ROLE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ACCREDITATION OF COURSES AND TEACHING PROGRAMS: A CASE OF AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ADO – EKITI

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ABSTRACT: *This study focused on the role of academic libraries in accreditation of courses and teaching programs in Nigeria taking a cursory look at Afe Babalola University, Ado – Ekiti (ABUAD) Library. It is worthy of note that no educational institution can perform its tripartite functions of teaching, learning and research without well – equipped library and other facilities. This study therefore analyzed the invaluable contribution of Afe Babalola University, Ado – Ekiti (ABUAD) library in courses accreditation and teaching programmes. The findings indicated that in Afe Babalola University, decentralized library system has enhanced specialized collections that are rich and in-depth for providing access to information in print and electronic media. Also, the systematic organizations of the collections have enhanced accessibility by users. This in turns have enhanced full accreditation of most of the courses that are being offered. Furthermore, the library has assisted in equipping students with the necessary skills needed for effective learning, reading skills, information literacy skills and the provision of relevant up – to – date information materials. Access to collections has also been enhanced through long opening hours including weekends.*

KEYWORDS: accreditation, academic libraries, teaching programs, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Among the goals of university education is to contribute to national development through high level manpower training and acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to become self-reliant and useful members of the society (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). Behind the mission and vision of university education is the university library, which is the academic library serving the university community. A library is generally concerned with the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, study and consultation (Aina, 2002). It is also an organized collection of books and other information materials covering a particular field of knowledge or part of it. Academic libraries are those established in tertiary institutions such as Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, Colleges of Agriculture, Colleges of Technology and also Research Institutes (Akporhonor, 2005 cited in Abubakar, 2011). Afe Babalola University, Ado – Ekiti (ABUAD) Library is therefore, an academic library.

The ABUAD libraries across all her colleges are designed to support the school programmes as well as the teaching and learning process. The library is integral to the teaching and learning process as it facilitates the work of the classroom teacher and ensures students' equitable access to resources. The university library, across all her colleges serves students by providing materials to meet their various needs and encouraging

reading and the use of libraries. The Library which can be considered as the heart of the university actively performs activities relating to: learning and teaching, research and generation of new knowledge, dissemination of research results, conservation of ideas/knowledge and the extension of services (Subair, 2015). Professional librarians that work in the university libraries especially in this information era have always engaged themselves with the collection, organization and dissemination of information resources to support research and learning. These are resources in both print and electronic formats. That is why librarians in the university libraries are fully recognized as academic staff. The accreditation of degree and other academic programmes by the National Universities Commission (NUC) means a system for recognizing educational institutions (universities and programmes offered in these institutions) for a level of performance, integrity and quality which entitles them to the confidence of the educational community, the public they serve and employers of labour (NUC manual of accreditation, 2012).

The library played a major role in the accreditation of academic programs in an institution. The NUC set up a Quality Control Division (QCD) which did research to test the quality of Nigerian university academic programmes. The NUC set up benchmarks for each academic programme which were evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Percent
Staffing	32
Academic Content	18
Physical Facilities	27
Library	18
Funding	03
Employers' Rating	02
Total	**100**

SOURCE: NUC Manual of Accreditation, March 2013: National Universities Commission Pg. 114

Academic programmes must have a score of 70 percent or above in each of the core areas of Staffing, Academic Content, Physical Facilities, and the Library in order to get full accreditation (Okojie, 2008). The result of the 2005/2006 NUC Accreditation Exercise was shocking. A total of 1670 academic programmes were accredited, 748 (44.8%) academic programmes were fully accredited, 810 (48.5%) academic programmes got interim accreditation while 112 (6.7%) academic programmes were not only denied accreditation but also barred from admitting new students. Four (4) programmes in universities that failed to get a score of 12 percent in the quality of library services were denied accreditation (Okojie, 2008). NUC's prima facie case about the deteriorating quality of academic activities in Nigerian universities was made by the result of the 2005/2006 accreditation exercise.

