



The effects of globalization on library practices- A case study of Ekiti state university Ado Ekiti

Osunrinde Ayodele Abiodun and Fagbemiro Ayodele Olabode
Ekiti State University Library Ado Ekiti.

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ABSTRACT

Effectiveness of library services in the present digital age depends largely upon the application of information and communication technology, with integration into global information initiatives. This paper attempts to explore the impact of globalization on library and information services. The population of the study comprises of professionals and students from Ekiti State University Ado Ekiti. A total number of 100 questionnaires were distributed and 80 were *returned*. Total enumeration sampling technique was used for the study. Thus, professionals and students were selected for sampling. All the respondents agreed that library services depend on the ICT in this present age. Majority of the respondents representing 87.5% agreed that Libraries are set up to provide service and access to information while the least that agreed represent 12.5%. 87.5% of the respondent agreed that globalization is imperative for the survival of library practices while 12.5% disagreed. Majority of the respondents representing 62.5% agreed that libraries in Africa are not ICT compliant and are at the rudimentary level of globalization while the least that agreed were 37.5%. The entire population 100% agreed that globalization has brought about paradigm shift on how library is operated. All respondents agreed that globalization brings about significant change to universities. The study however concluded and recommended among others that Libraries must be set up to provide services *and access to information*, Libraries in Africa must stand on its own and be less dependent on foreign countries for survival.

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Introduction

Libraries according to Buckland (1992) are “to provide services and access to information. In effect the performance of this role is thus necessary to management collection, processing, dissemination and preservation of our heritage of intellectual societies, communities and institutions inclusive. These heritages, are majorly in forms of books, journals, arts, music scores, to mention a few. In Africa, and more importantly in the pre-colonial context era, the notion of the Library was essentially oral compared to monarch and private libraries of Europe, and the Chinese engraved stone Steles or slab, the idea of library in Africa was misconceived.

Individuals were designated as the custodians of the collective memories of their various communities. In this light, Banjo (1998) examined the Pool of traditional intellectuals: elders, clan heads, priests, historians and story tellers” including musicians constituted or functioned as libraries and librarians in their local domains. Such individuals were recognized and accorded respect by the entire communities they domiciled.

Among the Wolof ethnic groups of West Africa individuals so important were called ‘griots’ and among the Hausa speaking community of Nigeria, the official title of such individuals is ‘Dan-Masanin’ which literally means the “learned”. They comprise of high chiefs in the courts and palaces of the emirs. Also among the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria they are known as ‘olupitan’ which means custodian of knowledge or better still story teller. However,

the idea of a library has been altered by the notion of globalization. As an idea, it has generated so much affections and hatred among scholars and technocrats (Stiglitz, 2002; Zeleza, (2003).

Globalization has its merits and demerits. It suffices to say that globalization is a pervasive enigma that is daily impacting on societies and institutions. Zeleza (2003:1) “globalization seems to be a kitchen concept, as rhetoric and reality, as process and project.” As a process, its prevalence has been reinforced by the development in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is the driving force. In the context of the library, globalization has brought about a paradigm shift in the conceptual understanding of what a library is about and how it is operated.

The Objectives of the study are to;

- i. determine the effect of globalization on library practices
- ii. ascertain the level of globalization on library practices
- iii. identify the transformation processes brought about by globalization

Research questions

- i. What is the effect of globalization on library practices?
- ii. What is the level of globalization on practices of the library?
- iii. What are the transformation processes resulting from globalization

Scope of the study

This study seeks to evaluate librarians and users in Ekiti State University Library, Ado Ekiti, It will also address the

effects of globalization on library practices, level of globalization practices of the library and determine transformation processes resulting from globalization.

Literature review

Globalization is a complex and multifaceted concept that has generated controversy from its meaning, its time line, and its future as well as whether it is serving the interest of all and also benefiting just a few countries or individuals in the world. Due to the fact that it cuts across almost all disciplines, each of the disciplines proffers solutions and interpretations for the concept.

