

**TRANSFORMATION OF THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARIES**

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***Abstract***

*The study examined the role of university libraries in the transformation of educational system in Nigeria. It discussed basic concepts embedded in the research. The state of Nigerian university education system was x-rayed, and libraries as catalysts for transformation of educational system extensively discussed, which covered ways university libraries can transform the Nigerian university education landscape through maintaining university library's role as instrument of self-education, provision of access to information resources without restrictions, promotion of intellectual freedom, making library a welcoming place to users, and promoting information literacy and lifelong learning, among others. The challenges hindering university libraries from effectively supporting the transformation agenda of the Nigerian university education were highlighted, which involve inadequate funding of Nigerian university libraries, lack of automation of library functions and services, lack of internet facilities and adequate bandwidth, negative influence of ICT on the library use, lack of adequate staff, technophobia of some librarians, and lack of appreciation of the educational roles of the library. Furthermore, possible strategies were proffered, which include infusing adequate financial resources to university libraries, and ensuring efficient use of the available fund to deliver best results, adopting viable educational reforms, optimal exploitation of the digital technology by the Nigerian university libraries, and support of indigenous publishing by the Nigerian Federal Government so as to reduce cost of production of books and also ensure its availability, among others. The study maintained that university libraries as vital organs of Nigerian university education play significant roles in transformation of university education system in Nigeria. This they do by ensuring provision of adequate library resources and effective services that are germane for teaching, learning and research activities of the university community for maintenance of*



*excellence in Nigerian university education and by extension excellence in the character and learning of the university products that are required to become useful members of the society and contribute effectively to national development. The study therefore among others, recommended that the Nigerian universities and their libraries should strategically maintain a cordial relationship with TETFund for funding intervention; and leverage NUC NgREN so as to gain from their Internet connections for effective library services; university management of various universities in Nigeria should value their university libraries and adequately fund the libraries through the release of 10% of the total annual allocation to universities to their libraries; while the university librarians are also encouraged to effectively manage the funds allocated to libraries in order to provide effective services and justify need for more funding.*

**Keywords:** Transformation, education, university libraries, roles, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Education has remained a key factor and bedrock for development and sustenance of literacy, self-actualization, lifelong learning and over-all development of individuals and nations. The library is a major instrument in the actualization of the goals of education, through the provision of adequate resources and effective services that enable individuals develop their full potentials, widen their horizons of perception, interests, attitude, character, understand social values and improve their knowledge and skills, which are germane for national development. Libraries through their informative, educational, recreational roles are responsible for transformation of individuals, nations and particularly, the educational landscape of any nation. University libraries provide quality services and resources that enhance education, research, teaching and learning activities; and also encourage wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure time.

Aluko, in Omeluzor and Ogo (2018) stated that the role of educational institutions in human capital development, research and technological innovation cannot be underestimated. Thus, transformation of the education system in Nigeria is urgently needed. This is sequel among others, to the report of National Higher Education Forum held at Abuja in 2014, which showed a gap in the educational system of Nigeria and revealed that hitherto, the Nigerian educational system was the envy of other nations as a result of well-equipped institutions, well trained and motivated lecturers whose capacity to impart knowledge resulted in churning out graduates that had abilities to compete favourably with their counterparts globally. The author also averred that educational institutions are the bedrock for human development by producing the much needed manpower to sustain a nation; and this cannot be achieved without the library. As an integral part of the educational



system, and one of the major components of educational transformation and national development, the university library is charged with the responsibility of sustaining education through identification of information needs, selection and acquisition of relevant information resources in varied areas of knowledge, processing information resources for easy accessibility, preservation and dissemination of information and knowledge. Its role in the university education is such that no university can be established without a functional library, and no academic programme of the university can be accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC), without a functional library filled with adequate and current information resources in different formats.

In recognition of the key role of the library in the transformation of education at all levels, the National Policy on Education (2006 as amended) and the various laws establishing all educational institutions of learning in Nigeria placed libraries as integral part of these institutions. In corroboration, Adegoke, Fijabi and Bamidele (2014), stated that in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), education was referred to "as instrument par excellence for national development". Thus, no educational system can be considered adequate without an effective and efficient library and information services, as libraries are central to education. No wonder the library and education are noted as two inseparable indivisible concepts that fundamentally and synchronically relate and co-exist with each other.

