PLANNING TOOLS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES AVAILABILITY IN STATE OWNED TERTIARY INSTITUTUIONS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between planning tools and information resources availability in state owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The planning tools used in this study are environmental analysis and collection development policy. A survey design was adopted and a set of questionnaires tagged 'Planning Tools and Information Resources Availability Questionnaire' (PTIRAQ) was developed, validated and administered on 73 library staff in four state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using PPMC statistical method. The findings indicated that environmental analysis has a significant relationship with information resources availability. It was also revealed that book selection policy is related significantly with information resources availability. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that library managers should develop more dependable approach towards environmental analysis in order to guarantee information resources availability in tertiary institutions. Further recommended is the serious need for written selection policy which of course should be regularly updated and reviewed in order to assure that its provision reflects current information requirement of all academic disciplines.

Key Words - Planning, Information Resources, Availability, Environmental Analysis, Collection Development Policy

Introduction

Planning is one of the management principles, which is central to the success of any organization. It is a process of determining in advance what should be accomplished and how it should be realized. Apart from increased productivity, planning allows managers to control and direct the necessary activities to accomplish organizational objectives. It is no gainsaying the fact that the whole process is intellectually demanding as it requires consciousness in determining the right tools for the activities that are capable of producing desired results. Although the planning tools used for organizational activities varies from organization to organization but the substance which is the essence of the exercise is the same. In other words, every organization including the library requires complex or formal tool(s) and simple or informal tool(s) to consciously planned for organizational activities that could lead to achieving the organizational goals.

The library as a social organization and repository of knowledge is saddled with the responsibility of providing vital information for socio-economic, political, and cultural development in any society. It is also the intellectual powerhouse for any educational institution which can take care of students as well as staff (teaching and non-teaching) in regards to their learning, teaching, and research situations. Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004), and Akwang (2007) are of the opinion that tertiary institutions and their libraries are like siamese twins which cannot and should not be separated. This simply means, no institution mostly academic can thrive without a functional library. It could be rightly said that libraries exist to perform various functions in support of the mission of academic institutions irrespective of ownership. One of such functions includes promoting good readership in all academic fields offered in the host institution.

In view of this function, librarians aptly described as "knowledge managers" are expected to prepare in advance a plan containing information on activities needed for increased patronage, desired recognition, quality research output in all disciplines. In doing so, the basic tools for the planning exercise should be considered necessary. But many librarians see planning as burdensome, therefore

are not ready to adopt practical approach to getting dependable information on some basic elements in order to develop a sustainable plan. It is a common practice among library managers not to conduct proper analysis of the host environment to identify the information needs of all the members of such environment. Also, they fail to involve relevant stakeholders outside library staff in the planning process. This situation is criticized by Anderson (1996), Eze and Eze (2006), and Akwang (2007) who reiterate that libraries fail to provide relevant information for users in all academic disciplines (balanced collection) in the host institutions because of lack of proper planning. Perhaps, this could contribute to users' dissatisfaction with the quantity and quality of information resources available in academic libraries. This paper, therefore, is aimed at determining the extent to which environmental analysis and collection development policy influences information resources availability.

Background Information on the Study Area

Akwa Ibom State was created from the old Calabar Kingdom in Cross River State on 23rd September, 1987. It is located in the coastal South-South part of Nigeria and situated between latitudes 432'N and 533'N and longitudes 725'E and 825' E. The state is bordered on the East by Cross River State, on the West by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the South by Atlantic Ocean which stretches from Ikot Abasi, Oron, to the southern-most tip of Cross River State. The state has 6,900sq km land area and a population strength of about 3.92 million (National Population Commission (NPC), 2006). Akwa Ibom State is educationally advantaged with many private, state, and federal tertiary institutions. Presently, the state has four state owned tertiary institutions namely Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden in Mkpat Enin Local Government Area and Obio Akpa in Oruk Anam Local Government Area (Akwa Ibom State University runs a multiple campus systems); Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area; College of Education, Afaha Nsit in Nsit Ibom Local Government Area; and College of Art and Science, Nung Ukim in Ikono Local Government Area. There are academic libraries established alongside the institutions to provide relevant and adequate information resources and services to members of the institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of planning tools with information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study is aimed at determining;

i.   the relationship between environmental analysis and information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

ii.   the extent to which collection development policy relates with information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State