Shenkar and Luo (2004: 199) refer to globalization as “the growing economic interdependencies of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services on one hand and of international capital flows, as well as through the rapid and widespread diffusion of technology and information. On the other hand, Globalization involves economic integration; the transfer of policies across borders; the transmission of knowledge; cultural stability; the reproduction, relations, and discourses of power; it is a global process, a concept, a revolution, and an establishment of the global market free from socio-political control. It has helped to liberalize national economics by creating a synergy of global market place in which all nations must participate directly or indirectly: This has led to the growing activities and power of international financial investors mainly presented by multinational corporations (Jaja, 2010).

Omekwu, (2006) asserted that, information growth has been exponential and the concept of information explosion is no longer new to information professionals. However, there are current developments in the professional horizon that impact on professional practice and the emerging roles of librarians in a global environment as created a gap that needs to be filled to meet the yearnings and aspirations of information experts.

The process of globalization is not restricted to the economic sphere alone. It also rooted in social, political, environment, cultural, religious dimensions, among others. Tony Schirato and Jan Webb (2003), “globalization is a process of integrating in the economy premise with respect to culture, technology and governance.

Globalization and African Library

The library is an integral component of a nation’s information system. It is established for the purpose of meeting the nation’s information needs in the academia, governance and industry too, hence the need for continuous acquisition of information materials must be taking to consideration. Unfortunately, in the last couple of years, libraries in Africa have been dependent on external assistance as the knowledge industry (academia, publishing and printing sector, and libraries) at the level of crumbling or moribund (Zezeza, 2003).

The concept of “globalization” is currently a fashionable term used in the social sciences, amongst management experts, journalists and politicians. There is a growing notion that today we live in a period where much of social life is determined by global processes (Institute of International Education, (2001). However, Beck argues that industrial society is being dissolved and replaced by a new modernity and globalization. In effect, it is the process of driving this transformation that is ‘changing the foundations of living together in all spheres of social action’ (Beck, 1998, p. 17).

However, both reflective modernization and globalization have been subject to wide range of discussions and debates.

Globalization is ‘deeply contested along a number of dimensions’ (Clark, 1998, p. 498), and reflective modernization is seen by some as being theoretically flawed (Alexander, 1996). Many agreed that both reflective modernization and globalization are surrounded by imprecision and conceptual confusion (Beck, 1998; Dannreuther & Lekhi, 2000). They are, however, key ideas that may help generate greater understanding of the multi-dimensional social, economic, political and cultural transformations currently taking place (Clark, 1998). Moreover, both have become major ideas and policy issues around the world (Dannreuther & Lekhi, 2000).

Globalization has brought about significant changes to universities across the globe, changes that have been examined in numerous studies. These studies show variations in the effects and responses of individual institutions and governments.

It is not surprising then that higher education in Australia has been significantly affected by globalization (Pratt and Poole, 2000). However, ‘globalization processes in higher education are under-studied and under-theorized’ (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, p. 281). As key locations for the development of the knowledge industries of global capitalism (e.g. education and training, legal and advisory services, research and development, electronic information management, telecommunications), better still, Universities have experienced rapid and profound changes over the past few decades— changes that are radically redefining the nature and purpose of higher education.

Akintunde, (2006) opines that “many libraries in Nigeria still operate in the traditional service pattern where librarians are in charge of core professionalism in the area of circulation, reference, serials, acquisition, cataloguing and documentations without much emphasis on academic disciplines. Afullo (2000), observed similarly that Nigeria was rated among the lowest in Africa. In terms of advancement in the area of information communication and technology, much is expected of academic libraries in Nigeria

Globalization of Library Services

The expansion and growth in scientific and technical innovations has posed serious challenges to libraries and information centers globally coupled with the exponential growth of research and development (R&D) in the developed nations, which has recognized information as a vital national resource that determine the direction of any nation. Information is an essential part of a nation’s resources, and access to it, is one of the basic human right; it is not only a national resource vital for scientific and economic progress but also seen as a medium for social communication (UNESCO, 1978) as cited by Nkiko (2005).