Excellence in education cannot be manifested without the help of the library, and its varied services. Libraries provide information resources, which enable users to be creative participants in the development drive of their nation. Information is the life wire of every human being and that is why human beings cannot exist without information. The greatest empowerment of any citizen is the empowerment of the intellect. Therefore, it is obvious that for a nation to develop, it needs to provide adequate and functional library and information infrastructure so as to build the capacity of its citizenry who will bring about development. The paper, therefore, examines the role of university libraries in the transformation of educational system in Nigeria.

### **Concept of University Library**

The university library according to Reitz (2004) is defined as a library or library system established, managed and funded by a university in order to meet the information, research and curriculum needs of its students, faculty and other staff. The university library is adjudged as the basis of effective teaching, learning and research; the pivot on which the life of the institution revolves and the heart of the institution. Curzon and Quinonez-Skinner (2010) stated that the mission of academic libraries, which university library is part of is to support the educational



and research activities of their parent institutions through the provision of collections, services and user education. The authors further emphasized that providing support for teaching, learning and research is the focus of academic libraries, making them vital to the success of academic enterprises of their institutions, whose research and teaching agenda are greatly enriched by libraries with comprehensive, rich and diverse collections. The university library is recognized as an essential resource center, which no student can dispense with if he/she wants to attain required academic standards and goals. Thus, the need for the students to get acquainted with the library and acquire the relevant skills and knowledge, library instruction is taught for effective use of the library.

University library plays a vital role in the development of Nigerian university education, as it functions as a dynamic instrument of education that feeds the intellect of the student, encourages research of the faculty members (lecturers), and enables the entire university community to partake fully in its intellectual and cultural contents. This is in line with Ranganathan's in Ashikuzzaman (2018) assertion that "libraries are not mere storehouses, but are rich springs from which knowledge flow out to irrigate the side field of education and culture". Without effective library services, the excellence in education cannot manifest; as library is an intellectual hub of the university for students, lecturers and other researchers.

The university library is of immense importance to the academia, with the primary objectives of: Facilitating the educational development of the academic institution, of which it is an integral part; acquisition of books and other resources based on the curriculum and needs of the users; assistance to individuals in satisfying their information needs; helping students become skillful users of library resources; guiding students in the use of library tools to locate books and other information resources; creating love for books and enduring interest in reading and critical thinking; provision of aid in the creative use of leisure; and helping users become better and more fulfilled human beings. These activities can only be achieved with a functional library.

The main functions performed by university libraries involve the following: Identification of information needs of the academic community, selection and acquisition of information resources (collection development), organization of information resources; dissemination of information and knowledge; preservation and conservation of knowledge; promotion of research activities; promotion of recreational activities; promotion of educational activities as dynamic instrument of education. These functions are corroborated and summarized by Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) who averred that libraries perform the following roles: educational; informational; research; conservational and recreational roles.

However, for university libraries to effectively carry out their functions, varied services are provided, which Akidi (2015) enumerated to involve providing



instruction on the use of the library; providing conducive environment to enhance effective study in the library; lending of books for home use; providing reference, referral and advisory services to users; reservation of books in order to ensure equal opportunity and accessibility to users; preservation and conservation of recorded knowledge for posterity; providing reprographic services in order to reduce the incidence of theft and mutilation of library resources; providing inter-library loan/resource sharing services for the benefit of users as no university library is self-sufficient; carrying out library display and exhibition in order to create awareness on library resources available and also attract users to the university library. Kaur and Rani, in Jelagat (2016) in their related study revealed that libraries can create awareness on its services by display of new books, exhibitions, use of brochures and posters, among others.

University libraries also provide current awareness services; provide selective dissemination of information (SDI) services; indexing and abstracting services with the view to enhance easy access and retrieval of information resources; publication of current contents and list of new arrivals in the university library; compilation of bibliographies; and also engage in information literacy programmes.

