

A Vital Role of Libraries for Higher Education of Research: An Overview

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Abstract:

Academic Libraries have provided services to researchers for many years. Changes in technology and new publishing models provide opportunities for libraries to be more involved in the research enterprise. Within this article, the author reviews traditional library services, briefly describes the science and publishing landscape as it relates to libraries, and explores possible library programs in support of research. Many of the new opportunities require new partnerships, both within the institution and externally.

Keywords:

Academic Library, Roles, Research, Key Benefits.

1. Introduction:

The role of the library is necessarily dependent upon the educational objectives of the institution. Frequently, these are unstated or inadequate. Reference is made to some definitions of objectives for higher education, and the consequences for libraries are discussed. The view is urged that libraries, and therefore librarians, should be treated as integral and active parts of the educational process, and the latter be involved in course planning and development.

The role identified for libraries in traditional higher education has not been transferred to the thinking about the external mode of study. The problems of providing any library service to external students in a country as vast and sparsely peopled as Australia are enormous. To extend services and opportunities equivalent to those available on campus may be impossible, but great effort should be made. Otherwise it may be impossible to match the educational experiences of external and internal students, in which case the equivalence of their qualifications is in serious question.

2. Review of Literature:

Anyira (2008) enumerated the services rendered to researchers to include lending library materials for a long period; providing specialized reference services; organizing introductory and orientation sessions for new researchers; and providing a secure and pleasant reading and researching environment. Nwalo (2003) describes services to researchers to include answering reference queries, user education, compilation of reading lists and bibliographies, indexing and abstracting, interlibrary loan, and current awareness services. Research and the library are interrelated and are not mutually exclusive. Sadiq (2005) notes that no good research is possible without a library. The library provides the needed required materials, data, information, and literature for research. Sadiq (2005) points out that the university library provides research facilities and resources to researchers, and in addition renders technical information services. Before embarking on any research work, the researcher should come to the library and discuss the research with a librarian. When the research has commenced, the library collects and collate information from different sources on the subject of study to inform the researcher on existing works in the area.

Mosuro (2000) observes that over the years, advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have offered library and information centres more efficient ways of acquiring, organizing, storing and disseminating information to researchers. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of research on community development; the impact of the library on research work; the impact of research on universities' recognition and ranking; and the impact of library ICT on research.

3. Academic Libraries:

Library is a service institution. Library services are one of the most widely used and accepted in the modern world. Academic community particularly in a university utilizes library services for research and teaching purposes. Academic work is supported by library. Therefore, library is rightly regarded as the heart of an academic institution. Thus, we can say the concept of a library is an institution where a reader can consult and acquire desired information under single roof. Therefore the universities are places, which are wholly responsible for higher education and knowledge for the development of a human personality and development of nations. A university caters to the needs of higher learning and research.

3.1. Aims, Objectives of University Library:

A library is considered as the 'heart' of a university and it is the Centre of learning for higher education. Each university has a central library attached to it and may have many constituent libraries attached to its different teaching departments or the constituent colleges. The aims and objectives of a library are as below:

- ❖ Education must facilitate the process of change that is essential for a developing and growing society.
- 2. To provide the promote facilities for advanced study and research in education.
- ❖ To provide opportunities for professional educators to improve their knowledge and ability through summer and evening classes, short term courses, seminars and other means.
- ❖ To provide teacher training & guidance in order to prepare candidates for the Master / Ph.D. in educational degrees of the university & such other disciplines / diplomas in education may be instituted.
- ❖ To conduct research in several branches of education, publish the result of such research and act as an educational information dissemination Centre.
- ❖ To prepare educational leaders in teaching, research and administration.
- ❖ To stimulate educational research of high quality, both fundamental and applied, required for the improvement of education.
- ❖ To create a dynamic and high quality academic environment of teaching, research and human services for prospective teachers and leaders in the field of special education.

