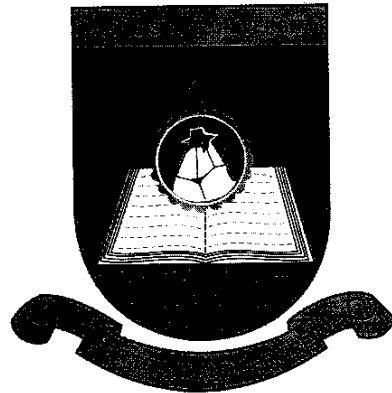


LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

International Conference

2011



CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

► **THEME** ◀

**DEMOCRATIZATION,
GOOD GOVERNANCE
AND EDUCATION**

VOLUME 2

THE LIBRARY AS AN AGENT OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AN ESSENCE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE.

MAKINDE, OMAWUMI O.

wummymak@yahoo.com

Fatiu Ademola Akesode Library

Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos

&

SHORUNKE, OLUDARE .A

darebanji@gmail.com

Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies,

University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Abstract

The paper discussed communication of information as a salient feature of any organisation that cannot be neglected, the understanding and correct interpretation of the message conveyed enhances organizational efficiency and forward the cause, aims and objectives of the organization. The crux of information in governance was also discussed in this paper. The library as an agent of information communication performs a great role in disseminating information to various individuals belonging to various segment of the society including the political sector: The paper thus highlight the relationship between the library and governance to see the immense benefits that can accrue to the political sector from the library.

Introduction

Communication is the process of transferring information, meaning and understanding from sender to receiver (Black and Porter, 2000). Communication can also be regarded as the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others at a particular time and place.

Communication involves four actions and five components. The four actions are encoding, sending, receiving and decoding. The five components are sender, message, medium, noise and receiver. The sender originates the message by encoding it, that is, by constructing the message intended for conveyance. The message is the content of the communication. The sender then transmits the message through a medium. A medium is the mode or form of transmission, not the message itself. The receiver acquires the message, then begins decoding the message or interpreting the message, sometimes distraction interferes with the message this is known as noise. Noise contributes to the misinterpretation of the original message and this can only be corrected through verification of the

original message. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another; it involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver.

Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. *Communication* is the activity of conveying information. Communication requires a sender, a message, and an intended recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the sender. Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) viewed communication as a process of mutual interaction of people through the transmission of information and messages.

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision.

Information has been regarded as processed data, it has several dimensions and it means many things to different people. It must also be noted that information is both a product and a process. Information is regarded as a 'thing' or a 'stuff' because traditionally, it has been embodied in artefacts such as books, journals, newspapers, etc. While the telecommunications engineers associate information with bits and data, the librarians associate information with recorded knowledge. Nevertheless attempts will be made in defining information. Rubin (1998) described information as a processed data from which meaning arises and it is communicated. Information is used interchangeably with news, data, and knowledge. Some of the definitions of information are

- Increasing the state of knowledge of a recipient.
- Reducing uncertainty
- Value in decision making
- Body of knowledge and a physical surrogate of knowledge

The Shannon-Weaver in Oyadonghan (2010) proposes that all communications must include six elements:-

- Source
- Encoder
- Message
- Channel

- Decoder
- Receiver

Communication of information of information as gleaned by Aina (2004) is the transmission of information (content) to individuals, groups of people, organisations, devices, etc, anywhere in the world. While the journalists are concerned with the main information, the telecommunications engineer is concerned with the accurate transmission of content. Communication of information can be between two individuals or it could be between one person and a group via printed materials, computer message or broadcast. Newspaper and magazines publishers, electronic news media and database producers are involved in the communication of information.

Communication System

The communications system in organisation is product of its degree of complexity and functions differentiated from one level to another. The direction of communication has been classified by Black and Porter (2000) according to the level they are intended: Downward Communication, which is sent from higher organisation level to lower organisational level; from the organisation top executives to its employees or from supervisors to subordinate. Secondly is upward communication, this includes communication sent from lower organizational levels to higher levels; for example from management employees to their supervisors, or from a manager to her boss. Lastly is lateral communication which is sent across essentially equivalent levels of an organization; for example, from one clerical assistant to another, or from the marketing department to the engineering design department.

However communication systems in libraries, archives and information centres are tailored towards user satisfaction and Aina (2004) explained it to include evaluating users needs, the existing software and hardware to ensure efficiency. Reference to the five classic laws of Library Science by S.R. Ranganathan is still very relevant in this regard. These five rules are as relevant today as when he wrote them years ago

- Books are for use.
- Every reader has his or her book.
- Every book has its reader.
- Save the time of the reader.
- The library is a growing organism

The essence of Ranganathan's laws which help us focus on two aspect of library services, are still very useful. First that the libraries are about what he called 'books' which today we might broaden to include all kinds of information and works of creative imagination – 'information resources'. Secondly and probably more importantly he perceived that libraries are people – readers, patrons or users and it is the use of the information resources that is the essence of the library.

Bearing this in mind, the role of the library may be analysed from a number of perspectives, the traditional approach has been to emphasize collection building and collection management in essence the library key essence is to build broader and deeper collection and to arrange for users to access only on terms which ensure their longterm integrity. In this view the library is essentially a repository, and most of the activities in devoted to the maintenance of the repository.

The Library as an Agent of Communicating Information

Any library is a community within a community. Reduced to its essentials, a library consists of its collections, its staff, and the bibliographic structure that makes the collections accessible and enables the staff to provide the services and programs that the library provides (Gorman, 1997).