From the foregoing objectives, functions and services provided by university libraries in the course of supporting education, university libraries are, therefore according to Ashikuzzaman (2018), the hubs from which intellectual activities radiate to all academic and research programmes, as they function as dynamic instrument of education.

### **Concept of Education**

Education can be defined from different perspectives. According to Dike (1993), education is broadly defined as what anthropologists refer to as enculturation. In this broad sense, Dike citing Encyclopaedia Americana refers to education as any process by which an individual acquires knowledge or insight or develops attitudes or skills, which can be gained by any process, involving formal or informal, inside or outside school. Ogwu's (2010) study revealed that education in its broad sense is an act that has formative effect on the mind, character, and physical ability of an individual. The author further defined education as a process by which society or a nation transmits accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. In a narrower sense, the Oxford English Dictionary in Dike (1993) defined education as 'the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life'. Viewing education from its individual and social functions, it is defined as 'the process through which a person develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior of positive value in the society in which he lives', while from its social function, education refers to that process that enables



each individual to become a more effective member of society by transmitting the collective experience of the past and present. However, its individual function is to make it possible for an individual to lead a more satisfying and productive life through training to successfully handle new experiences and challenges of life.

Education from the point of view of this study refers to the act of acquiring or imparting knowledge and skills that are germane for one to be acceptable and useful in any society, and invariably such individual to remain relevant to the society. That is to say that education has the objective of both social competence and optimum individual development. Bhaskaracharyulu (2006) maintained that education provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression; awakens knowledge and develops analytical capacity that enables people to understand different situations they come across and also empowers them to adjust accordingly to the requirements. The author consequently emphasized that people who are not educated lack the basic ability to properly and adequately confront situations and its demands.

Dike (1993) revealed that the philosophy of the National Policy on Education (2004), with its emphasis on functional education, new method of teaching, new method of evaluation, focus on learner, lifelong education, and critical thinking emphasizes the enhanced role of the library and a continued and increasing awareness of the role of libraries in education. The basic principles of this educational transformation equally affect university education. Thus, the role of university library in the Nigerian university educational system cannot be overemphasized, as no academic institution can survive without the library. The university library therefore provides the resources and infrastructure on which the university educational system can be transformed.

### **Concept of Transformation**

According to Business Dictionary (N.D), transformation involves a significant and radical change that positions an institution in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. According to the author, it "implies a basic change of character and little or no resemblance with the past structure". Therefore, transformation of Nigerian educational system can be seen from the perspective of bringing in positive changes with renewed focus on Nigerian university educational priorities, understanding the real goals of Nigerian education system and following it vigorously with best practices in mind so as to enhance effectiveness in practice, and achieving excellence in service, of all the stakeholders, and excellence in learning and character of the Nigerian educational products, who are the graduates and postgraduates of our universities. Transformation in this context means taking the Nigerian education system from its negative state to an enduring desired positive position. This requires that all sectors of the Nigerian education system and



university libraries as essential elements of educational process must be involved in the transformation agenda, as no university can function without university library.

### **State of Nigerian University Education System**

It could be right to state that the Nigerian philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual in the society into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal opportunities for all citizens of the nation at all levels of education, both inside and outside the formal school system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Ngene, Quadri, Bamigboye and Tenebe (2018) observed that the major thrust of government policy shortly after the Nigerian independence was on how to increase the number of both the teachers/lecturers and students in the educational systems, which gave rise to the phenomenon of "free education". The effect of this has been an increase in the number of educated citizens, and also many more that desire to be educated. This phenomenon has equally resulted in proliferation of schools, at different levels, and at different ownership status, which consequently resulted in infrastructural gap to cope with the large number of citizens desiring to have education, at all levels including university education.

Right from 1948 when the University College, Ibadan was established to date, Nigerian university education has gradually witnessed proliferation of universities. As at 2019, based on Bolaji's (2020) report, Nigeria has one hundred and seventy-four (174) universities, comprising forty-three (43) federal universities, fifty-two (52) state universities and seventy-nine (79) private universities. The author maintained that the list was the 'valid and current one for the year 2019, updated with the NUC on 03/10/2019'.

