

The Significance of the Library in Technology Education Institutions in Sustainable Youth Empowerment: An Overview

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Abstract This paper examines the significance of the library in technology education institutions for sustainable youth empowerment. It identified that the library is of relevant. The paper also pointed out that technology education institution cannot effectively realize its objective of sustainable youth empowerment without the supporting role of the library. It also uncovered one major impediment to library services and also pointed out possible ways to address the problem.

Keywords Technology Education, Library, Academic Institutions, Information Explosion

1. Introduction

It is glaring that technology education institutions are institutions aim at endowing its recipient with appropriate skills, experiences, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and make meaningful contribution to the development of the society.[1, 2], observed that technology education is desirable for self-reliance and economic development of Nigeria as it enables the recipients to acquire vocational/technical skills and competencies that make them become gainfully employed and be able to fit adequately into the society and perform functional roles. Few may still need to be told that technology education institutions are vocal force in sustainable youth empowerment. The point is that these institutions are engaged in harnessing knowledge of the natural and social worlds which affects society's activities and organization. It is an indisputable fact that these institutions are involved in research, teaching and learning which emphasized in applying the knowledge of science to specific practical use so that man can live more comfortably and securely in the future than he does now and even more than he did in the past. While this point cannot be over emphasized.

The fact remains that technology education institution cannot unilaterally realized its objective of sustainable youth empowerment without the supporting role of the library.

This is the crunch of the matter. The curious question therefore is of what relevant is the library in technology education institutions in sustainable youth empowerment? This form the basis of the paper.

2. Concept of Sustainable Youth Empowerment

Youth are one of the greatest assets any nation can have[3]. Therefore Youth Empowerment is a process according to[4] whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives. In Nigeria, youth empowerment occurs in homes, at schools, through youth organizations, government policy-making, reality TV shows and community organizing. Youth empowerment ranges from economic empowerment to social, ideology, educational, technological and political empowerment.

The term youth empowerment combines two important words (Youth and empowerment).[4] noted that the United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. While[5], defines empowerment as official authority or legal power to enable and promote self actualization influence. The strategy prescribed by the above definition means that the party been empowered already has the competencies needed to achieve the desired outcome. Youth empowerment therefore refers to a process through refers to a process through which adults being to share responsibility and power with young people.[6,7], stated that young people account for a large percentage of Nigeria's population figure, representing an important and dynamics force in any society. However,

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young people face many challenges in the Nigeria society, such as high rate of poverty and unemployment, illiteracy, and lack of access to information and essential welfare services.

In recent years, almost all governments of countries of the world, including advanced countries have sought new approaches to harness the potentials of young people and address the problems facing them[7]. As a result of the vintage position of the youth in any society, the concept of youth empowerment therefore means involving young people in decision- making processes on issues that affect them, as well as entrusting them with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to effectively and meaningfully participate[7, 8].

Sustainable youth empowerment in technology education institutions is very imperative because of the transitional period to adulthood and this is a challenge for many youth[9]. There are serious social, economic and educational consequences with not addressing. The issue, and since one of the major factor is literacy level arising from lack of information. The library whose main function is provision and dissemination of information can be use to address the situation by providing timely, accurate and regular information in technology education institution.

2.1. The meaning of Library

Scholars across the Globe have put in effort in getting an appropriate definition for the word library.[10], defined library as a store house of information and the seat of knowledge in an academic environment while[11], further noted that library as an organized collection of books and other curries of information organized and exploited for current and future use.[12], see the library as a place entrusted with the acquisition, organization, preservation, storage retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format it might appear. Although libraries predated the invention of book and collection Papyrus Scrolls (the original Alexandria libraries was a good example), and manuscript (the medieval monastery libraries, for instance). In developed countries, libraries are taking the lead in internalization, digitization and virtualization of access to knowledge[13].

While other like[14], defined the library as a large collection of books, today the term library can refer any collection, including digital sources, resources and services. The collection can be of print, audio, and visual materials in numerous formats, including maps, prints, documents micro form (microfilm/ microfiche) CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, video games, e-books, audio books and many other electronic resources. A library is organized for use and maintained by, institution, corporation, public body or a private individual depending on status and ownership. As a result of the dynamism, of our society and the mergence of information technology usage in library, the definition of library has change to reflect the services rendered in the modern library.

In recent time, the definition of library is changing both in nature and services. The term virtual library is been introduced into the library system worldwide because with virtual library the quality of academic library collections will be bolstered up, staff and students will be able to access data bases for teaching and research[15, 16]. They further noted that a library is an organized collection of items which may be in form of books, journals, videos, CD-Rom etc, along with the services required to make them available to a given user group or groups. It can also be referred to as a “place” to get information and to get help finding information. It can be physical or virtual or a combination of both[17, 18].

The virtual library therefore, can be referred to as a child of necessity arising from the need to use technologies in accessing the world information.

The term virtual library has been defined by various persons, according to[19] citing[20], it is a library in which the holdings are found in electronic stacks without any regard to a physical space or location. It is a technological wag of bringing to gather the resources of various libraries and information services in one place so that users can find what they need quickly and easily. A virtual library and consist of materials from a variety of separate libraries that are organized in a virtual space using computers and computer networks.

