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The Impact of Accreditation on the Growth of Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: The library being the most essential pillar of any academic institution needs utmost attention to avoid total collapse of the entire university community. The process of programmes accreditation in Nigerian universities is to ensure a uniform Maximum Academic Standards (MAS). To ensure that the process is meeting its set goals and objectives, this study examines the impact of accreditation on the growth of academic libraries in Nigeria.

Methodology: The research adopts a descriptive survey design. A total enumeration technique was used to select 125 respondents as the sampled population. Questionnaire was used for data collection and analyzed using simple percentage.

Results: The finding revealed that there is paucity of funds affecting the optimum performance of academic libraries in Nigeria; fund is not released until accreditation is approaching. Findings further revealed that accreditation exercise has been beneficial to the library in terms of increased library information resources and library face lift. The finding also revealed some of the challenges facing academic libraries in Nigeria. When there is no accreditation, the library faces poor attention and lack of fund from the university management which results to poor library services and no acquisition.

Policy recommendation: Therefore, the study recommends that academic libraries in Nigeria should device a means of self-funding through Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) in form of bindery, internet access provision, reprographic services etc. Also, the university managements should continue to fund its library and release to time the statutory 10% total budget of the institution's recurrent expenditure.

Keywords: *accreditation, library growth, academic libraries, acquisition, Nigerian universities*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Accreditation of programmes in higher institutions of Nigeria was designed by the National University Commission (NUC) to sustain quality of education and promote academic excellence among Nigeria University. For a university to be addressed as a world class citadel of knowledge, such university must possess a combination of special space, operational modalities and appropriate facilities. Such facilities to include, functional laboratories, classrooms, library and conducive learning environment (Omolewa, 2010). The decline of cash inflow from crude oil in Nigerian has significantly puts a strain on government to fund and meet the increasing demands and requirements of university education in Nigeria. The library being the knowledge base and the heart of any academic institution which determines the intellectual vitality and the academic excellence of any university has been bedevilled by The dwindling budgetary allocation awarded her and has caused a decline in the way the libraries run their services and meet the information needs of their users thereby putting the libraries in a deplorable state.

However, there has been struggle upon struggles by the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASSU) in ensuring a gross improvement of the deplorable state of infrastructural developments on Nigerian University campuses. The efforts of ASSU have further stressed the federal government of Nigeria to empower the National University Commission (NUC) to lay down Maximum Academic Standards (MAS) for universities in the federation and to accredit their degrees including other academic awards (Okojie, 2008). Accreditation exercises since it started in 1991 continue to remain as the savior from total collapse of tertiary education in Nigeria. Accreditation now occupies the position of the "old almighty May/June West Africa Examination Council (W.A.E.C). examination" for the Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and Provosts of higher institutions in Nigeria which has compelled them to be on their toes year round in the area of accountability, productivity and the delivery of qualitative education across boards.

It therefore becomes imperative to evaluate the process of programs accreditation in Nigeria Universities to ensure that the process is meeting its set purpose which is to ensure a uniform Maximum Academic Standards and how it has helped the growth of Nigerian Universities. Fabunmi (2013) positioned that the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any university depends largely upon the increasing growth of the library. Agboola (2000) opined that no university can lay claim to academic excellence without a good library to back up its teaching, research and public service mandates. It is on this premise that this study investigates the impact of accreditation on the growth of academic libraries in Nigeria.

1.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY.

The general objective of the study is to examine the impact of accreditation on academic library growth in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

i.   find out if accreditation is improving the funding status of the academic libraries in Nigeria?
ii.   investigate how accreditation exercise has benefited academic libraries in Nigeria.

iii.   find out the challenges facing the academic libraries in Nigeria when there is no accreditation   .

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

i.   Does accreditation of programmes in the university improve the funding of the library?
ii.   How has accreditation of programmes benefited the library?
iii.   What are the problems encountered by the library when there is no accreditation of programmes?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

University education in Nigeria was a follow up to the demand of post primary education following the establishment of secondary schools, the first being the church missionary society grammar school, founded in Lagos in 1859. Fafunwa (2010) reported that the beginning of higher education for our people date as far back as the time of the abolition of slavery and the resettlement of the freed slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century. The delegation of the Elliot commission submitted its report in 1945 which led to the establishment of university colleges in Nigeria. In 1948, University College Ibadan was established which marked the beginning of university education in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1971) asserted that, higher education in the Nigerian context has grown in importance from a profitable pastime for a handful of research scholars in the 1950' to a preoccupation of millions of Nigerians in the 1960's which he sees as the *sine qua non* of Nigeria development.