Research Hypotheses

To carry out this investigation, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1.   Environmental analysis does not significantly relate with information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.
2.   There is no significant relationship between collection development policy and information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

Review of Related Literature

Planning is one of the management principles that is involved in every segment of developmental process. It gives direction, improves continuity of actions and reduces overlapping and wasteful activities through defined pathways. According to Etim (2004), planning begins with organizational objectives, defining the strategies and policies, and providing means for achieving the set organizational objectives. Wheelen and Hunger (1986) cited in Akwang (2007) assert that activities associated with planning are useful in themselves, generating greater knowledge and understanding of the institution and ultimately, increasing the level of commitment, communication, and cohesiveness across the institution. The authors opine that libraries are often the products of a formative idea as

such the extent to which they are successful depends on the degree to which they are guided by ideas generated during the planning stage.

Aina (2004) holds the view that libraries need to take a fresh look at things they already know as well as collect, analyse and assimilate new information for better results. The author maintains that planning whether operational or strategic serves as today's design for tomorrow's action, a road map, better still, an outline of steps to be taken staring now and continuing into future. Planning can be very fruitful if the library manager adopts a proactive or practical approach to the process. This approach is of great advantage to the library as it ensures that the vision and mission statement of the library, library situation audit, effective programmes for library development, and dependable evaluative strategies among others are derived out of a well thought through exercise. Ugah (2006) and Akwang (2007) observed low level of information resources availability in academic libraries in South-South and South-East zones of Nigeria. The researchers recommended among others that librarians should adopt proper planning procedures in the areas of defining institutional purpose, conducting environmental analysis and selection of relevant information resources among others.

Environmental analysis refers to an analysis of data relating to the past, present, and future which could provide a base needed for effective planning. The activity is sometimes called situation audit, situation appraisal, or planning premises. It is a systematic process of getting information about the library and its host environment. The major objective of this analysis is to identify and analyse the key trends, forces, and phenomena that could exert potential impact on the formulation and implantation of strategies for information resources availability. It is quite obvious that recurrent changes in the library and its environment create either positive or negative impact on the activities of the library, as such, it is of the library's best interest to identify these changes caused by internal or and external forces through environmental analysis before their impact is felt. Such changes could be seen from six perspectives – economic (e.g. income level, tuition, library budget), environmental (e.g. architectural space, library setting, furniture, equipment), demographic (e.g. staff population, student population, other members of the community), social (e.g. information needs of students, staff, parents, and other constituencies), technology (new technologies and their impacts on library practices), political (e.g. hostile or favourable political climate, power and interest of available companies, government pressures, internal polity) and legal (e.g. legal responsibilities relating to information provision).

Library managers need to be conscious of the fact that environmental factors could be devastating to the library if ignored. Danset (2002) reiterates that environmental analysis remains a critical planning step to adequate provision of quality information resources in academic libraries. The author notes that the more frequently and systematically one assesses the changing environmental forces the more accurate one is likely to become in gauging properly the impacts of the changes. Again, Knight (2002) posits that environmental analysis should not be solely reliant upon the library staffs' professional judgement, rather comments and suggestions from students, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, members of the community and other stakeholders should be encouraged. Although, library mangers need to rely in varying degrees on the different information source about specific aspects of their environments but no information be it formal or informal should be totally ignored. Rather, library managers should adopt systematic approach to appraise and sharpen any vague suggestion or opinion before discarding it. Be that as it may, environmental analysis should not be as an end in itself, but instead must become an input to the planning process.

Collection development policy is another aspect that must be given overarching attention in the planning procedure. Ifidon (2006) defines collection development policy as a written statement of a library's intentions for building its collection. This policy, according to the author, describes the library collection's strengths and weaknesses towards information provision. In other words, it involves selecting among items, determining the worth of the items and deciding which of the items should be added to the library collection. Every library that is ready for adequate provision of

information resources in all the disciplines offered in its host institution need a laid down policy which provides guidelines on the selection, acquisition, and weeding processes (Onwubiko and Uzoigwe, 2004). Apart from serving as a selection, acquisition, and weeding guide, collection development policy reveals the worth library management, serve as a communication channel, prevent censorship, guarantees a balanced library stock, as well as increases users' patronage.