A close examination of those university libraries where the academic programmes were denied accreditation reveals that most do not have adequate ICT facilities. On the other hand, most of the libraries in which the programmes received full or interim accreditation had a functional Internet café, in addition to other ICT facilities.

Statement of the problem

The quality of academic programme in universities has become a universal concern. One of the ways of ensuring quality is through the accreditation of academic programmes. However, it is saddening to note that in Nigerian educational system, many of those indices that can guarantee quality are not taken into consideration. It has been noted that ill-equipped libraries, among other factors, has hindered the full accreditation of many academic programmes. Little attention is paid to the library system in terms of funding, staffing and modern technology.

Also, no educational institution can perform its functions without well – equipped library; this is so because the library is the heart and hub of intellectual activities and a pivot on which academic activities revolve. Unfortunately, many libraries are not given the due support in terms of recognition, provision of modern facilities and different formats of information resources which in turn hinder them in performing their role as expected. It is against this backdrop, therefore, that this paper seeks to look into the place of academic libraries in the accreditation of courses and teaching programmes in Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to identify the role of academic libraries in accreditation of courses and teaching programs in ABUAD. The specific objectives are to:

i.   identify the role of ABUAD library in accreditation of her academic programmes

ii.   To investigate the extent to which the library has assisted academic staff and students in their teaching programs.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions are formulated

i.   What are the roles of the ABUAD library in accreditation of her academic programmes?

ii.   To what extent does the library assisted staff and students in their teaching programmes?

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on the review of extant literature in the subjects under study. The particular case of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti Library in relation to the performance of its courses in the rounds of NUC programme accreditation exercises witnessed in the university was reported.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- **Accreditation of Academic Programmes and the Role of Academic Libraries**

The university system is an intellectual community that is widely recognized as an advanced community responsible for the transmission of high quality knowledge, attitude and skills for the development and

18

sustenance of the individual and the society. They are designed for the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills relevant for the advancement of the society (Gurin, 2014). The establishment of (NUC), which is a body responsible for the accreditation of academic programmes, came into being in 1962 by the Federal Government of Nigeria for nurturing the university system, collaborating with the universities to ensure orderly development of the university system (Okojie, 2010). The NUC was given additional Powers and responsibilities to: "lay down minimum standards for all universities in the federation and to accredit their degrees and other academic awards after obtaining prior approval therefore through the Minister from the president, Commander - in - Chief of the armed forces provided that the accreditation of degrees and other academic awards shall be in accordance with such guidelines as may be laid down and approved by the commission from time to time (Okojie, 2010: 102)".

According to the NUC Manual of accreditation (2012), the objectives of accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian Universities are to:

- Ensure that at least the provisions of the Minimum Academic Standards document are attained, maintained and enhanced;
- Assure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization; and
- Certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian Universities are of high standards and their graduates are adequate for employment and for further studies.

The accreditation exercise is basically organized by the NUC but conducted by teams of experts, mostly from the university system and other professional bodies. The exercise has helped in promoting compliance with standards and other regulations in higher education, especially in the improvement of quality in university education in the area of teaching, research and community service. The progress recorded by the NUC in higher education sector could be significantly attributed to the effective coordination it has provided, as well as the collaborative efforts of the universities in promoting quality service delivery in teaching, research and community service (Gurin, 2014).

It must be pointed out that government approved Minimum Academic Standard documents providing for minimum course content in each degree programmes, minimum floor space for lecture and laboratory facilities for students; minimum amount of laboratory space, library, minimum staff – student ratio for effective teaching and learning in any particular discipline (Gurin, 2014). From above, the library is not left out as an essential facility that a university must have; not just in building but well – stocked with various forms of information materials; and extending its role to providing effective networking and collaboration, updating knowledge among others. Thus, it can be deduced from above that academic libraries have proved invaluable through provision of information materials ranging from print resources, electronic resources, audio visual resources, databases, to support teaching, learning and research by postgraduate students and lecturers. If the university library falls short of this criterion, it can impede the full accreditation of such university's programme.