Obanya (2010) reiterated that, for a university to be addressed as a world class university needed to belong to a unique 'universe' – that combination of special space, operational modalities, appropriate facilities, global outreach and collegiate atmosphere that is most conducive for the pursuit of its triple mandate of ,knowledge generation (or research),knowledge transmission (or teaching) and knowledge application(or Responsive social engagement).Pinto (2008) submitted that within the context of the current knowledge and living society in European higher education, academic libraries have witnessed evolving transformation. The libraries are becoming resource centers for permanent learning and research, focusing their efforts on the access and supply of information.

Omolewa (2010) opined that the challenges facing university education in Nigeria include improving the learning environment in the form of libraries, laboratories, reliable electricity, water supply, security of staff and students, and academic freedom and now the internet. Abimbola and Badmus (2010) stressed that as a result of cash inflow from crude oil that subsequently declined, yet the Nigerian population increased significantly. This put a strain on government funds and it became impossible for the government to meet the increased demands and funding requirements of university education in Nigeria.

Udoh and Ogunrounbi (2007) raised imperative questions about the Nigerian university autonomy that hardly does a day pass without one form of anti-autonomy rally being staged in Nigerian major cities and campuses. The ASUU's resolute and formidable struggles for a virile and quality education for the Nigerian child started in early 1970's. The most recent was the ASSU strike in Nigeria that lasted for six months, that is, from June 1st to December 2013 over dilapidated and moribund laboratories, lecture theatres, 19th century analogy libraries and other

obsolete and or non-available infrastructures that compelled the federal government to have a five year development financial commitment to all public universities in Nigeria with a total sum of 600 Billion naira covering a period 2013 to 2017

Okojie (2008) established that a forward looking government no matter what it costs , will ensure that its citizenry is educated; not just any kind of education but a focused and qualitative one. It is not enough to license a higher institution to operate, there must be a continous evaluation to ensure that set standards and operational guides are not violated. He stressed further that the federal government of Nigeria through section 10, of Act No 16 of 1985, incorporated as section 4(m) of the National University Commission (NUC) Amended Act no 49 of 1988 empowered the NUC to lay down maximum academic standards (MAS) for universities in the federation and to accredit their degrees including other academic awards. Bamiro (2012)reported that, National University Commission(NUC) has evolved a robust scheme of international standards for the accreditation of programmes in the system. This has had a salutary effect on the commitment of the systems managers to qualify for their programme delivery. He pointed out the second criterion for accreditation on institutional governance and administration score thus;

- Quality of governance and administration by Council (2),
- Senate (2)
- Principal Officers(Vice-Chancellor(7),Registrar (3), Bursar, (2) University Librarian, (2))
- Faculty Boards, Departments and other statutory bodies (2) in relation to vision, mission and strategic goals of the university.

He emphasized the developed institutional accreditation, seeks to capture the operational environment for the conduct of the basic functions of teaching, learning, research and community service.

Fabunmi (2013) positioned that the academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any university depends largely upon the state of the health and excellence of its library, thus making it to be the heart of an academic institution. Bryant ,Matthews and Walton (2009) also opined that, the modern physical library is required to accommodate a wide array of services including provision of PC(S) collaborative study spaces, presentation facilities, laptops, whiteboards, data projectors etc. campus libraries are being redesigned to incorporate areas for group study and often provide space where users can eat, drink and chat (Freeman,2005). Olabanji and Abayomi (2013) likened accreditation to Quality Assurance (Q.A) and described it as a way of measuring , improving , maintaining, and improving the quality of any human activity or a criteria of the academic library to meet funding needs , staff development and adequate library infrastructures/facilities. Oladosu (2010) argued that the university library also has accreditation benefits in two salient areas: in their stock of books and currency of stocks.

