

Full Length Research

Issues of Library Space Organization for Users

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This paper is on issues of library space organization for users. Modern library is devoid of being tagged as a grave yard where every section or unit has the sign ‘silent please’. The aims of this paper are to discussed issues of space among libraries, many libraries are built for future purpose. These are lead to the concept of expanded or new building in many social/public institutions. A library may be public, national, school, special or academic in type. Library space is the bed rock of many roles expected of modern library such as recreational, cultural, multimedia and audio visual as the case may be. The paper discussed modern library, space organization, design and management, and among others issues challenges and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Library, Space, Users, Organization, Building, Services, and Modern Library.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of modern library space has its root in one of the multi-dimensional functions of library. A library may be public, national, school, special or academic in type. Library space is the bed rock of many roles expected of modern library such as recreational, cultural, multimedia and audio visual as the case may be. All these serve as communicating the library as a learning environment where traditional, archaic, obsolete and analog system are replaced with modern, efficient and well-designed modern building with space as an epitome of use of leisure through exposure to contemporary world of libraries. While this function is easily performed in the advanced countries, where most people are literate and derive pleasure from reading, in the developing countries where the vast majority are preoccupied with daily subsistence living, and are illiterate, the library, as a recreational institution, is far-cry (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002).

Before the adventure for modern library space, in the late 1990s, researchers studying how people learn began to question the characteristics of spaces and to formulate

implications for the design of learning environments, suggesting four perspectives on the design of learning environments: degree to which they are student centered, knowledge centered, and assessment centered, and community centered (Montgomery, 2014). One of the rationales behind modern library spacing is to motivate library learners or clienteles into the use of spaces that inspire learning. Bennet (2009) (cited in Garner, Black & Dewe, 2016) describes a learning-centered paradigm of library space in which users engage in solo and group learning with digital resources. For instance, in the form of information commons and learning commons, books stacks are less visible, while spaces for learning and collaboration are becoming more prominent. Such modern library spaces intend to support intentional learning, in which acquiring learning, as a skill, becomes part of students' motivation for engaging in study.

Concept of Modern Library

Modern libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many

formats and from many sources. They are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing material accessible through electronic means, and by providing the services of librarians who assist in navigating and analyzing very large amounts of information with a variety of digital resources. Libraries are increasingly becoming community hubs where programs are delivered and people engage in lifelong learning (Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/library>). Modern libraries, as conceptualized above, are becoming one of the numerous ways to inculcate reading habit among library users and for sustaining life-long learning by making such libraries to be conducive for learning purposes. This is necessary because libraries nowadays take up new functions and have become more complex than before, the planning of a new library requires interdisciplinary knowledge as well as cooperation between library science and architecture. Library staff is responsible for clearly defining and conveying the desired concept, purpose and functionality, while architects and designers work to make sure that those conditions will be met on a realistic basis.

In most cases, the building team mainly consists of permanent members such as the library manager, librarians, architects and interior designers. Specialists and consultants can be included in the team but they may not be involved in the whole process. Modern library is devoid of being tagged as a grave yard where every section or unit has the sign 'silent please'. For instance, some modern public library is now a space for which career women place their little children (with their Nannies/Housemaids) in a separate space designed within the library known as 'Crèche' to cater for the kids pending the time they will come back from work, similar design are available in academic libraries for instance University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba and Federal University of Technology, Owerri had taken time to create space for students to chat, make use of information communication technology devices to work on their studies. Most especially during examination period when all available seats are occupied in advanced countries there are many Coffee Café sections in the most academic, public, national, special libraries.

Concept of Space Organization for Functional Use

Concept of space in organization has gone beyond erection of traditional buildings devoid of spaces to cater for extracurricular activities among the users. This does not apply to modern library alone, but cuts across every establishment. The importance of space to organization is to encourage motivation of staff in such organization most especially for modern day career women with numerous corporate and domestic functions at home. Public libraries with modern space where are recreational facilities will take care of their kids during holidays by

making use of various types of information resources peculiar to children and adolescents. Recent developments in Information and Communication Technologies have largely influenced the way we define the purpose and function of libraries. Digitization has been considered challenging, and even threatening, to the existence of traditional libraries. On the other hand, widespread interest in library architecture has redefined the library as a physical space. In the present-day information society, the concept of the hybrid library, a fusion of the physical and digital dimensions of space and services, has offered one possible strategy for libraries to function as multifaceted social institutions (Baker, 2008).

