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Administrative Structure, Functions, Resources, Services, Etiquettes and E-Resources of Academic Libraries: Case Study of Ebonyi State University Library, Abakaliki

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Abstract

Each library is peculiar in its own arrangement and information provision; though there are general organizational patterns, functions, resources, services common to every library. Academic libraries, for instance, have their peculiarity from public or special libraries. The objective of this paper is to identify the Administrative Structure, Functions, Resources, Services, Etiquettes and Electronic Resources of Academic Libraries using Ebonyi State University Library Abakaliki as case study. The authors propose an organizational structure for the library under study and highlight numerous resources and services available in the university library and its subsidiary annexes. Our recommendation among others is that both staff and students should always visit the libraries and utilize the resources in order to achieve optimum result in the teaching, learning and research objectives of the university.

Keywords: *Academic library, Library administration, Library functions, Library resources, Ebony State University*

1.1 Introduction

Academic libraries are established in institutions of higher learning such as Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and Agriculture etc, to promote learning and research activities. The clientele of academic libraries are usually students, faculty members and researchers. Academic libraries have been described as the heart of the institutions. This description is apt when we consider the role of the library in the area of research and learning.

Being a multi campus university, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki has multi campus libraries though all of them are situated in Abakaliki the state capital. Some faculties

have their subsidiary departmental libraries in addition to the main faculty.

Functions of Academic Libraries

As a way of ensuring that their objectives are achieved, university libraries engage in a number of activities and offer some services to the clientele. Every university library is established to assist the university to meet its academic objectives. In line with this, these libraries are influenced by the courses and programmes offered by their parents universities, especially in the acquisition of materials. However, the following functions are common to most academic libraries:

- a) **Acquisition of materials:** Libraries are expected and indeed required to acquire current, relevant and adequate number of material resources in all the subject areas offered by the parent universities. In any library acquisition, the interest and needs of the patrons are paramount.
- b) **Organization of Materials:** To process and properly organize the acquired information resources for use by patrons is the next function following the acquisition of library materials.
- c) **Provision of Materials:** All materials in the library are made available to the clientele (who constitute students, academic and non-academic staff) to support them in their study, teaching or research. The library ensures that unnecessary restrictions are not imposed in the use of its materials.
- d) **Preservation of Materials:** After library materials are acquired, processed and made accessible to patrons; the next important responsibility is to preserve those materials in other to ensure they are not damaged by pests or humans and also ensure that they are not mutilated or stolen by library users. In other words the librarian provides adequate security to avoid theft of books and other library information resources.
- administrative structure of the library system and operations. Nwokocha (2013) identified the various departments that make up the academic library structure.
- a) **Administration Department**
Library operations involve the management of both human and material resources. This exercise, according to Nwokocha (2013), is supervised from this department by the overall head of the library who comes under different names depending on the type of library. In university libraries, he is called the University Librarian; in Polytechnics he is called Polytechnics Librarian or College Librarian in colleges of Education/ Agriculture. In public libraries he is referred to as the Director of Library Services.
- b) **Acquisition or Collection Development Department**
The department has the responsibility of identification, selection and acquisition of materials for the library. The department relies on certain bibliographic selection tools such as Books in Print in the identification and selection of materials. It also solicits recommendation of titles to be acquired from patrons who are specialists in their fields especially the teaching staff.
- c) **Circulation or Readers Services Department**
This department takes delivery of processed materials from the cataloguing department and ensures that they are arranged on the shelves based on their call numbers. It is in charge of regulating the circulation of library books. Some of the functions related to this include: shelf reading, issuing borrowers cards, charging and discharging of books, keeping records of materials borrowed, collecting appropriate fines stipulated overdue materials, taking and keeping daily statistics and maintaining and operating the reserve section.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1 Administrative Structure of an Academic Library

This aspect of the library system is called different names such as Unit, Section, Department, Division, etc. Whichever one that is chosen, they all describe various areas of activities performed by library staff in order to serve the library users better. Let us take the word 'Department' to describe this

d) Cataloguing Department

It is in the cataloguing department that books and other library materials are organized according to their subject areas through classification and physically described through cataloguing. The process begins as soon as the materials are received from the acquisition department. The person in charge of this department is known as the chief cataloguer.

e) Serials Department

Serials are books or materials that are published at regular intervals (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually etc) and intended for indefinite publication. Examples include journals, newspapers and magazines. Depending on the size of the library, the serials can be part of the reference or a full-fledged department of its own with a serials librarian as the head.