Based on the recognition that libraries generate, organize, store and disseminate information necessary for social, economic, and industrial development, the United States and the British Governments placed premium on libraries as a critical agent of educational and national development. British council as well as the United States Information Service (USIS) establishes sophisticated and well- stocked libraries across the globe (Adebayo, 1997).

In recent years, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have grown quite rapidly and the practice in the library and information environment is now tending

towards accessibility, networking, resource sharing, digitization and virtualization, open access, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), library consortia, information superhighway, etc. All these underscore the transformations brought to bear by ICTs to the library and information environment world-wide which necessitated libraries to open up their frontiers for others as against the old notion of self-sufficiency and restricted or closed access.

For higher education, the new technologies have made access easier, promote equity and improve the quality of education. It is further argued that the aim of using technology in library and information centers was to enhance access and flexibility, while reducing costs and promoting quality of service delivery and resources.

Ya'u (2003) postulated that virtual library is an enhanced access to national and International library and information resources for teaching, learning, research initiatives.

In essence pleasure via the digital technology is thereby making Nigeria a tune and active member of the global village policy makers. The uniqueness of the virtual library is that it is space less, since it requires the conversion of target library collection in to electronic format and placed on the Internet to be accessed by users anywhere.

Ndukwe (2005) postulates the digital revolution progressed to usher in the information age with computer networking of today that enable resources and information sharing available even on a world-wide basis. The interconnection of computers and the Internet have brought about greater efficiency and better information sharing and effective management. In recent years, major developments in ICTs and the rapid growth of global infrastructure and networks such as Globalization and Libraries... Abbas TRIM 6 (2) July - Dec 2010 107

Internet and broadband width have transformed businesses, markets and generated significant wealth in order to enhance economic growth in many countries. Besides, this revolution has removed constraints of time and distance as common phenomenon. The use of ICTs in libraries world-wide has provided the fastest and most efficient capabilities and flexibilities for acquiring, processing, sorting, storing, retrieving, dissemination, and utilization of information. More so, it will provide quality library services to people as one of the expectations of the larger society. Library services require both the innovative spirit of the community and the advancement in technology. Libraries and librarians will provide access to essential information that people need to participate in the emerging information society. Therefore, they have moral obligations to make information available to all categories of users.

It is obvious from the foregoing that ICT is a major factor in the actualization of globalization. With the use of ICT, it has become possible to access a variety of information and knowledge sources in a manner that would be simple, easy and independent of time, place and subject discipline.

Importance of globalization

The importance of globalization cannot be over-emphasized as these have brought about change in every facet of life. Globalization enables access to archives information worldwide;

- I. Transfer of data between machines and provides a great platform to have fun and be entertained.
- II. As a reference tool, the internet provides wealth of up-to-date resources unavailable in bond volumes;

- III. The internet gives personal access to specialization and experts in hundreds of disciplines;
- IV. It enables you to reach your fellow librarians with messages and documents independent of the constraints of mails, telegraph or even fax;
- V. One can collect news and facts which can be stored in one's computer for later use in reference;
- VI. Resources in the internet allow libraries to provide better services to their patrons by giving on-line access to information that will be difficult to locate in any other manner;
- VII. Librarians can make the selection of books required in their institutions and order them without going from one bookshop or publisher to another.

However, globalization has its own disadvantages which includes among the following;

- A. Poor level of ICT literacy even within the academic settings
- B. Poor level of awareness of internet facilities in the academic community
- C. Lack of adequate funding, Okiy (2003) identified inadequate funding as a major obstacle to the acquisition and application of information technology facilities in academic libraries in Nigeria. Funding from government is no longer adequate."
- D. Epileptic supply of electricity. The general low supply of electricity in most parts of Nigeria has also been identified as another major setback to globalization efforts in academic libraries in Nigeria. Zakari (2009) opines that academic libraries in Nigeria are plagued by epileptic power supply among others in their efforts to connect their libraries to the internet.
- E. Lukewarm Attitude of the Nigerian Government. The lukewarm attitude of the Nigerian government to the provision of ICT infrastructure and facilities at the level comparable to international standards has been generally lamented by Okiy, (1998) and Adedoyin, (2001).
- F. Lack of ICT Competencies by many Librarians