According to Akwang (2007) collection development policy remains the most important planning tool with which librarianship is concerned. This is because the policy aims at developing the library collection which gives the library its character or identity. Again, it is only through collection development policy that the library will be able to decide when, what, why and how information resources should be brought into the library. It is disheartening to note that despite the overwhelming importance of collection development policy, most libraries in Nigeria still treat it with levity. Regrettably, writing a collection development policy is preached more than it is practiced. Udoumoh (1995), Eze and Eze (2006) and Ugah (2006|) conducted empirical research on the state of collection development in academic libraries in South East and South South zones of Nigeria respectively and the findings revealed none of the libraries studies had a documented collection development policy. Notwithstanding the ugly situation, collection development policy remains the framework and set parameters for information resources availability. It is a bad policy to select resources that nobody is likely to use, just as it is to neglect subjects or specific materials frequently required by library users. It is always important to set up a committee that will develop the policy. Ideally, the committee should comprise library staff, faculty members (academic staff), representatives of Academic Staff Union and Non-Academic Staff Union, and students elected, appointed or selected to be members.

The committee would need to gather relevant information to determine the information needs and profile of individual departments, the strengths and weakness of the library collection, the viability of methods of information acquisition including inter-library loan and the financial resources available to the library. This information could prevent unnecessary duplication of titles and failure to acquire relevant titles while ensuring a balanced library collection. Although the publishers' catalogues remain the most widely used selection tool in most libraries, it is also essential that lecturers, students and any other stakeholder submit titles of high relevancy and necessity in a particular discipline to the committee for acquisition into the library. Again, with the technological advancement, the committee can access several online selection aids in all subjects issued weekly, bimonthly or monthly as subject guide to forthcoming books and later published permanently as books in print or indexes. The library could place order on the needed titles and thereby lessening the stress of sourcing for information resources.

Research Design
The researcher adopted survey design for the study. The design was considered appropriate because the study involve seeking relevant facts and opinions from a number of respondents that are heterogenous in location.

Scope of the Study
This study specifically focused on library staff who are holders of first degree and above in the four (4) state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The institutions covered were Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden; Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua; College of Education, Afaha Nsit; and College of Art and Science, Nung Ukim. In terms of content, the research was restricted to environmental analysis and collection development policy as planning tools, and information resources availability.

Population of the Study
The total population of the study is 73 library staff with bachelor's degree and above in Library and Information Science and other disciplines from the four state-owned tertiary institutions in the Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Library Staff According to Institutions

Institutions	Bachelor Degree	Master's Degree	Ph. D	Total
Akwa Ibom State University	42	3	3	**48**
Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic	08	2	-	**10**
College of Education	5	4	1	**10**
College of Arts and Science	5	-	-	**5**
Total	**60**	**09**	**4**	**73**

Source: Administrative Records (2017)

Sample Size and Sampling Technique
The researcher decided to use the entire population as sample size since the number was manageable. Hence, a criterion or purposive sampling technique was used to select 73 subjects for the study from the four state-owned tertiary institutions.

Instrumentation
A researcher-developed instrument tagged 'Planning and Information Resources Availability Questionnaire' PIRAQ was used for data collection. The instrument had two parts – part one sought for demographic information of the respondents; part two required specific information on the planning indices and information resources availability. Part one had five questions on demographic characteristic (location, sex, age, years of experience, and highest qualification) which demanded a tick at the appropriate box against the options. Part two comprised ten questions all centred on environmental analysis and collection development policy as regards to information resources availability. The items were presented as statements to which respondents were instructed to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement on a 4-point modified Likert scale.

Validation of Instrument
The instrument, PIRAQ was subjected to both face and content validation in order to ascertain its appropriateness and measurability to the research objectives. To accomplish this, copies of the questionnaires were presented to experts in the field of library and information science and educational research for independent validation. In this way, some items were amended, while some were either expunged or added.