All universities are supervised and controlled by the NUC, which is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education charged with the responsibility of advising the Federal Government on establishment and location of universities; establishment and maintenance of minimum academic standards in universities; approval / accreditation of courses and academic programs; and monitoring of public and private universities, among others.

Despite the proliferation of university education in Nigeria, some issues threatening the excellence of Nigerian education system arose, which include poor performance of students in universities, which seriously affects their employability, and even when employed, their performance at work is not encouraging, as being lamented by employers of labour and even NYSC Camp Directors in Nigeria. This is in line with Adegoke, Fijabi and Bamidele's (2014) study, which reported that the quality of the Nigerian educational system is not encouraging as there are several reports of mass failure in examinations, examination malpractices, cultism in Nigerian universities and its effects, and unemployable graduates, among others. There is also the issue of predominance of males in universities, which resulted in federal



government commencement of implementation of a four-year strategic development plan for education, focusing on access and equality, and standards and quality assurance, among others. At a point, the challenge of funding education on public finances became so unbearable that federal government opened up financing of education delivery to other key players like corporate organizations, philanthropists, international development partners, national and multinational corporations, among others; which according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2016), resulted in private sources accounting for 20% of total national expenditure on education.

Furthermore, the World Bank in Ajayi and Haastrup (2016) enumerated some predicaments of the Nigerian university education system, which involve decreasing public expenditure; deteriorated infrastructure/ facilities and equipment for teaching, learning and research, which are either inadequate or non-existent; brain drain; student unrest; incessant strikes by academic staff; and gradual erosion of university autonomy and academic freedom; among others. Katamba in Mahabub (2014) also lamented that Nigerian universities lack commitment needed for imparting education and providing equal and easy access to all members of the society. Mahabub therefore gave the major threats to Nigerian universities as outdated equipment and poor state of university libraries and laboratory facilities. Thus, many researchers opined that despite government efforts at commitment to education, the quality of Nigerian educational system continues to decline tremendously, which could largely be attributed to poor funding of university libraries and lack of adequate library patronage, requiring decisive action plans in order to reverse the situation before it degenerates. In addition, the increase in the number of public, state and private universities and number of student enrolment is not commensurate with the available infrastructural facilities to take care of effective teaching and learning in our universities, most especially in Nigerian public universities and their libraries. This has consequently resulted to incessant strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), with the demand on the Federal Government to revive the university education system in Nigeria. In corroboration, Ogunsola (2004) stated that the unrelenting upsurge in the establishment of university education in Nigeria has not reduced the problems of universities and their libraries as their future seems quite uncertain. The author also averred that despite the benefits of ICT, many universities' libraries in Nigeria are yet to optimally exploit the advantage of digital technology, while in some Nigerian universities that have embraced ICT their lecturers and students are carrying out their researches and other academic activities using various ICT devices like the internet, email, among others.

Thus, a critical survey of the Nigerian educational system indicates "many routes and too many dead ends within the system". Fafunwa's view as observed by Asaju



(2015) was aired some decades ago and the situation has not significantly improved, but rather worsened. According to Ngene, Quadri, Bamigboye and Tenebe (2018), the right physical environment of learning is a sine qua non for the realization of positive outcomes in any country's educational programme. Therefore, while the national policy on education is desirous of providing for citizens the right quality, that is, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the society, the follow-up action is missing in most states and federal government levels to ensure that the right facilities are put in place to achieve the stated goals. This has consequently resulted in the federal government empowering TETFund to come to the rescue of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and universities have benefitted most with some universities finding it difficult to meet up with the requirement for accessing the fund. It therefore behooves Nigerian universities to find a way of transforming the Nigerian university educational system through adequately funding their university libraries in order to empower them to offer effective services that will turn things around for good.