Virtual library collection is a collection of machine readable documents made available through an internet site, one of the examples of a virtual library is the networked computer science technical report library (NCSTRL)

The aggregate of all the definitions suggest that the library means a place where books and non-book material are systematically arranged following definite codes and schemes which makes for easy retrieval and use. It is the nerve center of educational institutions. The clearing house of information.

2.2. Roles of the Library in Technology Education Institutions in Sustainable Youth Empowerment

That the library occupies a unique position in dispensing educational services cannot be faulted.[21], noted that the main objective of academic library is to provide materials and service which will now and in future best contribute to the fulfillment of the objective of the university.[22], in recognizing this fact emphatically pointed out that libraries are one of the most important education service[23, 24], also mentioned that: the library is the live wire of academic institutions because it provides the atmosphere and materials conducive and necessary for learning, teaching and research.

When viewed against this background the role/relevance of the library in technology education institutions unsustainable youth empowerment need no emphasis. The overwhelming argument is that these institutions engaged in teaching, learning and research which can not be efficiently and effectively carried without a library. The point is that in this era of technological advancement and information explosion reliance on lectures note alone is no longer enough

for a student to record a reasonable success in the field of technology education. To complement lectures note the library provide the student with varieties of reading materials for his academic success. This it offer in both print and non-prints format.

It is an established fact that technology education institutions have clear objectives for sustainable youth empowerment. However, these objectives would be difficult to realize, if not impossible without the supporting role of the library. The unavoidable problem is that research work in the field of technology education for sustainable youth empowerment would be face with the inevitable need of consulting the work of other researchers. These works no double are better preserved in the library. It may not be for from this unique role of the library to institutions of higher learning that no tertiary institution of technology education, the country can be successfully accredited as one without a library house in it. The uncompromising fact is that the library is a living force in technology education institutions, both students and technology educators needs the library to realize the objectives of sustainable youth empowerment.

There is no gain, saying that the efficiency of effective technology education institutions undoubtedly depend on books, yet the fact remains that books are very expensive. [25], noted that books are not easily come by and when they are, they are too expensive. The culminating effect is that no student no matter how rich his financial background could single-handedly provides all his needed reading materials for a successful quality and quantitative technology education for sustainable youth empowerment. To save the situation, the library remain the anchor of hope for such student, as it provide freely, rich information materials to supplement whatever reading materials the student may have. As if that is not good enough, the library enhance student's communication skills, as it provides, materials with which the student could improve himself. Its wide range of services helps technology education institutions to implement its curriculum of studies. These services among others include book loan and reference services.

2.3. Problem of Libraries in Technology Education Institutions

The effectiveness of the library in technology education institutions to offer and render meaningful library service for sustainable youth empowerment is impended by a number of problems. One of the major hindrances is inadequate funding.

It is frustrating to observe that over the years the library has been given a step-mother treatment in the area of funding. When it comes to the allocation of funds according to [26] the library is usually the last to be remembered. And most often than not, allocation of fund to the library is tied to the relationship between the chief executive and the chief librarian. The resultant effect is under funding especially when there is a crack in the relationship in management. Lamenting this situation [27] identified that, most of the

problem affecting libraries are traceable to under funding. But the National University Commission (NUC) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education strongly recommended that 10% of an institution's of higher learning statutory recurrent votes be set aside for library development. However [28], discovered that in the times of stress when expenditure has to be curtailed, the library grant is one of the first to be affected. [29], observed that whenever there was a cut on the budget the management will than know that books already acquired in the library over the years were still useful. Some studies identified, material and non-material problem, which refers to the insufficient number of computers or copies of software, while the non material problems include insufficient knowledge and skill to reader services [6, 7]. Furthermore [11], highlighted other problem to include, library management, mindset of library, library services and library management software.

The implication is that the ability of the library to acquire relevant reading materials, up-date its collection and render effective library services for sustainable youth empowerment is hampered.

2.4. Possible Ways to Help the Library in Technology Education Institutions in Sustainable Youth Empowerment

Having identified one of the major problems inhabiting library service in technology education institutions. It is necessary to offer possible ways to check the trend and make the library more functional. And this the government can do by ensuring that the library is adequately funded. The watch dog of tertiary institutions that is the National University Commission and the National Commission for Colleges of Education should in its own part should ensure that fund allocation to the library are consistent with its policy statement.

Library, however is affected by the problem of inadequate funding, this have a telling affect on its service. This could be address if the library is adequately funded or of best funded in line with National University Commission and the National Commission for Colleges of Education Commission guideline.

3. Summary and Conclusions

Technology education institution has a role to play in sustainable youth empowerment. But this cannot be effectively done without the complementary role of the library. The issue is that these institutions are strongly connected with teaching, learning and research. And this cannot be meaningfully carried out without the library.

The fact is that the library provides rich reading materials and services to promote technology education institution for a sustainable youth empowerment. And these institutions cannot afford to denial its self if the objective of sustainable youth empowerment is to be realized.

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