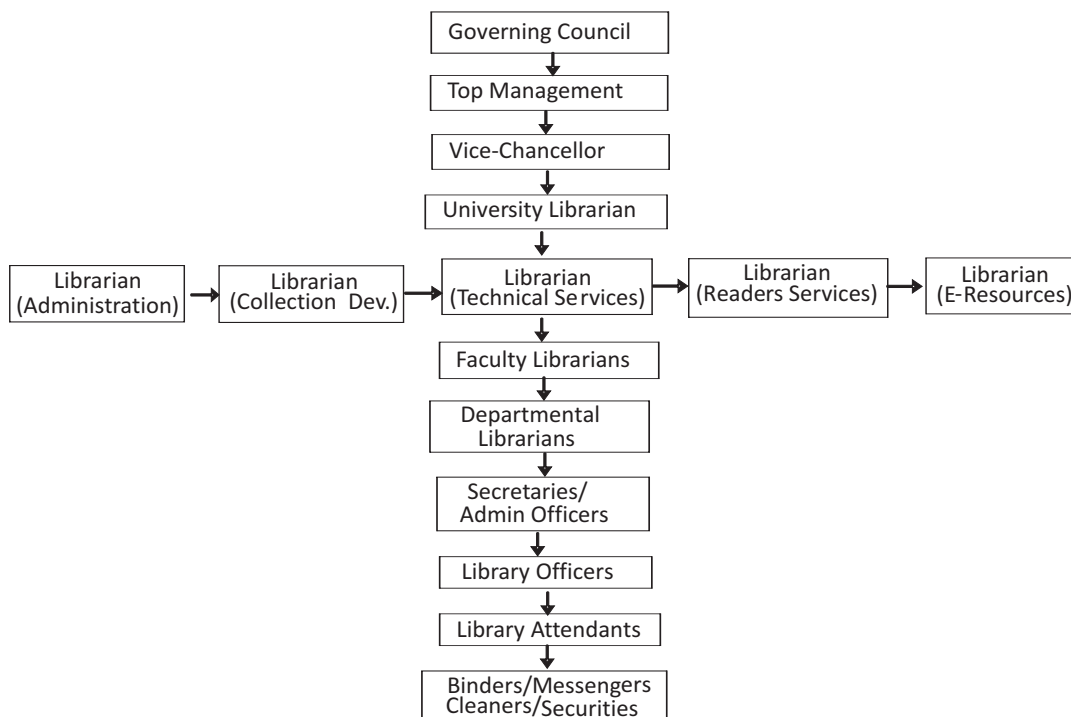
f) Audio-Visual Department

This is an emerging department in many libraries reflecting the domineering influence of information technologies (IT) in library operations. Many libraries now have in their collections, films, microforms, tapes, compact discs, diskettes and computers hence the need to have a separate department to manage them. They require special handling and the gadget are kept under stipulated temperature to avoid damage.

g) Reprographic Department

It is becoming increasingly necessary that every library should set up some form of reprographic services even if it is not big enough to be a fully fledged department. This is a result of the rate of theft and mutilation of library materials particularly books. The functions of this department are photocopying and bindery services.

Proposed Organizational Structure for Ebonyi State University Library



Source: The Authors, 2021

The Vice-Chancellor is responsible to the Top Management of the University made up of the Principal Officers who are responsible to the Governing Council on all matters pertaining to the university including the library. The University Librarian is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor on the day to day running of the university library system. Librarians who are in-charge of the various Faculty libraries are responsible to the University Librarian, while Library Officers in-charge of the Departmental Libraries are responsible to the Faculty Librarian.