### **University Libraries as Catalyst for Transformation of University Educational System in Nigeria**

The university library, as an appendage of the university and agency charged with the sole responsibility of supporting research, teaching and learning through information provision and dissemination has numerous essential roles to play in the transformation of university education system in Nigeria. The library as part of the education process in the university system is a useful tool of educational development in the university community. The improvement that is expected in the educational system can be obtained through effective use of the library as learning can be aided through its effective use by students who are regarded as future leaders. Krashen's (2004) study revealed the interaction between advanced student achievement and literacy development with effective and efficient library services. Thus, for one to attain the standards expected in the Nigerian university education system, emphasizing the role of university libraries is imperative, as no academic institution can survive without the library. Islam in Gboyega and Gbolahan (2012) pointed out that education and library are two inseparable, indivisible concepts as both are fundamentally and synchronically related and co-exist with each other. This is because educational resources and infrastructure on which universities as academic institutions rely for their effective teaching, learning and research activities are provided by the library; and effective use of these resources engender transformation of university educational systems.

It has been noted that many universities where research, teaching and learning are taken seriously have functional university libraries that offer state-of-the-art services. This is also owing to the importance attached to the library as the



university community acquires knowledge and skills for their tripartite roles through effective use of print and electronic information resources usually provided by the university library. It is only when people begin to be conscious of the important role university libraries play in driving information that are necessary for educational development that true transformation can take place in the Nigerian university education., as libraries have the capacity to bridge educational, economic and social divides that threaten nations.

State of Library of Queensland (2011) reported that we live in knowledge, rich society, characterized by wealth of ideas and information, and that the ability to understand communicate and transfer this abundance of information is built upon the foundation skills of reading and writing. Libraries therefore play transformative roles in actualization of this goal as literacy is the bedrock for their ethos and rationale. Thus, it is important that the university libraries adopt the frameworks stipulated by the author in promoting literacy and thereby transforming education in the university community and beyond. Advocacy programme should be embraced by the university library to create awareness in the entire university community. Functional library services should also be provided to enhance effective service delivery within and outside the country.

Akidi (2015) reported that libraries are very important components of every effort aimed at education at all levels. As dependence of the society on information continues to increase, access to information becomes a major factor for education to thrive. Thus, university libraries play key role in the process by providing the required access to information and by extension, education through the functions of selecting, acquiring, organizing, retrieving and disseminating information in various formats to the users.

The role of the library becomes central when learning is characterized by interaction with a variety of information resources, and encouraging individuals and groups to carry out investigations or inquiries aided by effective use of library resources and services. Islam (2004) therefore affirmed that education depends on libraries to remain relevant and effective; while the library has no significance if it cannot impart knowledge and education to its users. The library is an indispensable component of the absolute well-being of the citizenry and that of the nation at large, and consequently a veritable tool in education transformation agenda. Thus, the ways university libraries can support in transforming Nigerian university education include the following:

**Maintaining library's role as instrument of self-education:** The university library is an instrument of self-education, a means of knowledge and factual information, a centre of intellectual recreation, and a beacon of enlightenment that provides accumulated and preserved knowledge of civilization to individuals for



self-education. This consequently enriches the individual's mental vision, and dignifies his habit, behaviour, character, attitude, conduct, and general outlook on life. This is achievable by university libraries effectively making required information resources available and accessible to the individual users.

**Provision of access to information resources without restrictions:** Krolak (2005) stated that all over the world, libraries are dedicated to providing equitable access to information for all, in whatever format, be it print, electronic or database, among others. In the same vein, Sorenso (1998) averred that all people should be able to use libraries freely and effectively to pursue lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural and economic development. This is because free access to information for the public and freedom of expression has always been of tremendous value in librarianship. Thus, librarians, library associations, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and university managements, have the primary responsibilities of ensuring that university libraries are adequately funded to be able to provide information, and other resources that support lifelong learning, among others.

University libraries provide access to information, which according to Oyeronke (2012) has the capacity to accelerate the level of individual's advancement and also corporate educational development. Thus, functional university libraries that are adequately stocked with current and relevant information resources in various subject areas are considered as assets as they provide avenue for university community to have access to materials that provide information required for day to day activities, involving teaching, learning and research and thereby solving problems and also taking intelligent decisions, as information is power. This is also in line with Anasi's (2010) study, which reported that the library ensures that people have access to information that helps them to make informed judgments and decisions. Providing access to information equally enhances the opportunity for students and the entire university community to develop skills necessary to succeed in a constantly changing social and economic environment as information helps to create enlightened, responsive and responsible citizens.

