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Mark Quaye Affum
Borsah Library Complex, Cape
Coast Technical University,
Cape Coast, Ghana

Lack of concern for institutional libraries and its effects

Mark Quaye Affum

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Abstract

Lack of funding has remained one of the most crucial resources for libraries worldwide because most library policy makers are not librarians themselves. There has been a major decline in the funding of institutional libraries. This is attributed mainly to economic reasons, from founders who view libraries as less relevant in a world where google can search for any book.

The current remuneration and salary packages together with incentives for the ordinary librarian has dwindled. The rank of the librarian in some tertiary institutions are seen as a lecturer though the rank is synonymous to the pro-vice chancellor or next after the vice chancellor of a university. This has made it very difficult for staff working within the library institution to upgrade into different disciplines reducing the number of library staff gradually. Important facilities needed by every library such as printers, papers, toners, photocopiers, computers, laptops, scanners, internet accessibility etc. is mostly ignored by policy makers leaving the library under resourced. The library can take the role of most search engines if it is equipped with the need facilities to operate as such.

Keywords: Lack, concern, institutional, libraries, effects

1. Introduction

1.1 Background study

Knowledge institutions have always benefitted from libraries with regards to innovation and production. The information age has brought more emphasis on knowledge making libraries more crucial to organizational success. The over reliance on information for work has become imperative. The library becomes the store house for information and knowledge. Both tacit and theoretical knowledge are crucial for the success of any institution. More often than not, the library is disregarded or ignored. Instead of the library to be seen as an integral part of the development and growth of the knowledge institutions, it is rather seen as an obsolete and not so important part of an institution.

The libraries inability to liaise with lectures and tutors of institutions in order to facilitate effective tutorship to students is as a result of disempowerment from the institutions it belongs to. There has been instances where companies and organizations are unable to meet production targets or even perform because they are either using obsolete practices and are not given the required information to enable them compete globally.

Libraries measure people walking in through our doors, how much they borrow, and how often they visit the website and attend events. We build collections, offer some services, maybe even serve coffee - in short we rely on a model where people come to us. So are we too tied to the physical library building?

The library is very important faculty of every institution. Its absence in a particular institution makes it incomplete. The librarian forms a coalition with lecturers and students of an institution to create a better learning and teaching environment for all.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The state of some libraries especially institutional libraries are either stagnant in progress or deteriorating. Today's libraries are not given the needed reputation due to the recent proliferation of information. Most institutional heads do not know the importance of the role that libraries play in an organization, therefore they do not give the needed support or even create libraries with such organization. 'Library' as a term can be seen as old fashioned and outdated, while 'information service' is not well understood. The reputation that should be accorded the library staff has dwindled in the last three decades due to the drastic changes in technology and information behaviour.

Corresponding Author:
Mark Quaye Affum
Borsah Library Complex, Cape
Coast Technical University,
Cape Coast, Ghana

The library within an institution is the least accorded with respect due to the fact that, its functionality has been reduced to nothing. Most institutional libraries are being funded not from the institutions coffers but from donor support. This is a very unfortunate practice and it becomes more disturbing when the support ceases.

Staff that work in libraries are not given an equivalent reputation as it is being given to other workers of different departments.

Though the library has other roles to play in the society apart from searching for information and learning, the internet with its search engines are trying to erode the essence of the libraries existence. Most students do not regard the library discipline, "library and information sciences" as they do to other disciplines such as medicine, engineering, oil and gas, pharmacy, accounting, administration etc.

Today because the library has been depending on donor support, equipments in the library keep deteriorating with no attention given to it. Management are always waiting for funding from donor agencies to refurbish such projects.

1.3 Objectives

- Bring back the reputation of the information industry and the library.
- Share more light into the other roles that the library plays in knowledge institutions and the society.
- To create an atmosphere here the library will be made and integral and useful part of every knowledge institute and be
- Actively involved in research and developmental production of institutions.
- To create awareness in the sight of institutions as to where to look for solutions during cooperate challenges.

1.4 Scope

This study is about all institutions that utilize knowledge and information such as banks, hospitals, universities, mining firms, insurance companies, and other production industries.

