



Awareness: A Strategic Tool for The Implementation of Green Libraries by Academic Librarians

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the importance of awareness in the adoption and implementation of green libraries in academic libraries in Nigeria. The key objectives were to determine academic librarians' awareness of the concept of green libraries, ascertain if greening libraries is a good innovation for adoption and implementation, ascertain reasons for the slow adoption and implementation of green libraries by academic librarians in Nigeria and to identify strategies for enhancing green library implementation in Nigerian academic libraries. The methodology used was the descriptive survey research design while all the 170 academic librarians in the twelve university libraries across the six states of the North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja formed the population of the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. Various suggestions were made on how to create awareness and use it as a strategic tool in the implementation of green libraries in academic libraries. The paper concluded that implementing green libraries will enhance the visibility and value of libraries in society by showcasing their ability to contribute significantly to environmental sustainability and development issues, thereby demonstrating their continued relevance to humanity.

Keywords: Awareness Research; Green Library; Academic Librarians; Environmental Literacy.

Introduction

Greening or going green is not a new concept, however, the reality of climate change altering the world's environmental/climatic conditions and its negative effects that threaten lives and properties has necessitated its urgent adoption to reduce or surmount the adverse impact of environmental degradation. Most developed countries were the first to embrace going green or green buildings in their institutions and other areas of endeavor due to the timely awareness of the concepts and their health implications to lives and property. According to Uttara and Sawant (2018), the word "green" is very much concerned with energy depletion, climate change, greenhouse adverse effects, and global warming and its impacts, thereby implying that people want everything to be green to save the planet on which they live. Simply put, the concept of "green" deals with the environment and how it can be used to protect lives and properties from the effects of greenhouse gases and global warming.

The library and information field has not

been left out in responding to this global challenge. Libraries are pace-setters in many things, not just in information collection, management, preservation, and dissemination but they also specialize in novel areas such as being among the first set of advocates for green buildings. Hauke, Grunwald and Wilde (2014) stated that efforts at greening libraries were noticed all over the world from the United States to Australia, from China to Russia, and from Germany to Croatia, to name but a few. Suresh, (2017) added that today's libraries, as gateways for knowledge are particularly responsible not only for disseminating the idea of sustainability but also for leading by example and thus serving as exemplars. He further observed that people view the library as having a unique role to play in the green building movement due to its altruistic mission, public and pedagogical nature, and the fact that new libraries are usually high-profile, community-driven projects. The view resonates well if librarians all over the world are at the same level of awareness of the concept of a green library, why green libraries are essential and their role in the implementation.

Confirming the people's view of the library's unique role in the green movement, Smith, (2011) admitted that green topics were developed as "green librarian," "green librarianship," "green academic sector," "greening college libraries," "greening libraries," "green blogs", "to go green," and "green library movement" in the 1990s. By 2003, the concept of green libraries generated so much interest in the library profession that academic libraries were forced to start going green. However, the themes addressed were developed following Talloires's USFL (1990) commitment and declaration in the early 1990s on environmental sustainability in higher education which was composed and signed by over 40 countries for implementation. The declaration was an action plan for educating environmentally responsible citizens, fostering environmental literacy for all and incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in the operations of universities. This innovation was actualized by creating a library's green building, turning existing library equipment into a green one, providing green library service, and taking environmentally sustainable and supportive measures in the library (Antonelli, 2008). Unfortunately, the information was largely domiciled among librarians in developed countries with little or no information to stimulate awareness on green libraries or going green among librarians in developing countries.

The concept of Green Library (GL) has been defined in different ways by various researchers, including variables such as preserving natural resources for the future, living in a carbon-neutral way, and meeting the needs of the community (Uttara and Sawant, 2018). Similarly, the New World Encyclopedia describes a green library as a library built with environmental concerns in mind. In his contributions, Suresh (2017) states that green libraries seek to reduce the use of water and energy by designing the building to maximize the use of natural and renewable resources and also integrate actual plants into the building design, preferably with drought resistant and/or native vegetation. He further stressed the need for maintenance of high standards of indoor air quality to help ensure the health of the people who inhabit the building. In simple terms, a green library is nothing but an environmentally friendly or eco-library. To Hauke (2014), a green library is characterized by minimizing "the negative environmental effects" and maximizing "quality indoor" using the selection of an exact location, the use of disposable natural building materials and environmental products, conservation

of resources (water, energy and paper) and responsible waste disposal (recycling, etc.). From the foregoing, it is obvious that green design is defining the library of the 21st century. As such, it is important to note that green library is not just about taking care of the environment but encompasses the health care and well-being of both library staff and users.