3.1 Library Resources

Library resources available in Ebonyi State University have been summed up by Chimah (2019), as follows:

- a) **Staff** – The Ebonyi State University Library is staffed with qualified personnel ranging from professional, paraprofessional and supportive staff. The professional staff are core librarians with Higher Diploma or Degrees in Library and Information Science. The paraprofessionals are those who obtained only Ordinary Diploma in Library Science or those who have degree in other disciplines and have worked in the library and acquired experiences in library operations. The supportive staff are those with lover certificates who perform other kinds of duties other than core library operations. Such duties include security, cleaning, delivering mails, etc.
- b) **Seats and Shelves** – The main university library and other faculty and department libraries have enough reading carrels for the patrons. The sitting facilities at the faculty libraries have about 200 seating capacity for students at a time. Also enough bookshelves are procured in order to arrange the materials in orderly manner for easy access and retrieval.

- c) **Information Sources** – The library resources are information sources stored in reference books, textbooks, novels, undergraduate projects and postgraduate theses and dissertations as well as serials (periodicals).

3.2 Library Services

The librarians and other technical staff render a lot of services to the library patrons. Most of these services have been discussed by Chimah (2018) during orientation programme for first year students of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. These services are highlighted as follows:

- (a) **Lending Services:** Students and staff are accorded the privilege of borrowing certain number of books, for two to six weeks as the case may be. This service allows users to take away certain category of library books to their houses or hostels for use at their convenience. The loan service, however, is available only to registered patrons who have acquired the library borrowers' cards. As a way of discouraging the practice of keeping borrowed books beyond the due dates, some fines are imposed on defaulting borrowers.
- (b) **Inter-Library Loan Service:** This is an extension of the loan service. It involves a situation whereby the university library assists a registered user to secure a book on loan from another cooperating library. For instance, Ebonyi State University Library can secure a book which it does not have from Nnamdi Azikiwe Library of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka on behalf of a user who is in dire need of it. However, this service is only possible if there is a prior agreement to cooperate between EBSU and UNN libraries.

- (c) **Reference Service:** This is another service of the library that entails guiding and assisting readers in using library resources. Reference service involves answering questions as may be posed by users. The question may require the reference librarian to quickly consult a book and provide an answer or just pointing to the direction of what the client needs.
- (d) **Referral Services:** In a situation where the information needed is not readily available in the library, reference and/or circulation librarians could refer users to another library or experts in the subject area within or outside the university.
- (e) **User Orientation Service:** Library orientation programme is usually organized by academic libraries for newly admitted students. It is also known as 'User Education'. In this platform, fresh students are presented with library guide, in which they would learn how to locate the main library and its subsidiary faculty and departmental extensions. Also the new students are taught study skills and information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- (f) **Reprographic Service:** In order to curb or at least minimize the theft and mutilation of library materials, many university libraries now offer photocopying services. This enables users to make copies of those library books they need rather than tear or steal them.
- (g) **Serials Service:** Serials are materials other than books which are published periodically. They include: journals, conference proceedings, bulletins /newsletters, newspapers / magazines, annual reports, etc. They are made available at the serials section of the library.
- (h) **Bindery Service:** Students can bind their projects and torn books at the bindery unit of the library.
- (i) **Electronic Library Service:** The research and bibliographic searches are more quickly and conveniently undertaken in a computerized library. Electronic library often referred to as 'e-library' for short, is a library that appears in electronic form which the user can access electronically without handling physical books or journals. E-libraries or electronic information resources are made available through such computer networked facilities as online catalogues/databases or simply books on CD-ROMs.
- (j) **Readers Service:** The university library is better placed to render services to the clientele and can afford to provide effective Current Awareness Services (CAS) including the highly personalized Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). In other words, library users are promptly notified of new arrivals and also further steps are taken to proactively harness resources and repackage them to meet specific need of users whose area of research interest are identified.
- (k) **Indexing and Abstracting Service:** The main purpose of abstracting and indexing services is to help researchers overcome the difficulties of tracing potentially useful articles scattered over periodicals and other literature. Indexing is the process of providing a guide to the intellectual content of documents in library collection. An abstract service is a form of current bibliography in which contributions to periodicals, other collections and sometimes books are summarized.

(I) Ethical and Behavioural Service: The library which is ethically known as “as silence zone”, presents an environment for serious academic work and relation. In order to make this realizable certain ethics and behavior must be imposed on those who visit the place. And of course, like our bankers world always say “terms and conditions” must apply when library rules and regulations are violated.

