of resources whereas poor sanitary conditions scored 82%, however, the least dilemma was poor shelf arrangements and quick access to resources with 57% scores.

TABLE 2: Nature of Dilemma Affecting Effective Library Service Delivery

S/No	Items	Mean score	Decision
1	Failed communication, organization, motivating and personnel development	1.8	Not significant
2	Unfulfilled information needs and satisfying the target of parent organization	1.9	Not significant
3	Erode creativity and commitment to work	2.52	Significant
4	Fail to support learning, teaching and research activities embarked by university	2.50	Significant
5	Incapable of ensuring access, retrieval and use of information resources that are very engaging and necessary to achieve the essence of coming to the university.	2.71	Significant

Table 2 revealed the severity of dilemmas as they affect effective library service delivery to achieve quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence in a Nigerian university. The analysis relied on the decision rule. The highest mean score of 2.71 was on item stating that dilemma has grossly affected access, retrieval and use of information resources that are very engaging and necessary to achieve the essence of coming to the university. Dilemmas

was also reported to erode creativity and commitment to work (2.52) whereas the last most prominent response was that dilemma ensured libraries fail to support learning, teaching and research activities embarked by the university. Two conditions did not make the 2.5 mean scores to be significant, they include unfulfilled information needs and satisfying the target of parent organization (1.9) and failed communication, organization, motivating an personnel development. These assertions agrees with the independent studies of Du Mont (1991) and Wambugu (1987) who reported on the consequences of dilemma to effective library service delivery and supporting the aims and objectives of parent organization respectively.

TABLE 3: Opportunities Necessary for Libraries to Overcome Dilemmas

S/No	Opportunity to:	Mean score	Decision
1	Sensitize the management of the university to know that the library is the best platform to provide adequate resources to improve quality of education and access to information.	2.50	Significant
2	Maintain good working relationship with the management of the university to support the library's choices to acquisitions, trainings and infrastructures that directly impact on quality education and access to information.	2.50	Significant
3	Support library to organize, arrange and to publicize its available services and information resources for access and use.	2.50	Significant
4	Support the drive of the library of tolerance and to accept the diversity of people.	2.33	Not significant

The decision rule applied to the opportunities that can support libraries overcome dilemmas is presented in Table 3. The result revealed that support the drive of the library of tolerance and to accept the diversity of the people was not significant, which may not be

unconnected from the fact that patronage has decline tremendously thereby, hardly clients acquaint themselves to the diversity. This agrees with Mahmood *et al.* (2006) who reported that until libraries function adequately to overcome contending issues and compete for relevance; it will fail in its bid to support its parent organization. Opportunities to sensitize university management to recognize the role of the university; maintain good working relationship and support the library, and support library to organize, arrange and publicize available services were significant with 2.50 mean scores respectively, and accepted as pertinent measures necessary for libraries to overcome their dilemmas and contribute to university's quests for quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence in the university.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objectives of every university system are to have a library that has services that adequately support teaching, research and learning. In this paper, we have been able to establish that choice making is the most distinguishing factor that builds or destroys the role of the library in any university system. Generally, libraries have been reported not to have been able to make the right choices because of beclouding dilemmas, especially on finance, acquisition of supporting technologies, currency of stock, staff competences, achieving set targets, trainings and hosts of others. Three objectives were proposed for empirical investigations on the vulnerability and the constituents of library dilemmas in Nigeria, and how this affects effective library services now detrimental to quality education, access to information and peaceful co-existence. No doubt that these have consequences on all academic programmes, it has also alter the library environment attested to be a unifying environment for the converging of students, staff and other stakeholders in the university to access resources evaluated and authenticated by professionals and guides. The library also supports authors and publishers on matters of fair use

and respect suffrages, an attribute dilemma is also affecting. The following recommendations are put forward as itemized measures to address this scourge and from the findings how best to overcome it in our universities. The recommendations are:

1. The library should have a functional feedback mechanism through suggestions boxes, service evaluation strategies and quality assurance desks responsible for the collation of identified dilemmas affecting the effective service delivery, assessment and recommending appropriate measures to the university management from the collated felt needs expressed by stakeholders.
2. As documented in literatures that libraries walk a knife's edge when selecting, listening to the needs of users and catering to the prescribed goals of promoting multiplicity and intellectual freedom. It is very imperative therefore to build an internal mechanism as well to overcome challenges to effective communication, eroding creativity and commitment to work by staff who are expected to proactively engage stakeholders in ways veritable to the goals and aims of the library as well as arousing confidence and making them to support the library's quest in complementing learning, teaching and research activities embarked by the university.
3. Adding value to library services remains one of the most effective measures to overcome dilemmas rocking the system. Librarians can do through maintained and sustained sensitization programmes and by providing the necessary platforms and interfaces for quality service and access to information. The management of the University who dictates the operations of the library must not be left out of the happenings and contributions made in support of the library in order to attract their support and sympathy s well.

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