

Examining the role, values, and legal policy issues facing public Library resources in supporting students to achieve academic success

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Aim

- ▶ To consider the role, values, and legal policy issues facing public Library resources in supporting students to achieve academic success.
- ▶ Small scale research project exploring the perceptions of Library users in a Local Community of Bayelsa State of Nigeria.
- ▶ *Key Words: Education, Library resources, Legal policy compliance, students, academic success.*



Background

- ▶ Student support a key research interest of the Focus Learning Support Group with the primary aim of 'Making Education Count' for young people.
- ▶ Further to Dr Achinewhu–Nworgu's (2007) doctorate on key strategies promoting student retention and success, library service are a key resources perceived as important in supporting students.
- ▶ Libraries also subject to legal policy compliance in the areas of health and safety, access to internet, copywriter, data protection and access to disabled.
- ▶ Failure to provide strict rules and regulations to manage and access library information can lead to breach of compliance.



The role of libraries in supporting student success

- ▶ Many researchers beginning to engage more on exploring formally the benefits and values university and college academic libraries can provide to students.
- ▶ Others like Prof Aziaki embarked on intensive projects in building a library as a resource centre to support students' academic achievement.
- ▶ The benefits and values of academic libraries has extended to scholars providing evidence of positive associations between college students' use of academic libraries and link to retention and academic achievement.
- ▶ Wells (2008): positive links between number of books students borrowed and their grade point average; significant relationships between the number of resources held at libraries and students' development of critical thinking skills.



Access is key

- ▶ In relation to broader institution support services for students over the world, it students are generally aware that these services exist but do not always know how to access them (Martinez & Munday, 1998:102).
- ▶ Challenge: fear of becoming stigmatised that may prevent some students from accessing these academic supporting services.
- ▶ Most effective student support services appear to exist where there are clear roles, responsibilities, policy and procedures for course teams and dedicated support staff to create awareness of the existence of these services (Achinewhu–Nworgu 2007)
- ▶ Creating awareness of the role, values and legal policy implications of libraries is crucial.



Focus of this research

1. To explore whether there is a link between the uses of Steve Aziaki library to the Bayelsa Law students' academic success;
2. To establish whether the library users had clear knowledge of copyright, data protection and access to disable issues relating to legal policy compliance.



Azaiki Public Library



- ▶ Azaiki Public Library Foundation Inc is a US- registered Non Profit educational Foundation which provides educational and research assistance to students, academics, educational institutions and the general public in Africa with main focus in Nigeria.
- ▶ Funded the construction of new Library and Museum in Yenogua, Nigeria, serving University of Port-Harcourt, and other notable educational Institutions in Southern Nigeria.
- ▶ The Library has over 30,000 books, plus comprehensive range of audio, video materials, and articles available through its e-library.
- ▶ Facilities include reading rooms, a mini children corner, two Conference/Seminar halls (for 100 and 50 seats respectively), Museum of Niger-Delta, and a Gallery of Modern and Contemporary African Arts occupying four large halls.



Methodology

- ▶ Visit to Aziaki Public Library in Yenagoa , Bayelsa State of Nigeria, during the ISCEST Annual conference 2014
- ▶ Interviews/discussion with 20 students and some indigenes of Bayelsa community; to find out their perceptions on the role, values and understanding of legal policy issues of the Aziaki Library.



Summary of responses

- ▶ Library positively views as a good resource centre for students and community
- ▶ Provides relevant books/resources for law students, helping them do better in their studies
- ▶ Students reported a wide range of other benefits, eg. access to technology, supporting development of study skills, research, writing and other academic skills
- ▶ Some participants unaware of of compliance implications such as data protection, copyright and access to disabled.



Comments on books and resources:

- ▶ *“It has what I need, relevant books and I like reading different textbooks before constructing my essay. I can also browse the computers for what I want to research on. The resources definitely help a lot in boosting my grades as I can compare and contrast with other books.” (MA)*
- ▶ *“Finding relevant books here in Nigeria to cope with your research work is not easy, but this library is a great opportunity for us and can be more resourced with current law books.” (HE)*



Comments on access:

- ▶ *“This building serves a lot of things, conferences like this, government activities, arts, history, exhibitions as you can see many historical things. It is amazing and very beneficial to all in Bayelsa. But it must have free access, although it is new to tell you more of my benefits to it.”. (EAB)*
- ▶ *“Disabled people, what sort of access and legal protection here for them? People on their legs need to be catered for first. In Nigeria, disabled people are not recognised, much more building a special entrance door for them. Who will do that?”(TO).*



Comments on other aspects of legal compliance:

- ▶ *“I am not quite sure of the relevant legal policy issues than health and safety while in the building. Internet regulation has always been ignored by all providers of internet. People can still have access to your information if they want to. Who will monitor what you are browsing on computer, the staff or the Prof himself? The only way to comply with the law is for us to have a written policy which everyone has to have a copy and let it be displayed where we can all see it.”(TO)*



Key findings

- ▶ Good benefits and values of the library service perceived by the participants, specifically it has enhanced research activities;
- ▶ Although with some stating that it was too early to see the full benefits/impact.
- ▶ Others commented on lack of access for the disabled and unclear knowledge of legal policy compliance.
- ▶ There is a need for clear policy on access for disabled users.
- ▶ More extensive findings on legal compliance of Aziaki Library will be fully presented at a future conference.



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