

Library and Faculty Academics and Availability Theses and Dissertations to Postgraduate Programmes in University of Calabar, Nigeria

By
Mfon E. Etuk (Ph.D)
University of Calabar Library
Calabar

&

Joy Duruamaku-Dim (Ph.D)
Dept of Curriculum/Teaching,
Faculty of Education
University of Calabar
Calabar

Abstract

This paper focuses on the partnership existing between librarians, lecturers, and postgraduate school administrators of the University of Calabar in order to make theses and dissertations available to the University of Calabar Library. To this end the paper considers adequacy in the application of the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) and the Association of College and Research Library (ACRL) Standards to the analysis of theses availability in the University of Calabar Library.

Introduction

The University of Calabar ranks among the leading and largest second generation universities in Nigeria. It was established in 1975 under the National Higher Educational Programme of the then Federal Military Government. The student's population rose from 896 in 1976, spread in the Faculty of Arts, Science and Social Sciences to over 17,000 full time students during the 1991/92 session. In 1996, the university comprised 8 Faculties

and 3 Institutes, namely: Faculties of Agriculture, Arts, Education, Law, Science and Social Science, College of Medical Science, and the Graduate School. The Institutes were Institute of Education, Institute of Oceanography and Institute of Public Policy and Administration. As at November 2002, there were a total of 10 faculties and 3 institutes. The increase in the number of faculties is as a result of the split of the College of Medical Sciences into Faculties of Basic Medical Sciences and Clinical Sciences, while the Faculty of Management Sciences was carved out of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The total number of department is now 64.

Graduate studies commenced at the University of Calabar during 1978/79 session in pursuance of the objectives outlines in the University of Calabar Decree of 1979 which include:

- (a) The promotion of scholarship and research in all fields of learning and human endeavour and
- (b) Relating research concern to the social, cultural, political and economic needs of the country.

On 30th September 1982, the Board of Postgraduate Studies was replaced with the Graduate School Board. The Post Graduate Regulations were reviewed and major changes affected were approved by the Senate, which also gave approval to new programmes for the Departments of Sociology, Geology, Educational Administration (PGDE), History and Biological Sciences which presently comprises Zoology and Genetics.

The first batch of graduate students with theses were 8 in number in 1982. By 1996/97 a total of 556 Post Graduate Diploma, 2063 Masters Degree and 161 Ph.D degree students graduated from the various faculties of the University. By 2001/2002 session, the Post Graduate School of University of Calabar had received a total of 3000 theses and 600 dissertations. Both master's and doctoral students are required to produce theses for their degrees.

The Graduate School of the University of Calabar requires that theses be written under the supervision of qualified academics who are not just familiar but are deeply knowledgeable in the field of study. It requires that a Masters degree candidate should not have more than one supervisor while a doctorate degree dissertation must be written under the direction of a Supervisory Committee of two senior academics, one of whom be the Chief Supervisor, who must of necessity be an expert in the area of specialization of the candidate and should at least be a senior lecturer in rank. Once the theses and dissertations are completed, defended, produced and the final copies endorsed by supervisors, chairmen of Faculty Graduate Committees, and heads of departments, they are channelled via heads of department through the Postgraduate School to the University Library.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Availability of postgraduate theses is the process of ensuring that

postgraduate theses in physical form are made available to potential users who may be postgraduate students, lecturers and research scholars who need them to keep up with current research findings. A review of literature conducted by Okoro (2002) revealed that few students have been carried out on the analysis of these projects. The same is applicable to these availability in Nigerian Universities. Afolabi and Mohammed (1984), Gupta (1984), Duru (1987), Akande (1999), Amosu (1965), Edoaka (1992), and a handful of others have attempted to raise issues on theses availability in Nigeria but much more is required for theses literature to align with those obtained in other geopolitical zones.

In theory and practice, most theses and dissertations are available only at libraries of universities that accepted them. ASLIB Index of Theses with Abstracts (2000) points out that in 1954, a Standing Conference of University Librarians (SCONUL) in Britain proposed a four-fold standard of availability of theses as follows:

- (a) At least one copy of every thesis should be deposited in the university library;
- (b) Subject to author's consent, every thesis should be available for inter-library loan;
- (c) Subject to author's consent, every thesis should be available for photocopying;
- (d) Authors of theses should be asked at the time of deposit to give

their consent in writing to (b) and (c) above and this consent should be inserted in the deposit copy of theses.

To ensure theses availability in universities, there should be close cooperation between faculties, postgraduate school administrators and university librarians. This is confirmed in the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2007:1) which stress that collaboration between faculty and librarians is fundamental to information literacy and that such collaboration is based on shared goals, shared vision and a climate of trust and respect. Accordingly, teachers will bring an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, attitude and interests of the students and of the content of courses to be taught, while librarians should add a thorough knowledge of information skills and methods to integrate them into the courses, pedagogical knowledge for teaching these skills and understanding of student's frustrations with the research process. It should be the joint responsibility of graduate schools and university libraries to make bibliographic control of theses through quality control and deposit requirement. By so doing, better linkage will be established between graduate schools and university libraries.