3.2. Functions of the Academic Libraries:

- ❖ Aesthetic satisfaction
- ❖ All round development of personality
- ❖ Broadening of interest
- ❖ Development of power of expression
- ❖ Development of study habits
- ❖ Escape from boredom or worry
- ❖ Inter-library lending/Resource sharing
- ❖ Introduction to progressive methods
- ❖ Leisure time hobby
- ❖ Moral training
- ❖ Participation in co-curricular activities
- ❖ Positive discipline
- ❖ Promotion of self study
- ❖ Richness of information
- ❖ Sheer delight and thrill
- ❖ Sources of inspiration

- ❖ To assist the users, especially the teachers in their research activities
- ❖ To meet the reading needs and requirements of the students and the teaching staff of the college for the advancement of learning
- ❖ To support the study and teaching communicated to the students
- ❖ Training in proper use of books

4. Vital Role of Libraries:

4.1. Libraries Role:

- ❖ Developing, promoting and providing access to scholarly collections and resources across multiple sites, meeting individual campus and faculty needs.
- ❖ Engaging with and providing services as appropriate for commercial operations and the community.
- ❖ Engaging with students and staff in affiliated hospitals, teaching and research locations.
- ❖ Engaging with the University's internationalization strategies.
- ❖ Ensuring that collections are discoverable and accessible, regardless of format or location.
- ❖ Leading research data management across the University.
- ❖ Managing resources in an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable way in accordance with the University's policies and procedures.
- ❖ Partnering with faculty to ensure explicit development of information research, learning and employability skills in the curriculum and to develop in- and extra-curricular resources and programs.
- ❖ Promoting and providing information about the Library's programs, resources and activities.
- ❖ Providing a robust, reliable and stable suite of Library applications and associated information technology infrastructure in collaboration with University partners.
- ❖ Providing a safe and secure environment for collections, staff and students, including facilities for people with special needs.
- ❖ Providing copyright education and advice for the development of programs and resources.
- ❖ Providing high quality, welcoming research and learning environments that meet group and individual needs.
- ❖ Providing information, lending and online reading list services for library users.
- ❖ Providing materials from other libraries and suppliers for eligible students and staff.
- ❖ Providing materials from/to other libraries and suppliers for eligible students and staff.
- ❖ Providing stewardship for the University's research outputs through the University Research Repository.

4.2. Role of Library in Higher Education:

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan headed the report of the Library Committee of University Grants Commission in 1957 that dealt with in detail the role of the university library in academic development especially in the field of higher education. The above observations can be summarized in the words as:

- ❖ The library is the heart of education;
- ❖ Methods & fashion in education change from generation to generation, but each generation uses the library as a means of realizing its aims; hence the library remains the great conservator of learning;
- ❖ A quality education is impossible without a quality library;
- ❖ A library is vital organ for proper exploitation of our intellectual resources;
- ❖ A library is essential for maintenance of free access to ideas, and to the functioning of the untrammelled mind.

4.3. Five Ways Academic Libraries Support Higher Education:

- ❖ Support the transformation to openness
- ❖ Support the transformation to openness
- ❖ Support the transformation to high productivity
- ❖ Support the transformation to Alt-Higher Ed

- ❖ Supporting the transformation to UX-driven higher education

4.4. Academic Libraries Role in Research:

A survey of the research and professional literature on the role of academic libraries in research reveals three, often interconnected, themes:

- ❖ The information needs and information-seeking behavior of researchers – often reports of surveys of researchers' use of libraries;
- ❖ Descriptions of library roles and services in the support of research – some accompanied by surveys of users of these services; and
- ❖ Lists of competencies of so-called research librarians produced by professional library associations such as the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (2001) and the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (2010).