In Nigeria, the concept of a green library seems to be a relatively new development in the field of library and information science. However, the recognition of the added value can only be determined by the awareness level of the concept of a green library, its objectives, importance and the role of Nigerian librarians in its implementation. Most importantly, Nigerian academic librarians must be aware of their responsibilities as community advocates for greening or green buildings. Discussions with librarians in the chosen population informed the need for the study as the concept of a "green library" did not sound very familiar to them. Supporting the above view Oyelude & Alabi (2013) observed that the level of awareness on greening among librarians is to a large extent still very low hence there is a need to sensitize librarians on greening libraries so that librarians in Nigeria can conform to the global trend in promoting a sustainable environment, mindful of the fact that results are not attainable until the subject matter is known through awareness.

According to David (2022) awareness is the ingredient for belief as every other skill, quality and task undertaken can be traced to it. He stressed that awareness gives knowledge and knowledge gives the knowing of what you need to do and the direction to make changes to improve and be successful. Furthermore, being aware leads one to seek more information for the next line of action. Awareness is also viewed as the state wherein a subject is aware of some information when that information is directly available to bring to bear in the direction of a wide range of behavioral actions (Chalmers, 1997). In this study awareness is described as the realization of the existence of a thing, knowing a specific situation or subject. With awareness as an important determinant of knowing what to do, Nigerian librarians must be adequately aware of the imperative of greening libraries with relevant information for proper implementation. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which is the global voice of librarians, added impetus to the Green Library movement by establishing the Environment, Sustainability and Libraries (ENSULIB)

section to encourage librarians to inspire their communities into a more environmentally sustainable way of action, by providing materials on green librarianship, giving voice to green librarians and library projects worldwide, leading by example and offering a discussion forum. ENSULIB organizes the IFLA annual green library award to give impetus to the advocacy initiatives required to promote green librarianship (IFLA, 2022). In addition, IFLA (2014) stated that increased access to information and knowledge, underpinned by universal literacy, is an essential pillar of sustainable development. It stressed further that access to information is pivotal to the achievement of these goals both in the short and long term. Similarly, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), United Kingdom, published a Green Libraries Manifesto which seeks to bring environmental sustainability to the heart of decision-making, amongst other objectives (CILIP, 2022). In the same vein, Abiolu and Okere (2011) observed that when the level of awareness of greening among librarians is high, it will not be difficult for them to become environmental literacy experts and conform to their new role of developing the environmental literacy competency of library users.

Objectives

From the foregoing, this study seeks:

- to determine academic librarians' awareness of the concept of green libraries
- to ascertain if greening libraries is a good innovation for adoption and implementation by Nigerian libraries
- to ascertain reasons for the slow adoption and implementation of green libraries by academic librarians in Nigeria
- to identify strategies for enhancing green library implementation in Nigerian libraries.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. All the 170 academic librarians in the twelve university libraries across the six states of the North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja form the population of the study. Two universities (one federal government and one state government university) were randomly selected from each of the six states (only one university was selected from Kwara State while one university was selected from the Federal Capital Territory). The universities used for the study were: the University

of Abuja, Abuja; Nassarawa State University, Keffi, Nassarawa State; Federal University Lafia, Nassarawa State; Prince Abubakar Audu University, Ayingba, Kogi State; Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State; Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State; Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State; Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State; Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Benue State; University of Jos, Jos, Plateau State; Plateau State University, Bokkos, Plateau State and the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages for objectives one to three while mean scores and standard deviation of Likert's four-scale rating were used for objectives four and five. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was considered positive and accepted while any score below 2.50 was regarded as negative and rejected.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the distributions of the questionnaire that were administered in the twelve universities. One hundred and seventy (170) questionnaires were administered and one hundred and fifty-three (153) were duly completed and returned, representing a 90% response rate.