Information literacy encompasses a wide range of necessary competencies required to enable the development of graduate capabilities and support the teaching and learning goals of a university (Queensland University of Technology, 2006:1). In Nigerian universities, attempts at

making theses available only in the libraries are made but there is need to strictly adhere to rules and regulations of availability or theory of availability used worldwide, otherwise known as the University Availability of Publications (UAP). UAP involves proper recording and making theses physically available live or photocopied which is much required in Nigeria. Nigerian university libraries need to imbibe by the application of availability theory as required by the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) for theses received by them.

Research methodology

This paper is based on documentary research method which draws information from official documents particularly University Library Standards prepared by Association of College and Research Libraries, University of Calabar official records, library publications, postgraduate school publications, and other public documents. The paper is mainly descriptive in scope and thus utilizes quantitative methodology relying mostly on the researchers' styles of reasoning and rigour. The assessment of theses availability in the University of Calabar Library is based on the standards prepared by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) for assessing UNICAL Library Services, theses and dissertations collections, personnel, facilities and finance as reflected below under each standard.

Analysis of availability of postgraduate theses using university

standard prepared by Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)

Section A: Services

Standard A.1.

In order to support the instructional research and public service programs of the university, the services offered by a university library shall promote and facilitate effective use of recorded information in all formats by all of the library's clientele.

University of Calabar library Theses A.1.

Theses available in *UNICAL Library* are deposited by University of Calabar Graduate School. These are accepted as an acquired material in which the university library exercises ownership on them (that is, University of Calabar Library is stamped all over the books as specified by the library, accessioned and channelled to be processed by cataloguing and classification using Library of Congress Classification Scheme). A listing of these through catalogue cards facilities every location to these materials by the clientele who are students and staff furthering their research. The next service are in which theses are forwarded is the Readers Services Division which comprises the Central Lending Library, Reference Library and the Research Library.

Readers Services Division is the only division which strengthens availability of postgraduate theses because they here made available to the readers. Postgraduate theses are kept in the Research Library. The Research Library which is located on the third floor of the library and has four

sections. The sections are, Bound Journals, Abstract and Indexes, Africana and Government publications collections. Theses and dissertations are stocked in the Africana room. Due to the size of the collection, they are kept with Africana books. They are classified as books by year and shelf labelling is also by years.

Standard A.2.

In order to ensure maximum access to its collections and their contents, a university library shall maintain records of its collection which are complete, consistent and in conformity with national bibliographical standards and requirements.

University of Calabar Library Theses A.2

The library started receiving theses in 1987. Presently, the library has in stock over 3000 masters' theses and 600 doctoral dissertations. They are close access stack with its specialized catalogue. They are classified as books with locational symbols (5) as follows:

HB

231

845

1987

(5)

Along with its specialized catalogue, theses cards are also filed in the main

public catalogue at the Reference Library.

Standard A.3.

Within the limit of the university's particular responsibilities and priorities, a university library shall provide maximum access to its collections for all its clientele.

University of Calabar Library Theses A.3

The clientele for theses and dissertations at the university of Calabar library are postgraduate students and staff of the university. Being on close access, theses are available to all theses clientele on request and a spacious reading area is provided for them to sit and use theses materials for as long as they want during the opening hours of 8.00am to 10.00 Pm everyday except Sundays. They are not meant to be borrowed though (reference service). It has tight security such that readers are checked against undue removal of theses. This serves as a measure of control against loss and damage. Theses are arranged and labelled by years on the shelves. Both theses and dissertations borrowed for internal reading are specifically recorded. All returned theses are ensured safety and returned back to the shelves for future use.

Section B: Collection

Standard B.1

A University Library's collections shall be of sufficient size and scope to support the university's total instructional needs and to facilitate the university's research programs.

University Library Theses B.1.

University of Calabar Library attempts to provide theses from faculties offering postgraduate degree programs. These faculties are Faculties of Agriculture, Arts, Education, Institute of Education, Institute of Oceanography, College of Medical Sciences, Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), Faculty of Science, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Management Sciences. Information contained in these theses cut across all disciplines of the university and constant usage by the clientele indicates the quality of theses. There is interlibrary arrangement made for theses in case one wishes to use the theses. This is obtained by presenting the student with introduction letters to other university libraries as clients of the library and also honouring letters from other university libraries.

Standard B.2

A University Library's collections shall be developed systematically and consistently within the terms of explicit and detailed policies.

University of Calabar Library Theses B.2

Theses and dissertations, though unpublished in nature and are worthy of publication and they are acquired through submission by the Graduate School to the library. They are sent to the library on the basis of their relevance to the university policies. There is consistent policy of acquisition of these materials since there are good linkages with departments, faculty, and Graduate School to the library. The university librarian is also a member of the Graduate School Board who ensures consistent availability of theses at the library. Reference policy for theses is maintained.

Standard B.3

A university library's collections shall contain all of the various forms of recorded information.