According to Gbaje, (2007), "the implications of transporting library services to the online environment for the Nigerian academic libraries in the digital age are enormous particularly with the dynamic nature of digital technology which is constantly creating the need for new skills, work environment and work methods. Tennant, (2003), also opines that to be effective, librarians and information professionals must constantly learn and retool and be very versed in web technology

It cannot be over emphasized that academic librarians need to brace up to the new challenges of ICT competencies so that they can render effective service to their library patrons in this electronic environment.

Librarians must be involved in training and retraining to be able to manage successful library services.

Methodology

Methodology is about techniques used in providing answers to the problem under investigation which includes Research design, population of study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instrument and data analysis procedures.

Salau (2004) asserted that methodology is a summary of the instruments and techniques used for a study. The design adopted in this research is the descriptive survey type of research design. Questionnaire method was adopted for data collection.

Table 1. What is the effect of globalization on library practices?.

| S/N | | SA | A | UD | SD | D |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Library services depend on the level of ICT in this present age? | 40(50%) | 40(50%) | | | |
| 2 | Libraries are set up to provide service and access to information | 50(62.5%) | 20(25%) | | | 10(12.5%) |
| 3 | Globalization is imperative for the survival of library practices? | 30(37.5%) | 40(50%) | | 10(12.5%) | |
| 4 | Library is an integral part of Nations educational system? | 60(75%) | 20(25%) | | | |
| 5 | Libraries are established to meet the information needs in the academic settings? | 50(62.5%) | 30(37.5%) | | | |
| 6 | ICT has an aspect of globalization has made acquisition, processing and dissemination of information easy | 20(25%) | 60(75%) | | | |
| 7 | Information materials are in the form of books, journals, arts etc | 10(12.5%) | 60(75%) | 10(12.5%) | | |

Table 2. What is the level of globalization on practices of the library?.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Libraries in Africa are not ICT compliant and are at the rudimentary level of globalization? | | 50(62.5%) | 20(25%) | | 10(12.5%) |
| 2 | The expansion of scientific and technological innovation has posed a serious challenge to library and information center? | 20(25%) | 10(12.5%) | 30(37.5%) | 10(12.5%) | 10(12.5%) |
| 3 | University libraries have experienced rapid change over the past few decades? | 10(12.5%) | 50(62.5%) | | 10(12.5%) | 10(12.5%) |
| 4 | For effective library service, virtual library requires conversion from manual to electronic format? | 20(25%) | 30(37.5%) | 20(25%) | | 10(12.5%) |
| 5 | Interconnection of computers has brought about efficiency and management of information? | 40(50%) | 40(50%) | | | |
| 6 | Libraries in Africa have solely dependent on foreign countries for survival? | 20(25%) | 10(12.5%) | 10(12.5%) | 30(37.5%) | 10(12.5%) |

The population of study comprises of professionals and students in Ekiti State University Ado Ekiti. Total enumeration sampling technique was used for the study. Thus, professionals and students (100) were selected for sampling. 80 questionnaires were dully filled and returned for the study. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). An analysis of research questions was done with the use of percentages.

Discussion of findings

The result in table 1 shows that all the respondents agreed that library services depend on the ICT in this present age. Majority of the respondents representing 87.5% agreed that Libraries are set up to provide service and access to information while the least that agreed represent 12.5%.

87.5% of the respondent agreed that globalization is imperative for the survival of library practices while 12.5% disagreed. All the respondents 100% agreed that library is an integral part of nation's educational system which corroborates the findings of zezela (2003). All the respondents also agreed that libraries are established to meet the information needs in the academic settings which is in line with the findings of zezela (2003). All the respondents agreed that ICT as an aspect of globalization has made acquisition processing and dissemination of information easy which is in agreement with Nduke (2005) All respondents agreed that Information materials are in the form of books, journals, arts etc.