Findings from table 2 show that 32(20.9%) respondents were aware of the concept of the green library while 121(79.1%) were not aware of the green library as a concept. Table 2 also shows that 27(17.6%) were aware of their role in implementing green libraries while 126(82.4%) were not aware of their role in implementing green libraries.

Table 3 is the reflection of respondents' acceptance of the adoption and implementation of green libraries in the twelve university libraries. The findings reveal that 132(86.3%) of the respondents accepted that greening libraries is a positive innovation while 21(13.7%) of the respondents were of the view that green library is not a necessary innovation. Table 3 further reveals that 64.1% of the respondents believe that they can implement the concept clearly understood while 35.9% did not feel confident that implementation of the green library concept was possible.

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents agreed with all the items listed as factors responsible for the slow adoption and implementation of green libraries in their libraries with the following mean scores of 3.18, 3.16, 3.07, and 2.75 respectively. However, some of the respondents disagreed with item 3 in the table with a mean score of 2.25 which implies

Table 1: Distribution of Administered Questionnaire to Respondents

S/N	University	Total Copies of Questionnaires Administered	Total Copies Returned	Percentage Returned per University	Percentage of from each university of total copies returned
1	University of Abuja, Abuja	11	10	91	6.5
2	Nassarawa State University, Keffi, Nassarawa State	14	13	93	8.5
3	Federal University Lafia, Nassarawa State	9	9	100	5.8
4	Prince Abubakar Audu University, Ayingba, Kogi State	5	5	100	3.3
5	Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State	12	9	75	5.8
6	The Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State	13	11	85	7.3
7	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida University Lapai, Niger State	15	13	87	8.5
8	Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue State	24	22	92	14.4
9	Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Benue State	26	22	85	14.4
10	University of Jos, Jos, Plateau State	12	12	100	7.8
11	Plateau State University, Boko, Plateau State	6	6	100	3.9
12	University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara	23	21	91	13.7
	TOTAL	170	153	-	-

Table 2: Determine academic librarians' awareness of the concept of green library

S/N	Awareness of Concept	Aware F (%)	Not Aware F (%)	Total F (%)
1	Awareness of the green library concept by academic librarians	32(20.9%)	121(79.1%)	153(100%)
	Total	32	121	153
		20.9	79.1	(100%)
2	Librarians' awareness of their role in implementing green library	27(17.6%)	126(82.4%)	153(100%)
	Total	27	126	153
		17.6	82.4	(100%)

Table 3: Ascertain if the green library is a good innovation for adoption and implementation

S/N	Good Innovation	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Total F (%)
1	The green library is a good innovation for the adoption	132(86.3%)	21(13.7%)	153(100%)
	Total	132	21	153
		86.3	13.7	(100%)
2	Is the implementation of a green library possible if the concept is understood by academic librarians	98(64.1%)	55(35.9%)	153(100%)
	Total	98	55	153
		64.1	35.9	(100%)

Table 4: Ascertain reasons for the slow adoption and implementation of green libraries in Nigerian libraries

S/N	Reasons for slow adoption and implementation	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Total
1	Lack of awareness of the green library concept	71	49	21	12	3.16	0.94	153
2	Lacks sufficient information on the step-by-step process of the implementation	32	101	19	1	3.07	0.59	153
3	Lack of interest in green library innovation by librarians	15	31	85	22	2.25	0.82	153
4	Librarians are not aware of their role as educators and advocates of the green library	45	92	16	0	3.18	0.60	153
5	Librarians lack the basic skills in advocating for green libraries to their institutional administrators	29	87	8	29	2.75	0.97	153

that they did not believe that lack of interest in green library innovation by librarians was responsible for the slow rate of adoption and implementation.