4.1 Ebonyi State University Library System

Being a multi campus university, Ebonyi State University has multi campus libraries though all of them are situated in Abakaliki the state capital. There are faculty libraries with their subsidiary departmental libraries which are listed as follows:

S/N	Campuses	Faculty Libraries	Remarks
1	College of Agricultural Sciences (CAS)	Temporary University Library	Former Faculty of Law Library. Holdings not covering all subjects
		Faculty of Agriculture Library,	There are other Departmental Libraries in the Faculty
		Faculty of Law Library	Adequate resources on the subject
2	Ugwu Achara	Faculty of Engineering and Environmental Sciences Library	Yet to be fully equipped / furnished
3	Ishieke	Faculty of Education Library	There are other Departmental Libraries in the Faculty
4	Presbyterian College (Presco)	Faculty of Health Sciences and Technology Library	Presently hosting only Medical Lab Science & Nursing Science
		Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Library	Yet to be fully equipped / furnished)
5	FETHA 2	Clinical Medicine Library	Adequate resources on the subject
6	Main Campus	Faculty of Science Library	There are some departmental libraries in the Faculty
7	Main Campus	Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities Library	There are some departmental libraries in the faculty
8	Main Campus	Faculty of Management Sciences	There are some departmental libraries in the faculty
9	Main Campus	Central University Library	Newly built, not yet fully furnished. It has e-library section.

Source: Authors, 2021

4.1 Library Etiquettes

Both library staff and library users are requested to remember that the **Library** is a place for quiet study and to respect the needs of other members of College and/or University for a pleasant and conducive working environment. Libraries are some of the most valuable free resources we still have, so it imperative take some time to learn what you should or shouldn't do in libraries. Showing proper manners in libraries enables everyone to have a pleasant experience. Not following the rules doesn't benefit anyone.

This idea of maintaining decorum in the library has several terms for it including library rules and regulations, library behavior rules, library user instructions, library etiquettes. Whichever of them you choose to call it, the basic idea is putting up acceptable manners while you use the library so as to neither disrupt the serene nature of the library.

The importance of following library rules cannot be overemphasized. Mayne (2017) lists ten basic tips for how you should act in a library. There are library etiquettes that must be observed in public libraries. Most (if

not all) of these rules of course apply in all types of libraries. Obey posted rules. Most libraries have signs on or near the front door stating that particular facility's policy. Read it, commit it to memory, and obey. Doing otherwise can get you an escorted trip to the exit. Some of these rules might include expected attire, no food, no drink, and no loud noises.

i. Turn off your phone: Okay, you don't have to turn it off, in case there's an emergency at home, but at least put it on silent/vibrate. And if someone calls you, go outside and answer it or if you miss it return the call. Talking on your cell phone in a public venue – particularly a place where people are studying or doing research and need to concentrate – is rude and self-centred.

ii. Keep the noise down: You don't have to talk in whispers anymore, but you should use your indoor voice. That doesn't mean shouting to someone on the other side of the building. Wait until you are close enough to speak softly and still be heard.

iii. Don't get romantic: The library is a wonderful date place, but that doesn't make it okay to make out or engage in big public displays of affection. Take the romance somewhere else.

iv. Don't hog the equipment: If you are in the library during a slow time, and there are more computers than people who need them, use it as long as you are allowed. However, if there is even one person waiting, do what you need to do and let the other person have a turn. The same goes for copiers, fax machines, and any other devices that the library makes available to patrons.

v. Don't go where you're not allowed: This includes areas that are designated for something other than what you're there for. It also includes social media and websites that aren't approved by the library. Many systems have policies against porn sites, terrorist sites, and any site that promotes anything

dangerous to the public.

vi. Respect library staff: Each person has a job to do, and it is disrespectful and rude to expect one of them to cross the line against his or her job description. Many librarians and library clerks will be happy to help you with something other than what they typically do if they're not busy, but always ask first without assuming. And accept the answer.

vii. Be on time for library events: Whether you are there for a lecture from the local historical society representative or you're taking your child to the weekly story hour, arrive on time. Walking in late is disruptive.

viii. Know where your children are: If you bring your children to the library, don't let them run wild or misbehave in any manner. Only let them out of your sight if they are old enough to learn library rules, find what they are looking for on their own, and find you without raising their voices.

ix. Respect library materials: They don't belong to you. The library system is extremely generous in their lending policies, regardless of what they are. Where else can you take books, movies, and music home with you for a few days or weeks without having to pay a dime? Handle these items carefully, know where they are, and bring them back on time. If you do forget to return something by the due date, accept the fact that you owe a fine. Pay it without argument and move on.