**Promotion of intellectual freedom:** Nigerian university education can be transformed if libraries effectively play their role in promoting intellectual freedom. The role of libraries in promoting intellectual freedom was emphasized in IFLA (1999) proclamations as follows:

Libraries provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination, and also serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture; libraries provide essential support for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development for both



individuals and groups; libraries contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard basic democratic values and universal civil rights; libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, and thus, shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society (p.1).

Libraries actualize the above according to IFLA (1999) by ensuring that the selection and availability of library resources and services are not governed by political, religious or moral views but by professional considerations. Thus, libraries are mandated to acquire, organize and disseminate information freely and oppose any form of censorship, make the library resources, facilities and services equally accessible to all users, without discrimination of any kind. The author also emphasized that libraries funded from public sources and to which the public have access, and the library staff shall uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, among other principles. The principles of promotion of intellectual freedom enunciated by IFLA are applicable to all forms of libraries including the university libraries, and adherence to such principles will enhance transformation of Nigerian university educational system.

**Making library a welcoming place:** Nigerian university education can be transformed when university library staff members see themselves as public relations officers of the library; image makers and ensure that the university library is a welcome place for actual and potential users; and a pleasurable place for getting factual information. This is in line with Gupta and Jambhekar in Jelagat's (2016) study which revealed that library staff should ensure that the library is a welcoming place and not a place to shy away from. This role of the librarian can equally bring back the users to the library despite the negative effect of ICT on library patronage.

**Promoting information literacy:** Nigerian university education can be transformed when university libraries effectively engage in promotion of information literacy in their institutions. Information literacy according to ALA (2000) is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. IFLA (2015) also maintained that information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning, as it empowers people to seek information, identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. The quest for information literacy is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological



advancement and proliferation of information resources orchestrated by the emergence of ICT. University libraries play important role in the promotion of literacy by making reading materials available to all thereby optimizing human development through education (Krolak, 2005). Furthermore, information literacy involves providing bibliographic instructions, which entails giving users instructions on how to access sources of information that users want in the library. By this, the librarian shows users how to search information sources like books, journals, how to retrieve them using different access points and equally how to cite such information sources or resources. This is in support of Jelagat's (2016) study, which revealed that bibliographic instructions aid users in knowing how to search and retrieve information without requiring the help of the librarians.

**Promotion of lifelong learning:** IFLA (2015) asserted that lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared mutual benefits. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges and to advance the wellbeing of all. Thus, university libraries, through their collections, and effective service delivery continually encourage the university community to inculcate the habit of reading and lifelong learning by providing an enabling environment for such to thrive and be sustained through providing adequate information resources and making them available and accessible to all the users at all times.

**Creating environment for acquisition of skills and career development:** University education can be transformed when university libraries effectively involve in creating environment for skills and career development. According to Anasi (2010), libraries create an environment for acquiring skills and career development of students, and also members of the community where the university is situated. The library does this by going beyond acquisition of information resources in various subject areas, to organizing seminars and workshops on career development. Libraries have also been found engaging in lessons/ tutorials and extra-moral classes for students preparing for examinations so as to assist them excel in their academic pursuit. Though this is more prevalent in public libraries, university libraries can equally do it even in a better way by engaging professionals from various colleges and departments of the university. Presently, ICT directorate of universities are involved in training people on ICT skills acquisition, while department of entrepreneurial education equally train students in acquisition of various vocational skills. The university libraries can therefore form synergy with other directorates in the university and organize skills and career development programmes, which will help



graduates of such institutions to be self-employed and become employers of labour upon graduation, and thereby adding value to university education in Nigeria.