4.5. Role of Library Services in Research – (Reitz, 2005):

- ❖ Instructional programs for researchers
- ❖ Current awareness services
- ❖ Delivering traditional library services outside the physical walls of the library

4.6. Role of ICT in Facilitating Research in the Library:

Okonofua (2008) states that investment in a good Internet and ICT system is a major resource needed for all Nigerian universities and their libraries. He further notes that much research information and innovation can now be obtained from the Internet. Without the Internet and other ICTs, Nigerian universities and their libraries will be cut off from the global exchange of knowledge. Indeed, virtual libraries are now a major component of services provided by universities in western countries. There are open access resources available to researchers via their library Internet infrastructure (Bako, 2005). In Nigeria, more and more researchers are benefitting from their library's ICT infrastructure. For instance, the telecommunication giant MTN has established digital libraries in three prominent Nigerian universities: the University of Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University, and the University of Nigeria Nsukka (Mobile Telecommunication Network, 2009). According to Mosuro (2000), the role ICT plays in the library includes provision of unrestricted access to research information/data; the search for knowledge using different search criteria; reduction in travelling from one place to another in search of information; facilitating the communication of research information; allowing research collaboration among researchers in different locations; creating more services that the library renders to researchers; saves the time of the researcher in literature searching; and enhancing comfort in information seeking. In addition, Ajibola (2000) identifies the roles of ICT to include speed of access to information and cheap access to databases with multimedia capabilities. Also, ICT helps eliminate duplication of research, improves bibliographic control, and helps with error reduction in data analysis, increases range and scope of research operations, leading to improved morale and prestige of researchers and reduction of research costs (Tiamiyu 2000).

4.6.1. ICT in LIS Education:

Information technology is dynamic in nature. It is worth nothing that advocacy and educational reform as they relate to technology are among the trends. Trends in LIS educational technology are follows;

- Advocacy for Educational technology
- Computers in Departments/Institutions
- Networking by internet
- New delivery system for educational technology
- Satellite broadcasting
- Video conferencing
- World Wide Web

4.7. How are Academic Librarians Affecting Research? (Dave Kostos, 2016):

According to a 2011 report from the Research Information Network (RIN) and the Research Libraries UK (RLUK), academic libraries and academic librarians not only supply researchers with the tools they need to perform their work but also aid their patrons and institutions by

- ❖ Connecting with researchers to enhance the value of library services
- ❖ Contributing to institution-wide initiatives
- ❖ Ensuring easy access to high-quality content
- ❖ Helping researchers win research grants and contracts
- ❖ Helping to recruit and retain top researchers
- ❖ Increasing the visibility and research profile of the institution
- ❖ Promoting and exploiting new technologies and models of scholarly communication
- ❖ Providing a better work environment for researchers
- ❖ Representing the values of the institution and scholarship
- ❖ Working in partnership with academic departments

These effects on research not only display the value that academic librarians and academic libraries bring to the world of scientific research but, by creating such a clear picture of what librarians bring to the scientific community, also illustrate just how much would be lost without them.

4.8. Libraries help researchers win Grants and Contracts:

- ❖ References for inclusion in grant applications.
- ❖ Provide Ensuring researchers, the content they need to support their research.
- ❖ Providing resources and expertise for the project (e.g. a systematic literature review)
- ❖ Help researchers improve the quality of their funding applications, and to increase the institution's success in winning research income.

4.9. Libraries are a Physical Manifestation of the values of Academy and of Scholarship:

- ❖ Libraries are one of the most enduring features of the academy, central to the values and the practice of scholarship.
- ❖ There is a risk that this intrinsic value may not be recognized by future generations of researchers who work in an online world.
- ❖ The value of the library is as a crucial cornerstone and representation of the values of the academy and of scholarship.

4.10. Librarians' competencies for research support-Canadian Association of Research Librarians (CARL):

- ❖ Foundational knowledge: of librarianship, the higher education environment, scholarly communications, and legal issues like copyright and licensing models;
- ❖ Collections development: including digital curation, preservation of collections and archives, managing records;
- ❖ Information literacy: including knowledge of learning models and strategies, reference services, engaging with and educating patrons;
- ❖ Professional development and research: undertaking research, knowledge of the research process and the fundamentals of research methods;
- ❖ Information technology skills: for example in emerging web technology, institutional repositories, database management;

- ❖ Interpersonal skills: advocacy skills, enabling the required collaborations with diverse groups, writing and speaking skills; and
- ❖ Leadership: including strategizing to develop collaborations and partnerships with relevant communities

5. Key benefits:

The Research Skill Development (RSD) framework brings together areas and roles that have traditionally been perceived as distinct in the university. Librarians and learning skills advisers work with academic staff to embed skills development within the curriculum.

