SURVEY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES IN COMPUTER LABORATORIES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN LIBRARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Survey research was carried out to determine the availability of resources in computer laboratories of three University - based Library schools in Nigeria. The selection was based on the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The selected library schools were those of Ibadan, Kano and Minna. Findings revealed that there were five System Analysts and 64 computers in the computer laboratories understudy. The Library schools understudy utilized computer laboratory for practical lessons, while Federal University of Technology Minna Library School also uses computer to store/preserve data. None of the computer laboratories utilized computers for commercial purposes. Two of the library schools utilize computer laboratory for electronic mailings and Internet Browsing. The paper recommends among other things, the provision of adequate computers, adequate human resources to man the computer laboratories and adequate fund for the maintenance and preservation of various facilities in the laboratories.

INTRODUCTION

The antecedent of a formal library education in Nigeria can be traced to 1960 when the Institute of Librarianship was established at the then University College Ibadan. The institute was later transformed to a full fledged department and now known as department of Library, Archival and Information Studies (LARIS). It was the first Library School in Nigerian University to establish its own Library and Computer Laboratory. Ochogwu (1992) in a survey of the first - six Library Schools established in Nigerian Universities between 1960-1983 observed among other things that only the Ibadan Library school has its library and computer laboratory. He further postulated that as at the period of study, none of the other five Library Schools has neither a departmental library nor a computer laboratory.

Gwarzo (2003) in a research titled "Teaching of Information Technology skills:

The Kano Experience" lamented that Library schools in Nigeria are not producing technically sound graduates that would face challenges in this information age. According to the writer, emphasis is placed on the theoretical aspects of information technology without a practical backing. It is in this recognition that Aina (2007) while appraising the curriculum of library schools in Nigeria submitted that graduates of library schools in Nigeria are unable to perform effectively in non-traditional library job with substantial information component. The writer therefore posited that the minimum facilities required for library and information science school to embark on the programme include quality staffing, information resource center, ICT laboratory and indexing / cataloguing laboratory.

It is quite obvious that the availability and utilization of ICT facilities in Nigerian higher institutions are still quite inadequate and low when compared with other nations in the West. For instance Gambari and Chike - Okoli (2007) revealed the inadequacy of ICT facilities and equipment for teaching and research work in all levels of tertiary institutions in Niger state of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for this study. Three Library schools were selected on the basis of geo-political zones. The selected Library schools were: -

1) Department of Library Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan. (South West)

2) Department of Library and Information Science Bayero University Kano (North West)

3) Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology Minna (North - Central).

A one page questionnaire was designed and administered to Heads of computer Laboratory in the selected Library schools. The data collected were analyzed using a simple descriptive statistical analysis which involve tabulation, frequency counts and percentages.

Data Analysis

Table 1:   Distribution of Computer Laboratory staff in Library schools under study.

Computer Laboratories	Rank	Frequency	Percentage(%)
LARIS Department, University of Ibadan	System Analyst II	1	20
Dept. of Lib. And Info. Sciences, Bayero Uni. Kano	System Analyst II	1	20
Dept. of Library And Info. Tech, Fed. Uni. of Technology Minna	Senior Sys. Analyst System Analyst 2	1	60
Total	—	5	100

From the above table, Federal University of Technology Minna library school has 3 (60%) staff in her computer laboratory. It may be attributed to the fact that the Library School is in a University of technology where prominence is given to ICT application. The other two library schools have one staff each in their computer laboratories. It can be deduced from the findings that there is inadequate staff in most of the library schools' computer laboratories and this can adversely affect practical teaching of ICT courses. The inadequacy of System Analysts here is the quantity aspect.

Table 2: Availability of Computers in the computer laboratories of library Schools understudy.

Name of Computer Laboratories, centre or Establishment	Number of Computers	Number of Printers
LARIS Department, University of Ibadan	15	1
Department of Lib. And Inf. Science, Bayero University, Kano	13	2
Dept. of Lib. And Inf. Tech, FUT, Minna.	36	2
Total	64	5

There were sixty four (64) computers in the three (3) computer laboratories of Library Schools under study. Federal University of Technology Minna Library school tops the list with 36 computers. Perhaps, the availability of many computers in this library school (LIT Minna) may be due to the importance attached to Information Technology alongside with librarianship. The other library schools (computer laboratories) recorded 15 and 13 computers in Ibadan and Kano respectively. From observation, the problem of space could be the hindrance for not possessing much systems that can facilitate practical lessons better.

Table 3: Utilization of Computer laboratories in Library Schools understudy,

Computer Laboratories in Library Schools Understudy	Data Storage	Practical Lessons	Commercial Purpose	Others
LARIS Dept. University of Ibadan	—	√	—	—
Dept. of Lib. And Inf. Science BUK, Kano	—	√	—	—
Dept. of Lib. And Inf. Tech, FUT, Minna.	√	√	—	—

Heads of computer laboratories of the three (3) Library Schools under study

were requested to tick various uses to which computer laboratories were put into. All of them responded that the computer laboratories were mainly used for practical lessons for the students. Out of the 3 computer laboratories, one further indicated that its computer laboratory is also used for preservation / storage of data.

Table 4: Availability of Electronic services in the computer laboratories

Computer Laboratories	Electronic Mail	Internet Browsing	Telephone Service	Others
LARIS Dept. University of Ibadan	√	√	—	—
Dept. of Lib. and Inf. Science, Bayero Uni. Kano	√	√	—	—
Dept. of Lib. and Inf. Technology, PUT, Minna	—	—	—	—

Key:

√   Available

—   Not Available

Table 4 above revealed that two (2) of the computer laboratories in the library schools under study have internet services (e-mail and internet rifled browsing). Federal University of Technology Minna Library School does not have these two (2) internet services in its computer laboratory. However none of the laboratories has telephone services. This may be associated with GSM revolution.

Conclusion / Recommendations

It is a glaring fact that the traditional method of library and information services is gradually becoming obsolete. The revolution of computers and other forms of technologies is not only affecting librarianship but all sectors of the society. Thus, the conventional modes of training in library schools cannot adequately withstand the modern trends and a delay in Information and Communication Technology adoption can make the Nigerian Library schools' products handicapped and irrelevant. The following recommendations if adequately implemented, will be a consolidated means of achieving academic excellence in our library schools in Nigeria: -

a. There is a need for adequate provision of computers and other related equipments so that students of library schools can be exposed to various practical situations conveniently;

b. Human resources in the effective administration and operation of the computer laboratories cannot be underrated. Consequently, the situation demands for more quantitative and qua. .   e   sonnel that will coordinate the practical lessons

effectively;

c. Any library school without internet facilities is indirectly promoting over- dependence on printed materials and which at the moment is not the best for both staff and students in information industry;

d. Space which is one of the major hindrances to the continued expansion of the computer laboratories should also be appropriately addressed. Some laboratories like that of LARIS (Ibadan) might have developed further if it is so spacious.

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