However, there has been little interest in developing this concept further. In addition, the main interest behind the concept has been to explore possible means of connecting emerging electronic resources to existing library organizations. Therefore, the physical aspect of this dual concept has been poorly defined from the beginning, predominantly referring only to physical collections. A more rigorous understanding of the role of the physical space of libraries could benefit their development as institutions as a whole. In advanced countries, most universities have integrated technologies into academic library and learning spaces for continuous improvement of their information services provision. A Pre-conference Workshop entitled "Evaluating Space to Transform a Library" was held in conjunction with "Measuring and Improving Library Value" Conference in Sydney 2012. The outcome of the workshop was the development of integrated technologies that make provision for the following: furniture design supports students' flexible use of technologies; spaces allow for students' quick access to information; teaching and instructional spaces that promote innovative ways of learning, wireless network saturation achieved in all learning spaces and high speed networks support student engagement with information and peers; visual display and signage communicate and showcase information media, research and student work and web accessibility and inclusive practice principles influence choice in technologies and supporting services (Phillips, K.P.A (2007).

These are the type of innovations needed in developing countries that will provide basis for initiatives to develop modern library space in our libraries beyond academic but replicated in special, public and national libraries as well.

Space Organization: Design and Management

Library design is a pragmatic and contextual process where the design goals are formulated in cooperation with key individuals involved in the process. Based on the analysis of research materials, a multidimensional model of library space is introduced that consists of physical,

social and digital space. The design and utilization of physical space enables the versatile development of libraries and their adaptation to the digital age. Library space should be understood as a complex and multidimensional concept. Greater efforts should be made to find out how the design of physical space facilitates the various uses of libraries and how these uses are connected with the library's digital resources (Mehtonen, 2016).

Aaltoene (2012) notes that the interest in library space seems to have increased steadily since the mid-1990s. Undoubtedly, one reason for this has been the change in library functions caused by new information technologies. These changes have induced the need to reform existing library spaces and to develop new concepts for the design of new libraries. To sum up the previous library research literature, there have been two major concepts for library space in the digital age: the library as a learning environment and the library as a place. Academic libraries deal with the former, while the latter is often directed at public libraries, but the division is not exclusive.

Place of Modern Library Space for Library Services in 21st Century

One of the characteristics of information society is the development of modern library space in all strata of library, mostly public and academic libraries. The complexity and diverse nature of society from various communities, town and cities require adequate information provision. Gone are the days librarians are seated behind their desks expecting users to come for direct and indirect reference services. The world of Information and Communication Technology continue to dictate every facets of life, such e-library, e-commerce, e-agriculture, up till the latest advanced information technology - artificial intelligence. Library in various formats have always be the custodian of the aforementioned developments since information resources provided in the library lead to the discovery of some of the discipline in form of learning. Many scholars date the beginning of the learning space movement in higher education to the early 1990s. At this time, the traditional college classroom began undergoing great changes due to advances in information technology. Wireless connections enabled real-time and asynchronous learning to be patched into teaching sessions. PowerPoint presentations were being captured for later viewing and review. Web content and searching became integrated into class lectures and problem-solving exercises. As a whole, constructivist learning for understanding and discovery began to replace traditional teaching and learning and the activity of memorization and recall (Head, 2016). Horn, Langham and Owen (2014) posited that the introduction of new generation library and learning spaces was taking place at a time

when the benefits of learning outside of the classroom, informal peer-to-peer interactions and social networking opportunities were being recognized by university as critical to improving learning outcomes. More libraries are saving space by significantly reducing their collection of government documents. The first reason for this reduction is due to technology, as more government agencies are publishing their documents in digital form. Budget reductions provide the second reason, since staff cutbacks have made libraries less willing to process government documents and to comply with stringent rules that the government imposes upon libraries with depository status. Finally, other digital resources may provide the information that was formerly available most expeditiously from government publications (Heronon & Sounders, 2009). For instance, there are four floors in the University of Lagos main Library building. Each of the floors had been re-designed in such a way to allow students have a separate space for them to engage in discussion, peerto-peer group chatting where they make use of the Wi-Fi from the Centre for Information Communication System of the university. Each floor has good leather set of couches and tables, aside the conventional reading tables in the open access and close access sections of the library. The Akintunde Ojo MTN library in the University has a space with beautiful upholstery that allows students to relax after surfing the net on workstation for hours. There is a need for upcoming university to incorporate this into their plans. Suffice to say that in similar vein, the Federal University of Technology Library at Owerri turned their spaces/foyer into recreational centre called 'love garden' to mark the 2020 Valentine Day. The advent of Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) in Nigeria has created multiple opportunities for internet usage and data utilization through download of information resources among group of library users, such as students, university community members, and researchers. For library services, the internet has virtually eliminated the need for ready reference. While libraries continue to feel the need to provide an in-depth reference service in support of student and faculty research, many have made significant space implications beyond the reduction already described of the physical reference collection. Some libraries have combined the circulation desk, normally staffed by clerical employees, and the reference desk (Wang & Henson, 2011).