Collaboration benefits both academic staff and students.

5.1. Benefits for Academic Staff:

- ❖ Evidences research skills, Monash graduate and professional attributes throughout curriculum
- ❖ Assessment design that explicitly connects to skills development
- ❖ Informs diagnostic assessments to incorporate learning and feedback
- ❖ Sustainable formative assessment tasks
- ❖ Marking rubrics that incorporate explicit and transparent feedback
- ❖ Fosters student-centered learning
- ❖ Students transition to independent learning
- ❖ Improves unit evaluations
- ❖ Quality assurance under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

5.2. Benefits for Students:

- ❖ Greater awareness of themselves as learners and researchers
- ❖ Greater understanding and confidence with research
- ❖ Consistency of approach
- ❖ Predictable pathway to completing a research task
- ❖ Incremental development of research skills within the curriculum to a context of relevance
- ❖ Research skills are made explicit rather than implicit
- ❖ The development of a set of transferable skills
- ❖ Clearly articulated assessment task expectations
- ❖ Enables self-assessment against explicit criteria
- ❖ Quality, timely feedback.

5.3. Top Benefits for Academic Staff:

The Library is here to help you continue your own professional development as well as provide support and advice in developing teaching and research resources for your subject area. This includes:

- ❖ Advice and guidance on developing and reviewing reading lists.
- ❖ Copyright & digitalization
- ❖ Help in managing references and using reference management tools.
- ❖ Help in keeping up-to-date with information in your subject area
- ❖ Are you conducting Research then check out our Subject Guide for Researchers. Or contact your Subject Liaison Librarian for help.

6. Researchers' Expectations & Experiences of Libraries:

- ❖ Access to up-to-date and generous collections of both print and electronic resources
- ❖ Access to archives and special collections – facilitated in recent years by libraries' digitization projects efficient ICTs
- ❖ Quick document delivery services
- ❖ Specialist help and advice in tracing resources

6.1. Sources for Professional Competencies Development:

LIS Professionals have a wide range of channels and ways to develop their professional competencies and manage changing technologies effectively. The important methods/ways for improving professional competencies are;

- Acquiring formal qualifications
- Affiliation to professional bodies
- Attending induction programs
- Attending professionals meetings, conferences and seminars
- Attending staff training and development courses
- Attending workplace programs
- Distance and e-learning courses
- Participation in specialist groups
- Personal interaction with expert fellow professionals
- Pursuing doctoral research
- Reading professional literature
- Tours and visits to well managed libraries
- Undertaking research and development projects
- Web resources
- Writing papers in periodical and books

6.2. Library Should Be:

- ❖ Accessible
- ❖ Comfortable
- ❖ Compact
- ❖ Constant in environment
- ❖ Economic
- ❖ Extendible
- ❖ Flexible
- ❖ Organized
- ❖ Secure
- ❖ Varied

7. Conclusion:

- Libraries are playing an important role in the achievement of students at their academic level in the lifelong learning process of the individual the role of Libraries cannot be denied. ... Libraries prepare individuals in an information based economy and productive employment.
- Libraries are playing an important role in the achievement of students at their academic level in the lifelong learning process of the individual the role of Libraries cannot be denied.
- It provides a lifelong learning process for the community members and assist them in their difficult task/ Assignment.
- Libraries prepare individuals in an information based economy and productive employment.
- Libraries prepare individually to prove himself as a responsible citizen in contemporary society. In short Education and libraries are interdependent on each other Education without libraries and libraries without education are paralyzed.

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