Role of Academic Libraries in University Teaching Programmes in Nigeria
According to Uvah (2014), educational institutions exist to inculcate in the learners the knowledge, skills and attitude they need to appropriately integrate into society, and to enable succession necessary for the survival of the society itself. Although the broad purpose of universities is teaching, research and service to the society, teaching is central to the mandate of these institutions. Chiedu (2014) therefore, posited that for

the university to be able to carry out its tripartite mandate of teaching, research and community development (service), certain elements that contribute to the existence of the university must be present in adequate qualitative and quantitative measure. The library must be stocked with current books and journals in hard and soft (electronic) copies to enrich the knowledge of the teacher/ researcher and learners, thus motivating them to generate knowledge that will further update knowledge.

In his study, Itsekor established that there is a positive relationship between libraries and educational development in Nigeria. Citing Ogunsola (2008), "the development of education may be said to be synonymous with the development of library and library services within any given community. Libraries are very relevant to the development of our educational system; they make significant contribution to the effectiveness of education process; the present educational system emphasizes active learning and this is where the role of librarians and libraries in the development of education comes in". He stressed further that Library professional associations all over the world have a crucial role in empowering the citizenry for upward development, the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) should take a cue from American Library Association (ALA) and other associations of developed countries to ensure that Nigerian educational system is developed to a set standard.

In supporting this, Umar (2013), reported that libraries play integral roles in educational development through its activities of research, services, acquisition, organization and dissemination of relevant information and education carrier materials in both print and electronic media to its users. He stressed that the goals of education cannot be achieved without emphasis on the proper and adequate management of libraries and that quality education is impossible without quality libraries in any given educational institutions. Also, Lonsade (2003) opines that positive relationship exists between libraries and students' excellent academic performances. This indicates that if education is the transmission of knowledge, skills, values and norms from one generation to another, then the management of libraries in achievement of these goals cannot be overemphasized.

According to Adio and Olasina (2012), a well-equipped library is a sine qua non for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual advancement and elevation of the people of a community. It is an indispensable element of the absolute well-being of the citizens and that of the nation at large. Undoubtedly, the goals of the library are to promote literacy, provide services, materials, and opportunities for citizens to become a part of the educational system and to give support to government educational policies and programmes. The establishment of more schools, training of teachers and curricula improvements, although, worthy efforts, may not just be all without a commensurate programme to establish and upgrade libraries which are not merely conservers of past events, experiences and knowledge, but have essential roles and close bearing on advancement of education and nationhood.

Furthermore, Owoeye (2011) says effective teaching and learning requires the support of librarians and well – equipped libraries. This denotes that for any teaching and learning process to be effective there must be adequate provision of library facilities. Chiedu (2014) further stressed that library resources as well as physical infrastructure and facilities must be made available and adequate to achieve internal quality assurance whose ultimate goal is for the university to meet requisite standards while striving towards

attaining a world class status. It is worthy of note that to achieve external quality assurance, the activities of academic libraries is also an essential criterion. The university libraries in playing their supportive role to the university education provide necessary resources and services more so in this information era. These enable the libraries to meet up the needs of their teaming patrons. Such resources range from print to non-print and electronic materials in line with what Yusuf and Iwu (2010) asserted that different users of academic libraries utilize different materials provided by these libraries; such materials as reference materials, textbooks, journals, newspapers, past projects, electronic journals etc.

In his view, Okebukola (2014) highlighted areas of linkages, research networking and collaboration in Nigerian Universities. It is worthy of note that the library has played vital role, especially in recent times in facilitating research, networking and collaboration among universities through provision of digital libraries (virtual) that can be accessed from anywhere, interlibrary loan facilities, studying facilities for research students from other universities (undergraduate and postgraduate students), online databases in varieties of disciplines, electronic resources (information) in BlogSpot, reference services among others.