Many colleges and universities are renovating the library environment around the concept of the library space and learning commons to reflect next-generation trends in library space planning that will include: fewer physical resources; flexible, modular learning environments; wireless connectivity and outlet access; integrated academic support services; and food and drink options (<https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/libraririans/management>). To better accommodate the modern

needs of users, libraries are tailoring their design and facility strategy to their students' increasingly social approach to learning and studying. Facility renovations often opt for large, public tables and couches to create comfortable collaborative spaces. The modern learning recreational areas or commons provide a variety of multimedia tools for students and faculty who want to explore alternative modes of scholarship. Campus members are also able to access relevant academic content digitally, either at computer terminals or on mobile devices. A newly allocated space typically includes a café for relaxation, food and drinks. In addition, related academic support units such as support services, often share space in these new facilities, which provide students with a "one stop shop" for academic assistance (Bryant, Mathews & Walton, 2009)

. The features of a good library building have openness, artistry and flexibility. According to Adolphus (n.d.), it is important to have social "third spaces" which are neither home nor work, but ones where people can relax, have fun, see and be seen, and find rejuvenation for the mind and the spirit. They also provide guidelines for designing a library coffee shop, some of which can be applied to the library as a whole. These features include:

- Layout: people like seating to be anchored to an architectural feature, such as a wall, which gives them a feeling of security; avoid having seats near queues for food or that would impede access to the main library;
- Flooring: should be easy to clean, non-slip, with colours and patterns chosen for their ability to not show up soiling, and of a material that is warm but muffles sound (wood does not have this acoustic quality)
- Seating and tables: cater for all types of users, with tables of different sizes, for those who come in groups, those who prefer to sit alone, and those who like to spread out their books and use their laptop;
- Lighting: It is particularly important that this be right in a place where people will be reading, and should be either directly above or near the tables. Dimmer switches are a useful way of varying the light, and natural light (controlled in the event of glare) is also important.
- Aroma: Coffee and baking emanate desirable smells, and can be enhanced by venting
- Acoustic: discreet music, which should obviously not interfere with quiet areas of the library;
- Views: people like to be able to see outside, also to "people watch."
- Ambience: use soft and cozy colours and textile. Art can liven up the space, and provide an opportunity for students to showcase their work.

However, the serious idea behind the introduction of the café is to tempt people inside the building to look at the resources it houses. There is some anecdotal evidence that the presence of a café increases library use; according to one example, traffic increased by as

much as 42 percent when a Starbucks was added (Stephen, 2001 cited in Waxman et al, 2007). Milton Keynes Central Library has redesigned its foyer to include a café area, with bistro style tables and chairs as well as brightly coloured sofas and pebble chairs, and also "quick IT" areas; also, Burton Library (Staffordshire) now has an Internet café in its entrance foyer (Horn, 2012). All these had been developed and put into use in advanced countries; modern library space should be the trend in developing countries so that our libraries would be attractive to users in all strata of librarianship.

Challenges of Space organization in Modern Libraries

The library's valued proposition to university managements has always been focused on student learning and the student experience, and providing spaces that can act as change agents; these are the some of the challenges of space organization in modern libraries. The introduction of new generation library and learning informal peer-to-peer interactions and social networking opportunities were being incorporated into the university as critical to improving learning outcomes. This idea must be developed in the developing countries by incorporating it into their budget and plans. Although globally, higher education is experiencing turbulent times, Nigeria is not different, the federal government allocation to higher education

CONCLUSION

Modern library space organization for functional use is embedded in recreational function of a typical library but this has never been harnessed and developed. In this discourse, modern, sophisticated or complex libraries are characterized by their architectural design which serves as a flagship of other academic buildings in academic settings. Such building or modern library has spaces for all recreational facilities you can think of for the support of learning spaces as noted in group/peer chatting, tea café, audio-visual for multi-media accessibility spaces. The role of Information and Communication Technology has not only assisted but has enhanced modern library spaces because all forms of internet facilities are used to enjoy those spaces that were designed for information resources accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for re-defining recreational functions of the library has come of age, considering the fact that library professionals have to bring life into our various facets of library in order to enhance development and cultivate

culture of reading among users. Modern library space in an organization requires advances in technology which have dual roles of benefits for those without much space and for those that have big spaces. The use of information communication technology will solve the problem of additional modern library space through the availability of the Internet that will alter changes in services such as reference; the increased importance of digital collections is the main factor in the reduction of the need for space. Some libraries are already completely digital, while others will undoubtedly follow.

Overall, for the academic library, the need is no longer to serve as a place where users go to access physical materials. Instead, the library has become a service point for providing users with the information resources and services that they seek even if they never set foot in the physical library.

There is need for little motivation to go to the public library for pleasure reading, or to borrow light-reading materials. The Modern public library spaces should serve, in addition to non-fictional resources, as a repository for entertainment reading, viewing and listening materials, making full use of modern technological devices, such as video, phonographs, slides, which may be used in the library or borrowed from home use.

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