**Using library Website for provision of library and information services:**

According to Jelegat (2016), academic libraries can provide information about their services by using library websites, which save the time of users. University library websites can also give answers to quick reference inquiries of patrons of the library, as well as creating awareness on the available library services. University library websites can equally provide preliminary information to students and researchers who may not find it easy to personally go to such university libraries to obtain information. Effective use of university library website is in response to the need to optimal exploitation of the digital economy, which university libraries enhance.

**Providing guided library tour:** Providing guided tour to library users is an avenue through which university libraries transform education as it enables the students to get acquainted with the library and its services. This affords students the opportunity to navigate the library, understand its roles in their educational pursuit and thereby leverage the benefits.

**Playing active role in university accreditation exercises:** University libraries have always been involved in accreditation of university academic programmes. For Nigerian university education system to be transformed, university libraries should continually realize their important role in accreditation of academic programmes in their universities, and therefore be prepared at all times to defend their reason of existence and their supportive role in teaching, learning and research. What is observed is that most university libraries are involved in fire brigade work during accreditation periods, which results from their unpreparedness. Thus, university libraries in order to promote transformation of education system should prepare ahead of accreditation exercises.

**Challenges Hindering Nigerian University Libraries from Actualizing their Transformational Roles**

The challenges hindering Nigerian university libraries from realizing their effective support of transformation agenda for Nigerian university education involve the following: Lack of adequate funding of Nigerian university libraries; lack of automation of library services of most university libraries in Nigeria; lack of internet facilities in this digital age, and even some of the Nigerian university libraries that have Internet facilities do not have adequate bandwidth; negative influence of ICT on the part of the students that boycott using the library; lack of adequate staff to effectively carry out library services, as most university libraries



are under-staffed both in academic and non-academic staff categories; inability of many academic libraries to be digitally driven; technophobia on the part of some librarians that have adamantly refused to move with the tide; lack of adequate training for staff.

Others include lack of adequate orientation for fresh students so as to adequately prepare them for independent study in the library, as the university library is usually allotted few minutes during orientation week, which is not enough to educate the users; lack of adequate motivation of staff; inability to efficiently use university library funds and also channeling funds meant for library development to other things the university management may deem more important than library services; and inability of the university management to speedily approve university librarian's request for funds, as library is not autonomous; failure of university libraries to be prepared at all times for accreditation of academic programmes of their universities. Fagbola, Uzoigwe and Ayegomogun (2011) enumerated the following as challenges:

Poor/ unreliable power supply, poor funding, lack of maintenance culture in the areas of infrastructures and equipment like ICT facilities, apathy on the part of staff that are not committed to client oriented service, and shortage of librarians that are digitally driven. Ajeluorou (2011) lamented on too much focus on reading to pass examinations rather than encouraging reading for pleasure, which is a habit that when formed at early stage of education, positively affects the individual through university education and beyond. The Library and Information Services Transformation Charter (2014) revealed that the state of education is not only due to scarce information resources but also lack of appreciation of the developmental and educational roles which the library plays in eradicating illiteracy and promoting information literacy, which enhance education outcome.

### **Possible Strategies for Overcoming the Challenges**

1. Making transformation of Nigerian university educational landscape a reality requires infusing more financial resources to university libraries, adopting measures to ensure that the available financial resources are used efficiently to deliver best results, and adopting reforms that support students to learn and gain skills that will help them become productive and successful adults upon graduation. This will help Nigerian universities to achieve a learning generation. However, The Education Commission (2016) identified four educational transformation parameters, which involve performance, innovation, inclusion and finance.
2. University education must focus on performance: Performance refers to ensuring that university education system focuses on being transformed to deliver results through setting standards, tracking progress; making



information easily available and accessible; investing in university education interventions that will deliver best results; cutting waste and cracking down inefficiency and corruption in the university system, which inhibit lecturers and students from effective teaching and learning respectively.

