


Chapter 105

Can Interlending and Document Supply Be Undervalued: Survival Strategies of Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The multifarious task of information services, which academic libraries are saddled with, continues to require the support of interlending and document supply from other libraries, in order to meet users' increasing information needs. The rationale that spurs this drive was the shifting nature of operations from traditional to virtual/technological platforms. This article employed the qualitative research approach grounded on documents/textual content analysis of literature extracted from databases of Scopus, Science Direct, and LISTA. Findings revealed that academic libraries should utilize interlending and document supply to fulfill growing and diverse demands for information. The ability to fulfill information needs requires diverse knowledge and the skills of librarians, information resources, and infrastructure to strengthen interlending and document supply. The study recommends the adaptation of grey literature as part of the collection development, cooperation with library associations and securing funding for academic libraries in Nigeria as the way forward.

INTRODUCTION

Universally, academic libraries are those libraries established in higher institutions of learning. They are established to fulfil the parent body's mandate of teaching, learning, research and community engagement. Fulfilling this mandate requires academic libraries to be proactive and dedicated through providing information resources available in multifarious format. The provision of adequate information resources would not only help to strengthen service delivery of inter-lending and document supply to users in

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academic libraries, but would also deepen the viability of teaching, learning and research agenda of the institution. Hart and Kleinveldt (2011) argue that the central call of academic libraries in their duties is to not only support teaching, learning and community engagement, but also research. This was based on the mission of the academic institution from inception of establishment. The point of emphasis on what researchers expect to have and how their research needs are met through provision of adequate information resources is that academic libraries should acquire adequate and reliable information resources that address their information needs, according to Hart and Kleinveldt (2011, p. 39). The needs should focus on print and electronic information resources that address the following:

- Access to updated collections of print and electronic resources;
- Access to archives and special collections – facilitated in libraries, museums and archival institutions
- Proficient ICTs
- Quick document delivery services
- Specialist help and advice in tracing resources (Hart and Kleinveldt, 2011, p. 39).

This makes it imperative for academic libraries to embark on inter-lending and document supply (ILDS). Inter-lending and document supply could broaden the nature of users and varieties of information needs that require adequate and timely attention. The ILDS becomes significant due to the dwindling nature of multifarious information resources on the internet. The innate need of academic libraries opting for inter-lending and document supply was based on limited information resources and increasing information needs of users. This has brought a survival strategy to academic libraries in the age of digital technology. Academic libraries are one of the most viable libraries in this digital age due to the activities and programmes they support. Activities such as workshops, seminars, conferences, among others, and programmes like diploma, certificate and degrees (masters and doctorates) are undertaken on a regular basis at institutions (Brown and Malenfant, 2016). The author of this paper envisioned that the activities and programmes that are taking place at the institutions brought about the support during teaching, learning, research, community engagement, organisation of workshops, seminars, conferences, to mention but a few. These activities and programmes keep the academic library viable and eventful to such an extent that they become more relevant to their community or institutions.

A study by Enakrire and Ocholla (2018) emphasised that academic libraries in Nigeria have experience transformation with respect to value-added information resources in print and electronic format. These printed and electronic information resources have enhanced library and information services, which could serve as a means of expanding inter-lending, and document supply. The interlending and document supply can become feasible and practicable when there are well-trained information professionals. The idea is that the inter-lending and document supply cannot work in isolation if the personnel that should do the job are not available and well-trained. Brown and Malenfant (2016) further note that today's academic libraries are now striving to support students, undergraduates and postgraduates in diverse ways, especially in meeting their academic needs. The essence is to serve their information needs through the collaborative efforts of librarians, searching for different information resources. The acquired information resources in different formats in the library are matched with what students were taught in class; what they obtained from online platforms and the times when they have group discussions with other students. (Brown and Malenfant, 2016). The support offered by inter-lending and document supply cannot be undervalued, especially in age of digital technology. Academic libraries should therefore

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