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Comparative Analysis of Library Automation Between Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria

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Abstract: There is no doubt that automation of library services will enhance efficiency. This is because automation is a computerized system. The National Commissions for Colleges of Education in Nigeria set laid down guidelines for Colleges of Education to follow regarding automation. This study compared library automation between Federal and State Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Data was collected from 197 librarians in 58 colleges of Education in Nigeria. Findings revealed that Colleges of Education in Nigeria are not automated. This has grave implications for teacher education. It is therefore recommended that Colleges of Education libraries be computerized.

Key words: Library automation, colleges of education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Information centre such as the library needs to be automated to enhance their information acquisition, storage, retrieval and dissemination capabilities and also ease the access and utilization of the information services. The ACRL (1994) suggested that institutions should be prepared to utilize new technologies for accessing information as they are developed. This is why automating the library operations is quite a welcome idea. A summary of the advantages of a library automation system on the point of view of Ifidon (1985) includes: Processing speed, longer storage and protection facilities for record, flexible and can work for loner hours, handling so many assignments at the same time. Mohammed (1997) strongly having soft spot for library automation remarked that by every standard the world is fast moving into a smaller global village, particularly with the advent of internet. As a result of this Nigerian libraries and information centres and those of the Technologically Less Developed (TLD) countries have no choice than to automate their systems. By this, they can easily join the race towards information network connectivity as the most viable option for provision of the right information to the right audience at the right time in the right package. Eniafe (1986) also in support of library automation condemned the idea of storing printed materials alone. He opined that books waste the time of our users. Users cannot quickly go over 300, 500 and so pages within 6 h. Users easily sleep after 10 to 12 min of commencement, whereas in automation, a book of 600 pages can be accessed under 1 h. Karen (1991) opined that over the course of the last two decades, automation has become a fact of life in library services operations.

Automation is a component of information and communication technology which Adesope *et al*. (2006) stated that is composed of a series of computer-related mechanisms for communicating information effectively. The application of ICT in the world today is a global challenge. This is because the introduction of ICT has brought with it renewed opportunities in the automation of libraries. Unfortunately Nigeria is still behind in meeting the challenges (Adebayo, 2006). In line with meeting up with global challenges most universities abroad have computerized their libraries to increase efficiency. Thus, it is possible to have a quick look at the holdings of a library within the shortest possible time (Guardian, 2002). A majority of libraries now depend upon automation for at least some portion of their processing activities.

For a library to be worthwhile there must be some standards guiding its operation. Library standards was defined as contained in the Statistics for South African Public Library (1986) as the criteria by which library services may be measured and assessed. They are determined by professional librarians in order to attain and maintain the objectives they set themselves. Standards may be interpreted in various ways as the pattern of an ideal, a model procedure, a measure for appraisals and a stimulus for future development and improvement. A lot of importance is attached to the library as revealed in the roles that it can perform in the educational system of a country. This makes various professionals to conclude that there is the necessity to design a kind of standard which all institutions must meet

before operating a library system. Among other items that are considered for streamlining, to bring about a uniform output by the libraries as listed in the standards for managing colleges of education libraries is that the library should be computerized as soon as individual circumstances permit. This is the automation services. The National Commissions for Colleges of Education (NCCE) prescribed standards that will ensure that their libraries live up to expectation. There are indications that since NCCE is a federal government institution, the tendency is that they will pay particular attention to their own federal colleges and federal colleges will more likely abide by the set regulations. This study intends to examine whether significant difference exist in automation services of federal and state colleges of education in Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study covered 58 colleges of education comprising of 20 Federal Colleges of Education and 38 State Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The subjects comprised of librarians and specifically those with at least university degrees in Library Science or university degrees in other disciplines with a Post Graduate Diploma in Library Science. Sample for the study was 197 librarians in the colleges of education identified for the study. Data analysis was by the use of chi square statistic, which was tested at the 5% level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data on Table 1 shows that performances in the Colleges of education were generally poor as 98% of the respondents in the State Colleges of Education and 85% of respondents in the Federal Colleges of Education, respectively indicated that no section of their libraries was automated. In this regard only 25 and 15% of the respondents in the State Colleges of Education and the Federal Colleges of Education respectively automated their library administration.

From the table few Federal colleges automated some sections of their library while none of the State Colleges automated sections of their library. In the same vein, 97% of the respondents in the State Colleges of Education and 84.8% of respondents in the Federal Colleges of Education respectively indicated that their libraries did not adopt any computerization system.

Differences in library automation: Table 2 is the chi-square analysis showing differences in automation in federal and state colleges of education in Nigeria. From the analysis since the X^2 calculated value is greater than the critical X^2 values in terms of library automation between the practices of the Federal and State Colleges of Education in the implementation of the NCCE library standards regarding library automation, significant difference was established.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by computerization

Sections of the library automated	State college of of education (n = 131)	Federal college of education (n = 66)
Circulation	0 (0)	2 (3.0)
Cataloguing and classification	0 (0)	2 (3.0)
Readers services	0 (0)	3 (4.5)
Library administration	33 (25.2)	10 (15.1)
None	98 (74.5)	49 (74.2)
Computerization system adopted		
Integrated	0 (0)	0 (0)
Partial	3 (2.2)	10 (15.1)
None	128 (97.7)	56 (84.8)

Table 2: Chi-square analysis showing differences in automation

Variable	X^2 cal	X^2 tab	df	Decision
Sections of the library automated	15.5	9.49	4	Significant
Form of library automated adopted	8.2	3.84	1	Significant

The difference is as a result of one category of College of Education being more automated than the other. From the analysis, Federal Colleges of Education experienced more automation than their state counterparts. This is an indication that library automation is not being implemented in the state colleges as recommended by the NCCE. It is likely to be because there is no standard monitoring mechanism to ascertain whether NCCE guidelines are followed to uphold standard. It is also possible to be because state colleges feel inadequate in their funding compared to federal colleges.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the colleges were found not to have computerized their libraries. This has serious implication for teacher education as information seeking behaviour of teacher trainees and teacher trainers will be hampered. It is therefore recommended that libraries should be encouraged to computerize their services as we are in the information technology era. This is expected to enable users derive full benefits of the library with ease. It will also afford them the opportunity to access information from various libraries through the internet.

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