3. University education must be focused on being innovative: For Nigerian university education to be transformed, there is need for university libraries to focus and embrace innovation, which refers to investing in approaches and adapting to future needs. It is therefore suggested that Nigerian leaders and policy makers in university library and also university librarians should foster innovations across education systems by creating an enabling environment in which new ideas and approaches can emerge and thrive; and by prioritizing innovations in some areas like strengthening and diversifying education workforce, harnessing technology for effective library services so as to effectively support teaching, learning and research; and forming effective partnerships with organizations, nationally and internationally, so as to encourage people that can assist university libraries in the provision of information resources and other infrastructure.
4. Improvement on funding of Nigerian university education: For Nigerian university education to be transformed through performance, innovations among others, adequate funding is required. Thus, public sources of funding should be enhanced by government, as it is the major driving force in expanding access to education and equally in enhancing education transformation. Nigerian universities and their libraries can as well ensure that they adequately meet up with TETFund requirements/regulations for accessing fund so as to use such avenue to transform their various universities and university libraries in terms of staff development, renovations, building new and adequate lecture halls, laboratories, and university libraries, acquiring adequate library resources, equipment and other infrastructure, among others. In addition, university libraries can adopt fee-based services in order to have more funds for improved services.
5. Ajeluorou (2011) advocated a book-friendly environment especially at home as being very important in enabling students see reading as part of their upbringing, which will invariably affect them positively in their university education. It has been noted that children that developed from book-friendly environment always grow up loving books and having good reading habits, lifelong reading habit, which has the capacity to transform education as reading improves educational performance.
6. Nigerian Government should effectively support indigenous publishing as a sure way of transforming education in Nigeria. This is because the effort will reduce cost of production of books and other information resources; and



thereby making it affordable and accessible to the university libraries and users too. When this is done, reading materials will be easily available and affordable, while education will be transformed.

7. Ensuring that the university library staff have the capacity to meet the demands for excellent service by encouraging effective manpower development. When university library staff are constantly trained through workshops, seminars, conferences and even in-service training to obtain higher degrees, it enables them to move with the tide of times in information delivery as they will be conversant with the global best practices through such trainings, which will positively impact their service delivery.
8. Ensuring that Nigerian university libraries optimally exploit digital technology in their services, by having adequate ICT facilities and providing effective e-library services. At this digital age, every library strives to offer the state-of-the-art services and this is enabled by exploitation of digital technology, which university libraries must embrace, as no university can boast of having all the needs of its users but must be able to provide access to information resources beyond what it can acquire.
9. Nigerian university libraries should ensure that students with disabilities have access to their services and resources by adapting the university library building and facilities and also acquiring technologies and devices to aid such access. This will encourage the yearning for education for all in our citadel of learning.
10. Agencies and associations that can contribute effectively and also work in synergy with university libraries for Nigerian university education transformation should involve the Federal Ministry of Education, National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The Federal Ministry of Education, NUC, NLA should continually help in formulation of national educational policies, maintaining uniform education standards in the country, among others, so as to move Nigerian university education forward, while university libraries should help in implementing such policies formulated. On the other hand, NLA and LRCN as professional bodies should equally assist in restructuring and also ensuring effective implementation of policies relating to libraries and librarianship as a profession. Effective implementation of university educational policies in Nigeria will make Nigerian university education compete favourably with their counterparts globally.



## Conclusion

It is evident from the foregoing that the university library is a vital organ in the Nigerian university education system and plays significant educational roles in its transformation. University libraries make available all the relevant information resources free or almost free of cost, and without discrimination but giving equal opportunities to library users. University libraries and librarians can contribute significantly to the actualization of transformation of Nigerian university education system through effective library services, which support teaching, learning and research activities of their parent institutions. Thus, university libraries have an essential and close bearing upon the advancement of education and learning and therefore play very pivotal roles in educational transformation. However, for transformation of Nigerian university educational system to be achieved, the Nigerian universities and their libraries in addition to adopting other strategies adduced, should strategically maintain a cordial relationship with TETFund for funding; and leverage NUC NgREN so as to gain from their Internet connections for effective library services; university management of various universities in Nigeria should appreciate the educational role of their university libraries; value them as integral part of the knowledge economy and thereby help them to offer effective services by adequately funding the libraries through the release of 10% of the total yearly allocation to universities to their libraries; and the university librarians are also encouraged to effectively manage the funds allocated to libraries in order to justify need for more funding.



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