FINDINGS FROM THE ABUAD EXPERIENCE

Specifically, in Afe Babalola University, Ado –Ekiti, the decentralized library systems have enhanced studying and research among faculty staff and students. There is a Social and Management Science Library, Law Library, Medical Library, Federal Teaching Hospital Medical Library, Engineering Library and Nursing Science Departmental Library which have specialized collections that are rich and in-depth to provide access to information in both print and electronic media which can be accessed remotely and globally.

The university management stocks the library with adequate, relevant and up to – date collections and the librarians ensures that they are organized and made accessible to users. During accreditation programmes, the library staff ensures that the library meet up with the expected criteria from the library (as an integral part of the whole institution); working tirelessly to provide the needed records about the library collections and other relevant information as may be required.

Also, the libraries have proved highly invaluable in the area of teaching "Use of Library and Study Skills". This is to support the curriculum of the National University Commission that use of library must be taught in all universities and not only this, students are equipped with the necessary skills for effective learning process, reading skills, information literacy skills (including use of electronic resources) which in turn boost their academic output.

Furthermore, the library management also collaborates and communicates with faculty members and gets recommendation from them in order to select and acquire relevant information materials to facilitate the vision of quality and reformative education through availability of relevant and adequate information materials for teaching, studying and researching. In addition in – house workshops and seminars are also organized to enhance effective library and information service delivery by the librarians and other supportive staff of the library within the university. The libraries have been found to provide ready access to collections through long opening hours including weekends.

ACCREDITED COURSES IN AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. B.Eng. Chemical Engineering Full 2020
2. B.Eng. Petroleum Engineering Full 2020
3. B.Eng. Mechanical Engineering Full 2020
4. B.Eng. Mechatronics Engineering Full 2020
5. B.Eng. Electrical Engineering Full 2020
6. B.Eng. Computer Engineering Full 2020
7. B.Eng. Civil Engineering Full 2020
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. MBBS Full 2019
2. B.Sc Human Nutrition and Dietetics Full 2020
3. B.Sc. Anatomy Full 2018
4. B.Sc. Physiology Full 2018
5. B.Sc Medical Science Laboratory Full 2020
6. BNSc. Nursing Interim 2016
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. B.Sc. Accounting Full 2018
2. B.Sc. Banking & Finance Full 2018
3. B.Sc. Business Administration Full 2018
4. B.Sc. Economics Full 2018
5. B.Sc. Media & Communication Studies Full 2018
6. B.Sc. Tourism and Events Management Full 2018
7. B.Sc. Peace and Conflict Studies Full 2019
8. B.Sc. Political Science Full 2019
9. B.Sc. Intelligence and Security Studies Full 2019
10. B.Sc. Social Justice Full 2020
11 B.Sc. International Relations and Diplomacy Interim 2016
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. B.Sc. Biochemistry Full 2018
2. B.Sc. Human Biology Full 2018
3. B.Sc. Microbiology Full 2018
4. B.Sc. Computer Science Full 2020
5. B.Sc. Industrial Chemistry Full 2019
6. B.Sc. Agriculture Full 2019
7. B.Sc. Mathematics Full 2019
8. B.Sc. Physics Full 2019
9. B.Sc. Geology Full 2020

COLLEGE OF LAW
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. LLB Full 2018
ARTS AND HUMANITIES
S/N PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION STATUS YEAR DUE
1. B.A English Interim 2016
Signed: Director, Academic Planning
Retrieved on 1st September, 2016 at www.abuad.edu.ng

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the above statuses of the various courses in ABUAD that have been subjected to NUC accreditation exercises between 2013 and 2015 and the corresponding successes recorded, it is obvious that the 70% pass requirement for library for each of the courses have been met. The direct and positive impacts of university libraries on accreditation of academic programmes, learning and teaching activities have thus been demonstrated.It is therefore recommended that university management should give more attention to libraries in terms of funding, provision of ICT equipment and staffing so as to fulfill the mission of their parent institutions

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