Results from Table 5 reveal the strategies that could enhance the implementation of green libraries in the study area. The respondents indicated that all the items enumerated are acceptable ways in fostering the reality of green libraries. These have mean scores of 3.16, 3.05, 3.0, 2.99, and 2.87.

Discussion of Findings

Five objectives were the goals the study sought to achieve. These are to: determine academic librarians' awareness of the concept of green libraries, ascertain if the green libraries concept is a good innovation for adoption and implementation by Nigerian libraries, ascertain reasons for the slow adoption and implementation of green libraries by librarians

and identify strategies for enhancing green library implementation.

The results showed that the majority of the academic librarians in the study were unaware of the concept of green libraries, with some of them confirming that they were just hearing about it from this study. However, very few librarians attested to the fact that they were aware of the concept and its role in the implementation. Interestingly, a few of those that confirmed their awareness of the concept stated that they lacked the basic knowledge of implementing green libraries. This finding is contrary to that of Aparna and Prasanth (2019) who observed that majority of the male and female professionals were aware of the green library concept.

On the adoption and implementation of green libraries, the study showed a positive acceptance of librarians' adoption and implementation of the

Table 5: Identify strategies for enhancing green library implementation

S/N	Strategies for enhancing the implementation	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Total
1	Aggressive awareness campaign of green libraries	72	36	18	27	3.0	1.14	153
2	Information on the step-by-step process of the implementation should be made handy	39	99	0	15	3.05	0.80	153
3	Conferences should be organized for librarians on the basic skills of greening the libraries	100	13	5	35	3.16	1.25	153
4	Self-development should be encouraged by networking with librarians that understand/may have implemented the concept of greening libraries	45	66	20	22	2.87	0.99	153
5	The concept should be integrated into the curriculum of the library and information science program	51	69	14	19	2.99	0.96	153

innovation. This is similar to the work of Muhammad and Pervaiz (2022) who observed some level of awareness and adoption of green practices in university libraries but also confirmed that there is still much to be done as the implementation of all green library practices is still in its early stages owing to certain challenges.

Results from the findings indicate a limited level of awareness about the concept of green libraries, a lack of sufficient information on the step-by-step process for the implementation, limited awareness of librarians' role as educators and advocates of the green library and librarians' lack of basic skills in advocating for the implementation of green library practices to their institutional administrator as reasons for slow adoption and implementation of green libraries in the study. This study is in line with that of Adetoun Adebisi Oyelude and Adefunke Olanike Alabi (2013) who observed that the level of awareness on greening libraries among librarians is still at a low extent, and stressed the need to sensitize librarians on greening libraries so that librarians in Nigeria can conform to the global trend in promoting a sustainable environment. Similarly, Aparna and Prasanth (2019) said factors hindering the incorporation of the green concept include lack of funds, awareness about the green library concept, support from authorities, and training. In addition, Hafijull Mondal (2021) notes a lack of awareness of green technology among the employees who have been recruited with traditional knowledge and skills and attitudinal barriers as factors that slow down green library practices, including the ability

to convince the top management/decision makers who would otherwise object to the idea of executing green library practices due to limited awareness of the benefits.

The study also indicated that aggressive awareness campaigns of green library practices, provision of ready information on the step-by-step process of implementation, organization of conferences for librarians on the basic skills required for greening libraries, self-development by networking with other librarians and the integration of green libraries into the curriculum of library and information science program are ways in which greening libraries can be enhanced. The study is in agreement with that of Abiolu and Okere (2011) who opined that when the level of awareness on greening among librarians is high, it will not be difficult for them to become environmental literacy experts and conform to their new role of developing the environmental literacy competency of library users. Similarly, Siti and Vianney (2018) indicate workshops as the best way to increase awareness among librarians and other stakeholders. In the same vein, Abiolu (2018) concluded that environmental knowledge and positive behavior can be increased using appropriate media sensitization and the introduction of environmental education (Abiolu, 2018).