Furthermore, Ude (2015) notes that obedience to library rules and regulations are necessary for effective and optimum utilization of the library. Some of the rules and regulations governing the wise use of the library include avoiding stealing, mutilation of books, fighting, reservations of seat, noise making, bringing food or water, impersonation, etc.

4.3 Electronic Information Resources

Electronic information resources

(EIRs) have become imperative in contemporary library system (type of library notwithstanding). Afolabi (2007) notes some electronic resources cover many subjects and others are subject specific. The most effectively way to provide access to electronic books/journals in University libraries is through subscription to online databases which can be accessed through the Internet. Online databases are a collection of electronic information sources (e-journals/e-books) by publishers from various fields and disciplines. Some of these databases are provided free of charge or at subsidized rate to libraries in developing countries by their publishers or vendors.

As observed by Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo and Okello-Obura (2013), electronic information

usage in a University Library is a shift from print materials to electronic information materials and services in the form of CD-ROMS, e-books, e-databases, electronic journals, electronic current awareness services and information subject gateways, accessed through the Internet. This means that students are expected to utilize these resources for effective research and of better quality.

Electronic Information Resources in EBSU

E-Libraries are established in all Faculties and Colleges of the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. On the Digital Library page in EBSU website you will find a drop down menu for e-journal collections. Electronic Information Resources (EIRs) available in EBSU Library among others include ones in the table below:

S/N	Name of E-Resources	Resource Contents	Web Address
1	Research4Life	HINARI (Health), AGORA (Agriculture) OARE Environment, ARDI (Innovation) & GOALI (Global Justice)	http://login.research4life.org/tacgw
2	EBSCOhost	Academic Search Complete	https://www.search.ebschost.com
3	AgricKnowledge (TEEAL)	Access to information on agricultural development	https://www.agriknowledge.org/pages/resources
4	LegalPedia	Legal Resources in Nigeria	https://legalpediaonline.com
5	LexisNexis	Legal Resources overseas	https://www.lesisnexis.com/uk
6	BioMed Central (BMC)	Medical Resources	https://www.biomedcentral.com/p/the-bmc-series-journals

Source: Authors, 2021

Conclusion

Academic libraries are established by owners of institutions of higher learning with the aim of fostering the tripartite objectives of the institutions which are teaching/learning, research and community service. Basic functions of academic libraries are identified as: acquisition of materials, organization of materials; provision of materials; preservation of materials. Administrative structure of an academic library is also highlighted. The various departments or sections of the library are: administration, acquisition or collection development,

circulation or readers services, cataloguing, serials, audio-visual and reprographic. Organizational structure for Ebonyi State University Library has been proposed.

Library resources and functions involve staff, seats, shelves, and information sources. Library services rendered by academic libraries include: lending service, Inter-library loan service, reference service, referral services, user orientation service, reprographic service, serials service, bindery service, electronic library service, readers service, indexing and abstracting service, ethical and behavioural service.

The Ebonyi State University Library System is presented in a tabulated format comprising Campuses, Faculty Libraries and Remarks. Library Etiquettes were discussed. Electronic information resources in EBSU have been identified to include: Research4Life, EBSCO host, Agric Knowledge (TEEAL), Legal Pedia, Lexis Nexis, BioMed Central (BMC). The resource contents, Website addresses were provided.

Recommendations

- Both library staff and library users are expected to take note of the libraries and their facilities and utilize them for maximum output.
- Both staff and students of EBSU should remember that the **Library** is a place for quiet study and to respect the needs of other members of the University for a pleasant and conducive working environment.
- Electronic Information Resources are subscribed in order to enhance teaching/learning, research and community service. Internet facility should be provided in order to make the e-resources accessible by both staff and students.
- Librarians should continue to perform their technical /reference service duties with technology for enhanced library and information service delivery.

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