The result in table 2 suggest that majority of the respondents representing 62.5% agreed that libraries in Africa are not ICT compliant and are at the rudimentary level of globalization while the least that agreed were 37.5%. The observation agrees with the earlier findings of Akintunde (2006) and Afullo (2002). 37.5% of the respondents agreed that the expansion of scientific and technological innovation has posed a serious challenge to library and information center while majority of the respondent representing 62.5% disagree. Majority of the respondents 75% agreed that university libraries have experienced rapid change over the past few decades while 25% disagree. 62.5% of the respondents agreed that for effective library services, virtual library requires

conversion from manual to electronic format while 37.5% disagree. The finding is in agreement with Yau (2003). All respondents agreed that interconnection of computers has brought about efficiency and management of information which corroborates Ndukwe (2005) which says the interconnection of computers and the internet has brought about greater efficiency and better information sharing and management. 62.5% also agreed that libraries in Africa have solely dependent on foreign countries for survival while 37.5% disagreed. This is also in line with zezela (2003) which says libraries in Africa have been dependent on external assistance as the knowledge industry for academic, publishing and printing and that most of the nations seems to be crumbling or moribund.

Table 3. What are the transformation processes resulting from globalization?.

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Globalization has brought about paradigm shift on what library is? | 10(12.5%) | 70(87.5%) |
| 2 | Globalization has brought about a paradigm shift on how library is operated? | | 80(100%) |
| 3 | Globalization brings about significant changes to universities? | 20(25%) | 60(75%) |
| 4 | Globalization is impacting on societies and institutions? | 30(37.5%) | 50(62.5%) |
| 5 | New technologies as a result of globalization has made access to information easier and improve the quality of education | 50(62.5%) | 30(37.5%) |

Table 3 shows that all the respondents 100% agreed that globalization has brought about paradigm shift on what library is which corroborate zezela (2003) which says globalization has brought about a paradigm shift in the conceptual understanding of what a library is and how it is operated. The entire population 100% agreed that globalization has brought about paradigm shift on how library is operated. All respondents agreed that globalization brings about significant change to universities which is in agreement with Pratt and Poole (2000) which says higher education across the globe has been significantly affected by globalization, and that universities have experienced rapid and profound change over

the past few decades-changes that are radically redefining the nature and purpose of higher education. All respondents agreed that globalization is impacting on societies and institutions which agreed with zezela (2003). All respondents agreed that new technologies as a result of globalization has made access to information easier and improve the quality of education which corroborate the findings of Yau (2003) which says new technologies have made access easier, promote equity and improve the quality of education while reducing costs and promoting quality of services and resources.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It has been observed that in spite of the transformation recorded in the global information environment where barriers to access and utilization irrespective of the location were removed, Nigerian libraries and information centers still operate at closed access levels.

For Nigerian library and information centers to achieve success, the global information trend must be embraced, the virtual library project must be taken serious and enhanced which Fabunmi (2009) described as a technological way of bringing together the resources of various libraries and information services in one place, so that users can find what they need quickly and easily. However, it is recommended among others that;

1. Libraries must be set up to provide services and access to information
2. ICT as an aspect of globalization must be enhanced to make acquisition, processing and dissemination of information easy
3. Libraries in Africa must be ICT compliant and move with the global trends of doing things.
4. For effective library service, virtual library must be converted from manual to electronic format
5. Libraries in Africa must stand on its own and be less dependent on foreign countries for survival
6. New technologies must be adopted with a view of making information retrieval easier and improve the quality of education
7. Practicing Librarians must be involved in training and retraining in the knowledge of ICT competencies required for them to effectively manage the resources in the academic libraries towards globalization of their services;
8. Library schools in Nigeria should incorporate ICT competency training into their curriculum
9. The problem of epileptic power supply should be seriously addressed by the Nigerian government funds must be made available and skilled people recruited for effective performance
10. Academic libraries in Nigeria will need to be effectively involved in resource sharing towards their involvement in the globalization of their services.

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