Discussions with the respondents also revealed other challenges that they envisage may limit the implementation of greening their libraries. Questions that required them to list additional reasons for the slow adoption of greening libraries and other suggestions for enhancing implementation were asked. As regards

the challenge of slow adoption, respondents listed a lack of funds, erratic electric power supply and lack of institutional enforcement agencies. Solutions proffered included more lobbying and advocacy to policymakers to provide funding, provision of alternative sources of electric power supply and other required facilities such as air-conditioners and development of national policies and standards by established government regulatory agencies such as the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and the National Universities Commission (NUC). The need to monitor, evaluate, assess the impact and enforce implementation by these regulatory agencies was stressed.

Recommendations

This study sought to examine the importance of awareness in adopting and implementing the concept of green libraries in academic libraries in Nigeria. From the observations made, suggestions on how to enhance the adoption of greening academic libraries in Nigeria were recommended.

The researchers recommend aggressive awareness campaigns for greening libraries, recommending a manual that details a step-by-step approach for implementation in academic libraries in Nigeria. It emphasizes that librarians with adequate knowledge about green libraries should be encouraged to talk more and write more on the subject matter in professional journals and newsletters, especially those that are accessible to their immediate community of users. Advocacy is key in this regard.

In an era where librarianship practice as custodians and managers of information is being challenged, librarians need to engage in strategic self-development to maintain relevance. A lot has been written about the benefits and processes of greening libraries. As part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), capacity-building programs that up-skill academic librarians should be organized as affirmative action toward promoting implementation.

Another important aspect of implementing green library programs in Nigerian academic libraries, the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) should develop standards and policies, working collaboratively with all stakeholders that can be used as guidelines. This will increase the level of awareness and implementation. Working with the National Universities Commission, for instance, the LRCN could adopt the Talloires Declaration model whereby twenty-two university presidents from all over the world signed the Talloires declaration in France in 1990

creating the Association of University Leaders for a sustainable future (ULSF). The declaration empowered them to commit their universities to incorporate sustainability and environmental literacy into research, teaching, outreach and university and college operations (Talloires: ULSF, 1990). Other initiatives on standards developed for libraries and how they are used are replete in the literature (Cunningham, Feder and Moise, 2010; Pangail, 2015; Shah, Kumar and Shah, 2015). The LRCN should urgently develop tailor-made "standards and policies" that consider local needs for libraries in Nigeria. The regulatory agencies should also take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating and impact assessment of greening libraries to develop a compendium of best practices that can be adopted or adopted by other libraries or other institutions.

Similarly, the Nigerian Library Association should take urgent steps to roll out an action plan for the promotion of greening university libraries. Furthermore, the NLA can encourage the establishment of a Section on Green Libraries and Environmental Sustainability. This Section will be responsible for taking the lead in ensuring awareness and implementation of green library policies and standards by key stakeholders in Nigerian libraries as well as other issues that relate to environmental sustainability. The establishment of a section by the Nigerian Library Association will give great impetus to awareness and implementation by librarians as well as raise the profile of libraries as key players in the sustainable environment ecosystem.

Lastly, the study recommends the inclusion of "Environmental Sustainability and Green Libraries" as part of the curriculum of the library and information science program. This will ensure that successive generation of librarians understands the concept, value and implementation process of greening libraries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, awareness is a necessary tool that influences belief in any rational human being as it fosters knowledge for decision-making and action. Advocacy campaigns are therefore a sine qua non for educating academic librarians on the need to implement actions for going green. With greening libraries as a defining factor for a successful 21st-century librarian, it is worrisome that most librarians in university libraries in Nigeria are unaware of the concept (some even think a green library is an edifice located somewhere!).

However, the prospects look bright because

most libraries are in the process of reviewing their policies, operations and practices in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is therefore no better time than now to integrate the concept of green libraries into the system. As a follow-up on this study, we strongly suggest that green libraries and other new trends in the profession should be integrated into the curriculum of the library and information science program. Also, the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria and the Nigerian Library Association should take the lead in developing a robust action plan that will ensure that Nigerian libraries implement the concept of green libraries.

The findings of this study and the consequent recommendations will enhance the visibility and value of libraries in society by providing libraries and information centers the required platforms to showcase their ability to contribute significantly to sustainable environment and development issues, thereby demonstrating their continued relevance to humanity.

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