According to a research by Nera (2004) cited in a presentation by Buenrostro (2015), on the impact of accreditation to librarians in Philippines, the accreditation process has helped librarians in life time opportunity for advancement in career and economic status. Also, Pila, Resureccion and Resureccion (2016) carried out a research on the impact of accreditation in the library services of Riza Technological University, they used the set criteria of Accrediting Association

of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP) and Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), they found out that the library complied with almost all the standards of the AACUP accreditors in terms of library services which have enhanced the library growth in terms of services but the study further revealed the weaknesses and areas of need to improve the library services, which include: collections, facilities and library personnel.

Odera-Kwach and Ngulube (2013) examined the Impact of Accreditation Exercise on University Libraries in Kenya, The results showed that the university librarian was aware of the purpose of accreditation as it pertains to licensing, while conformity to standards was the greatest strength of accreditation. The university librarian suggested ways of improving the accreditation process. The findings showed that there were positive and negative perceptions about the accreditation process. The findings revealed that despite the differences in the universities, majority of the librarians were positive that the accreditation process had brought about significant growth to the library.

Alokun and Busayo (2009), observed that consequently in Nigeria, most of the institutional annual budget is spent on other project at the detriment of the library. This will eventually lead to libraries not having current books, journals and audio-visual materials for readers. Poor collections arising from inadequate funding may prevent the library from satisfying its readers. For library to meet the needs of their users, adequate and current books, journals, audio-visual equipment should be provided for users, in order to achieve this, not less than 10% of the institution's recurrent expenditure should be spent on library growth. Agboola, (2000) opined that, the university library is an important component of any university institution. Consequently no university can lay claim to academic excellence without good library to back up its teaching, research and public service mandates. To ensure a consistent and sustainable library growth, accreditation becomes an inevitable tool to sustain quality education in Nigerian universities.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design using simple percentage. This design allowed for data to be collected. The population for this study cut across all the librarians and library officers in the academic libraries in Nigeria. A total of 8 university libraries in Nigeria with 125 librarians and library officers was used as the population of this study. Table below shows the list of some academic libraries in the Southwest of Nigeria.

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Table 1 Academic University Libraries in Nigeria

S/N	Academic University Libraries	Population size
1	AdekunleAjasin University, AkungbaAkoko. Ondo state	20
2	College of Education, IkereEkiti. Ekiti State	15
3	Ekiti State University, Ado ekiti, Ekiti State.	20
4	Elizade University, IlaraMokin, Ondo State	10
5	Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State	15
6	Federal University, OyeEkiti, Ekiti state	10
7	ObafemiAwolowoUniversity,ileife, Nigeria	20
8	University of Ilorin, illorin, Nigeria.	15
	TOTAL	**125**

A total enumeration technique was used to select all the 125 librarians and library officers from the 8 sampled universities. 125 questionnaires were administered but only 93(74.4%) questionnaires was returned and found useful for data analysis. Data analysis was done using relevant descriptive statistics, percentage distribution and frequency counts were generated on most of the items in the questionnaire.

4.0 RESULTS

Demographic distribution

TABLE 2

GENDER	
Male	51(54.8%)
Female	42(45.2%)
Total	93(100%)

STATUS	
Librarians	54(58.1%)
Library officer	39(41.9%)
Total	93(100%)

The gender distribution of respondents shown in table 2 indicates that out of the 93 respondents, 51 (54.8%) are male respondents while 42 (45.2%) are female. Also on the status of respondents, 54(58.1%) of the respondent are librarians while 39(41.9%) of the respondents form the library officer cadre. These imply that majority of the respondents are male and librarians.

SECTION B

TABLE 3: FUNDING STATUS OF THE LIBRARY

FUNDING STATUS OF THE LIBRARY	SA	A	SD	D
The statutory library fund of 10% of the total university budget is only released during accreditation?	22 (23.7%)	35 (37.6%)	20 (21.5%)	16 (17.2%)
Is funding available to acquire library resources round the year?	16 (17.2%)	26 (28%)	33 (35.5%)	18 (19.4%)
Fund is only released during accreditation to the library	31 (33.3%)	27 (29%)	17 (18.3%)	18 (19.4%)
The library rely on imp rest to keep the library running when there is no accreditation	20 (21.5%)	50 (53.8%)	8 (8.6%)	15 (16.1%)

Opinion of respondents was sampled on the funding status of the library, 61.3% agreed that the statutory library fund of 10% is only released during accreditation. Also, 55% disagreed that fund is made available round the year to acquire library resources while 62.3% agreed that fund is only released to the library only during accreditation. However, 75.3% of the respondents affirmed that the library runs on imp rest when there is no accreditation.