University of Calabar Library Theses B.3

Theses and dissertations are documents that provide relevant information to supplement various information needed by the library and the university as a whole. More information can be gathered from audio-visual materials such as microfilms which can be obtained in other libraries of the world. But UNICAL audiovisual collection is lacking. Information should be stored in computer too.

Section C: Personnel

Standard C.1

A university library shall have sufficient number and variety of personnel to develop, organize and maintain such collections and to provide such reference and information services as well meet the university needs.

University of Calabar Library Theses C.1

Post graduate theses collection is headed by an academic librarian with MSLS qualification, assisted by on BLS qualified staff, one library officer, four library assistants, 2 porters and a cleaner who all know their responsibilities regarding services to the readers. Theses staff also serve the Africana and Government Documents collections. They are also kept in the same close access area. The size of the collection is quite moderate for the number of staff and these have long years of experience working in the library.

Standard C.2

Personnel practices within a university shall be based on sound contemporary administrative practice and shall be consistent with personnel practices within the university as well as the goals and purposes of the library.

University of Calabar Library Theses C.2

The practices for theses collection is mainly reference services. The

library administration allows provision for personnel management programmes. For instance, the head of Africana collection in which theses collection is overseen by the head of Bound Journals, Abstracts and Indexes sections.

Staff of this unit are also allowed to go on in-service training. The staff with BLS obtained his degree from the library science programme mounted by the Faculty of Education.

Section D: Facilities

Standard D.1.

A university library shall have facilities which meet the present and anticipated future requirements of the university and its programmes.

University of Calabar Library Theses D.1

The University of Calabar Library is considered the largest building in West Africa. The library collection can only occupy major parts of the left wing of the building. As collection grow, the materials are gradually moved to new locations. The rooms are spacious; well ventilated, well lit and there is enough allowance for the materials on shelves. The theses collection meets those qualities of a collection environment with good shelf areas and reading area.

Standard D.2

Libraries should be so located that the university community will have convenient access to them.

University of Calabar Library Theses D.2

The theses collection is located in the Research Library which serves mainly postgraduates, final year undergraduates and staff who are clientele of the materials. The space of the library building shows convenience for reading. Library staff are always of service to these users at all times.

Section E: Administration and Governance

Standard E.1

The place of the university library within the administrative and governance structure of the university shall be clearly identified, and the responsibility and authority of the library administration and chief administrative officer shall be defined.

University of Calabar Theses E.1

The theses collection librarian relates with the university librarian to ensure appropriate organization of theses. Also there is a good relationship between the supervisors and the junior library staff such that there is no delay in terms of making materials available to the users.

Standard E.2

The university's own administrative and governance structure shall be clearly specified and shall be consonant with the governance structure of the university as well as with the particular needs and requirements of the library.

University of Calabar Theses E.2

The role of all categories of personnel for the theses collection is specified. The collection operates with the Liberty of Congress Classification just as other libraries of the world. This means that the library operates with the principles and practices followed in other sections of the library.

Standard E.3

There shall be a close administrative relationship among all libraries with the university to the end that library users may make full use and effective use of the library resources and services.

University of Calabar Library Theses E.3

Theses librarian and other library staff should ensure that they keep abreast with users' needs. They should try to find the materials even at other library level. Departments of University of Calabar also keep theses. There should be links with them. The relationship between the postgraduate school and the library is quite conducive for the library's principles and practices.

Standard E.4

A university library's major policies and procedures shall be clearly defined and regularly reviewed.

University of Calabar Library Theses E.4

The library should provide the listing of theses to the awareness of the entire university faculties. The use of Library Instructions offered by the University of Calabar clearly streamlines the circulations and collection development policies of the library which also embraces the theses collection.

Section F: Finance

Standard F.1

Budgetary support for the university library should be sufficient to enable it to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities as in the preceding standards.

University of Calabar Library Theses F.1

Budgetary support aspect for theses and dissertations commences from the Processing Division. Theses are needed to be catalogued and classified but due to lack of funding for materials for cataloguing, processing of theses was suspended to give way to processing of books with the little

resources for cataloguing. Sufficient cataloguing materials should be provided for theses to be processed and made available to the users.

Standard F.2

The University Library budget shall be a distinct part of the university budget and it shall be developed and managed by the chief Administrative Officer of the university library.

University of Calabar Library Theses F.2

The library budget is dependent on the university budget while the theses collection budget is dependent on the library budget. The theses collection librarian reports all budgetary needs to the university librarian.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The above factors represent variables that would contribute to the effective maintenance and administration of theses and dissertations in the University of Calabar Library. It is therefore recommended that:

1. University of Calabar Library theses collection should be guided by the standards for the university libraries.
2. By way of information literacy initiative librarians and academics should work together to develop strategies to enhance students success as skilled information foragers.
3. The library needs to revamp the audiovisual unit for future storage of

theses in microfilm and other audiovisual forms.

4. Budget should be provided to the university librarian to enable him provide materials for effective organization of theses in the University of Calabar Library, such as getting processing materials.
5. University of Calabar Library needs to computerize its book resources lists to include theses and dissertation lists.

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