1.5 Limitations

- Sufficient funds to carry out the research since I will purchase certain instruments and may require services of research assistance.
- It is quite difficult to track the usage of information in the libraries of most knowledge institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

I was able to review a few articles and publications about knowledge institutions. Some of them researched into titles such as: "Learning and local knowledge institutions in African industry", "Collaboration between manufacturing firms and knowledge institutions on product development", "LIS 855, Publishing, Knowledge Institutions and Society: E-Revolutions?"

2.3 Critique of the existing literature relevant to the study

On the average most literature looked at how innovation has informed knowledge institutions the need to be trained and retrained. One literature agreed that research by manufacturing firms is very crucial to product development.

It is also emphasized that collaboration is equally important for the sharing of knowledge in an effort to develop and increase products.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

I contact a few knowledge institutions to find out from them how they treat they value libraries and how they are utilizing them to ensure the benefit completely from them.

Information was also drawn from members of staff of knowledge institutions especially universities, manufacturing firms, banks, etc.

3.2 Description

The main brain behind the study was to find out how and why staff patronize the library and how it has assisted the to perform in their work.

Response from the study conducted and the questionnaires are as follows:

- Staff who worked actively with knowledge said they were able to do more in less time
- Staff were able to do away with conflict in the work place
- Staff were also able to upgrade their knowledge base into practical result oriented information that is not taught in the classroom
- Staff who regularly sought information from the library found it easy to solve job related challenges that proved difficult initially.
- Information about work brought about increase in productivity and progress
- Personnel were able to reduce the cost of retraining new staff and reduce cost of funding staff to further their education. On the other side staff who did not show much use for the library had the following results:
 - They found it quite difficult with job related challenges
 - They also realized that the knowledge they acquired from the classroom was not adequate enough for the job market and there more had to be done to salvage the situation.
 - They found themselves always in conflict with other staff with respect to work related issues
 - They had to spend more time on a job and production were not able to meet deadlines
 - Their knowledge base as far as the job was concern was always lacking and remained the same.
 - They were not able to meet deadline and schedules regarding production and work
 - They also spent so much to go back to the classroom to collect more certificates and qualifications in order to perform. Yet they were always found wanting.
 - They work practice was found to be obsolete and couldn't compete competently with their counterparts who sought help from the library.

Income Generation

The institutional library is seen by management, policy makers as a non-income generating department of any institution. Though the library contributes to the general revenue of an institution, it is not seen as directly affecting the generating of income. This is by management and policy feel reluctant in injecting capital into the activities of the library. It is seen as a loss to the profit making institution. Though the institutional library does generate direct income

through the services of photocopying, internet usage, lamination of documents of patrons and the patronage of space in the library such as conference rooms, it is seen as meagre and not commercial enough.

Vital input into the service of education

With respect to teaching and providing both practical and theoretical education to patrons the library is not fully known to be part of such activities. As a result of this perception it is always sidelined in some institutions during academic board meetings etc.

The teaching of students or usage of information by patrons involves a collaborative effort between library staff and lectures, patrons, students and staff.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Results

My conclusions based on this study found that libraries need much attention just as any other faculty or department in any knowledge institution. It is the knowledge and information that will catapult the needed growth and development of these knowledge institutions.

In countries where governments are oppressive, there seem to be very low investments and regard for the library and new ideas are seen as dangerous or irrelevant. In other institutions where the past is easily discarded and where people don't value books and reading there is little or no importance associated to libraries. There is also a 'near enough is good enough' approach when the library is disregarded. Poverty and disadvantage go unchallenged. People who ignore enterprise and innovation also ignore the use of the library.

The lack of concern for libraries has brought about retrogression, low profit, liquidation and many challenges in such knowledge institutions. If knowledge and information is to be respected, regarded and followed, a lot of bad practices going on within institutions will be avoided and the needed results will be realized. I also found out that policy makers do not take pride in civic and institutional infrastructure.

4.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that, every accredited institution must have a complete and functional library to support the activities of that institution.

Management of various institutions should see investment in knowledge as essential for successful outcomes.

Using the library effectively involves the collaboration of both staff of an institutions and members of the library. Therefore, there is supposed to be regular meetings between such stakeholders to ensure effective coordination and maximum use of the library. Current books are important for the library to meet its required standards so as to gain the confidence of patrons. Conversely management of institutions should also provide any form of assistance and materials that an institutional library needs to facilitate its daily activities. There should also be regular orientation of staff in knowledge institutions for them to know the essence of the library and information.

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