SECTION C

TABLE 4: BENEFIT OF ACCREDITATION TO THE LIBRARY

BENEFIT OF ACCREDITATION TO THE LIBRARY	SA	A	SD	D
The library resources and services are always in place during accreditation.	44 (47.3%)	46 (49.5%)	2 (2.2%)	1 (1.1%)
Library staffs are more dutiful during accreditation.	48 (51.6%)	39 (41.9%)	4 (4.3%)	2 (2.2%)
Library usually receives face-lift during accreditation.	33 (35.5%)	47 (50.5%)	4 (4.3%)	9 (9.7%)
University management is a good listener to the library during accreditation.	50 (53.8%)	41 (44.1%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)

On the benefit of accreditation to the library, 96.8% respondent agreed that library resources and services are always in place during accreditation. Table 4 above revealed that 93.5% of respondents agreed they are more dutiful during accreditation. Furthermore, 86% of the respondent ascertained that library receives facelift during accreditation. 97.9% of the respondent confirmed that the university management doesn't attend to the library needs until accreditation period.

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SECTION D

TABLE 5: CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES WHEN THERE IS NO ACCREDITATION

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES WHEN THERE IS NO ACCREDITATION	SA	A	SD	D
Acquisition of library resources becomes more difficult when there is no accreditation	21 (22.6%)	35 (37.6%)	20 (21.5%)	17 (18.3%)
Some library services may not function due to lack of fund when there is no accreditation.	31 (33.3%)	36 (38.7%)	17 (18.3%)	9 (9.7%)
Library staff are not encouraged (incentives to work) when there is no accreditation	24 (25.8%)	21 (22.6%)	30 (32.3%)	18 (19.4%)
The management do not respect library needs when there no accreditation.	30 (32.3%)	22 (23.7%)	27 (29%)	14 (15.1%)

Table 5 above revealed the challenges that bewail the library when there is no accreditation. The result of the finding shows that about 79% of the respondents agreed that they are not encouraged. Also, 72% of the respondent agreed that most of the library services do not function. Furthermore, 60.2% affirmed that it's difficult to acquire library resources. Finally, 56% agreed that the university management do not respect library needs.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The growth of a library is largely dependent on the fund in her coffer. It is obvious from this study that there is paucity of fund made available to the libraries. The 10% of the total university budget allotted to the library is never made available until accreditation exercise is forthcoming and the only source of fund to the library year round is imp rest. The outcome of this study is in conformity with Alokun and Busayo, (2009), who observed that consequently in Nigeria, most of the institutional annual budget is spent on other project at the detriment of the library.

Regarding the other benefits of accreditation on library growth, the finding revealed that accreditation has increased library information resources and library receives face lift during the exercise. These agree with the assertion of Oladosu (2010) who argued that the university library also has accreditation benefits in two salient areas: in their stock/currency of books and infrastructure. More so, library staff and more dutifully engaged during accreditation, this is in agreement with Nera (2004) as cited by Buenrostro (2015) on the impact of accreditation to librarians in Philippines; the accreditation process has helped librarians in job engagement and advancement in career.

On the issues of challenges confronting libraries when there is no accreditation; findings revealed that some library services and acquisition of library resources become impossible due to lack of fund and attention from the Universities management. The library staffs are not dutifully

engaged due to lack of incentives to work. The findings agreed with Pila, Resureccion and Resureccion (2016).

5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The library being the most essential pillar and the heart of any academic institution needs all the utmost attention to avoid a total collapse of the entire university system. It's been exposed in the study that the libraries are left in a deplorable state and neglected until an accreditation exercise is approaching. Accreditation exercise takes place at interval of four years, the implication being, the libraries are subjected to suffer kwashiorkor and malgrowth over that period. To save the libraries from this quagmire, the following recommendations are made:

- The 10% of the institution's recurrent expenditure should be given to the libraries dully not until accreditation
- The university management should be responsive to the library needs not until accreditation
- The libraries management should device means of self funding through Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) in form of bindery, internet access provision, reprographic services e.t.c.

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