Reliability of Instrument
To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher trial tested the instrument on twenty (20) respondents in University of Uyo who were not part of the subjects for the study. The data emanated from their responses were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability technique using the split half method to achieve the reliability coefficient of 0.82. This value was considered high enough for study.

Method of Data analysis
The PPMC statistical package was used to test the two hypotheses raised for the study thus, determining the significant relationship between environmental analysis, selection policy and information resources availability.

Table 2: PPMC Analysis of Responses on Environmental Analysis and Information Resources Availability

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	r-crit	r^2	Df	Remark
Environmental Analysis	1261	14529	14054	.698	.174	.487	72	S
Information Resources Availability	1250	13893						

S = Significant at $p \leq .05$ alpha

The result displayed in Table 2 indicates that the r-cal value (.698) for environmental analysis and information resources availability is greater than the r-crit value (.174). Hence, the null hypothesis one is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant relationship between environmental analysis and information resources availability. The r^2 value of .487 indicates the strength of relationship between the two variables.

Table 3: PPMC Analysis of Reponses on Collection Development Policy and Information Resources Availability

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	r-crit	r^2	Df	Remark
Collection Development Policy	1166	12496	12998	.603	.174	.364	72	S
Information Resources Availability	1250	13893						

S = Significant at $p \leq .05$ alpha

The analysis in Table 3 shows that the r-cal value (.608) for library's selection policy and information resources availability is greater than the r-crit value (.174). Hence, the null hypothesis one rejected. This observation implies that there is significant relationship between collection development policy and information resources availability. The r^2 value of .364 reveals the strength of relationship between the two variables.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed in line the research hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study. The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between environmental analysis and information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The result of data analysis in Table two has shown that the null hypothesis is rejected. This result is in line with Danset (2002) who noted that environmental analysis remains a critical planning step to adequate provision of quality information resources in academic libraries. The implication is that the more frequently and systematically library staff (especially the heads of various units) assess the environmental factors the more accurate they are likely to make available relevant information resources in the library.

The second hypotheses states that there is no significant relationship between collection development policy and information resources availability in state-owned tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The findings in Table three revealed that the hypothesis is rejected. In other words, information resources availability is directly dependent on the library's policy guiding collection development. This corroborates Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) and Ugah (2006), Eze and Eze (2006) views which state that every library that is ready for adequate provision of information resources in all the disciplines offered in its host institution need a laid down (written) collection development policy. This assertion is buttressed by the fact that the more concerned the library staff are with collection

development policy, the more serious they are in enhancing availability of information resources in all academic programmes offered in the host institutions.

Conclusion

Environmental analysis and collection development policy are the basic planning tools that should not be sacrificed for anything if any library is interested in supporting the mission of its parent institution as well as gaining its users' patronage. Library staff need to carefully study the library and its host environment (users, facilities, staff, past and present internal operations, external influence, etc.) in order to develop a plan that will support its vision and mission. On the basis of data analyses and research findings, it has been shown that information resources availability is dependent on environmental analysis and collection development policy among other factors. This is an indication that libraries could improve on information resources availability if they conduct environmental analysis and develop dependable policy as often as possible to determine their strengths and weaknesses in the information delivery process.

Recommendations

To ensure effectiveness on the part of library staff as regards planning and information resources availability, the result of this research should be given prompt attention. On the basis of the findings, the researcher made the following recommendations: -

1. Library staff should cultivate the habit of conducting environmental analysis especially when there are internal changes (desired or undesired) the host environment like increase in enrollment and staff strength, new academic programmes, management decision, etc and external changes (desired or undesired) facilitated by government policies, societal needs, innovations, political system, etc. To achieve this, the library staff need to adopt a dependable approach. And policies guiding the selection and onward acquisition of information resources should be written, updated, and regularly reviewed in order to assure that its provision reflects current information requirement of all academic disciplines.
2. The concern education constituencies should be ready to provide necessary assistance to sustain balance collection in libraries in tertiary institutions

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