The library is an information management organisation, bestowed with the responsibility of acquiring information resources, processing information resources, storage of information resources and timely dissemination of information resources through direct dissemination or repackaged dissemination. In the process of transmission of knowledge and information, communication takes place. Libraries are concerned with all basic elements in the chain of communication. The library functions to acquire materials (containing information or knowledge), systematically organize the materials and finally bring them in contact with the users (receivers). All These point to corroborate the idea that all activities in libraries and information centres are user based and users are the essence of the information profession.

Libraries in the communication of information engages creation of information by repackaging information to suit the intellectual capacity of their potential users based on the envisaged information needs, information in hard form like textbooks, journals, encyclopedia, abstracts etc can be repackaged to illiterate users in oral form. The library also encodes information resources acquired in the process of cataloguing and classification of information carriers, thereby describing resources to ensure uniformity and consistency and systematically organizing the materials by assigning class mark through a recognized list of subject headings or thesaurus like the Sears List of Subject Headings or the Library of Congress Subject Headings to facilitate placement on shelves and thereby ensuring easy retrieval by the users. A library also engages in providing guides to the intellectual content of books through the index, so as to ensure that no information is lost to the library user. Catalogue cards, book catalogue, computer output microform, online public access catalogue and the Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) are channels in which the library display its holdings to the benefit of its users.

The library as a mediator in the communication process create original information, document it in print or non print medium and bring the information in close proximity with the end users of the information created. It can be safely said that the library is concerned with information generation.

organisation for use and dissemination to users. Nwalo (2000) noted that some national and international agencies including the British Council, United States Information Service and United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation are constantly assisting libraries with its task of generation, management and communication of information, recognising the fact that the library is important to every area of life that will witness meaningful development including the political sector.

Good Governance and the Library

The business of governance could be within the context of the legislative, executive and the judiciary, the crux of information in the performance of this governmental function needs to be underscored. Good governance is Crucial to the development process. Governance is the exercise of power or authority – political, economic, administrative or otherwise, to manage a country's resources and affairs (Downer, 2000) . It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and meet their obligations. 'Good governance also connotes the competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs. Good governance has the characteristic of being participatory, ensures effective and efficient decision making, responsive to the present and future needs of society, consensus oriented, minimizes corruption and ensures the rule of law.

To achieve good governance the availability of relevant information is essential in the act of governance to serve as a guide in decision making on any subject and speeds up the decision making process., Bergdahl (1989) opines that, information has become such a precious resource that the fate of modern nations in all essentials is connected with their capacity to develop and exploit it. He further predicts that in future, countries that do not develop this capacity will be left behind in the cultural, scientific and economic development.

If information is so essential to official business, it is worthwhile to consider the sources of gathering the information. One of the remarkable sources of obtaining information is the library and of note also are information and documentation centres. The presence of information materials such as records, books, journals, audio visual materials which bear the records of events from the beginning of human society till this present time, including government documents, organizational documents are so on are sources that are to be contacted in the process of policy making to enhance good government.

Government needs information about the needs of the people in the area of education, social amenities, health, food and housing amongst some other ones. Government needs to borrow from experiences of other developed nations of the world in order to perform well and also consult documented knowledge of professionals in various fields of life so as to identify, understand and profer solution to divers problems in various areas of public life.

Generally speaking information is needed on how to move the society forward. In order to be able to all this effectively the library comes to the rescue with its rich and varied documented knowledge about people, places, government subjects, experience and other things about life that the people can read and view depending on the format of the information resource and this will help in effective communication between the government and the governed and also in good policy formulation.

Conclusion

Effective communication of information reduce uncertainty in the recipient, dispel ignorance, increase the knowledge level enlighten and provide knowledge which in turn transform people's outlook by what they know. By dissemination of information which includes communicating news of various events, day-to-day educational activities, happenings in a community, which could be local, national or international helps to enlighten and educate the recipient on various issues as a result of the knowledge acquired, (Oyadonghan, 2010). The knowledge enhances understanding and gives good orientation which invariably generates the transformation of self and which in turn creates peace and tranquility within and between cultural groups (Eze, 1999). Information is important for the mental, material, cultural and political development of any society hence the the people in government should ensure they make the best use of information.

The place of library in governance is crucial considering the wealth of information available in Libraries, the federal tier of government in Nigeria appreciates this fact hence the establishment of National Libraries scattered around the thirty-six states of the federation including the federal capital territory, it now behoves policy makers and their key advisers to place premium on information input in the decision making process to improve performance in governance and administration.

As earlier on mentioned, library is an agent of information communication in any community where it is found and its place in governance is crucial considering the wealth of information on various aspects of public life in it. Government at various levels recognise this fact by establishing National, Public, Academic and School libraries to meet the information needs of various people in the society. Therefore, it now behoves society leaders, policy makers and their advisers to make judicious use of the library in the decision making process so as to improve performance in governance as a prerequisite to move their communities, states and nations forward.

References

- Aina, L.O. (2004). *Library and Information Science Text for Africa*. Ibadan: Third World Information Service Limited.
- Alexander Downer (2000). *Good Governance - Guiding principles for implementation*
Available at www.usaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/good_governance.pdf accessed on 28th June 2011.

- Black, J.S and Layman, L.W.** (2000). *Management: Meeting New Challenges*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Berghahl, B.** (1989). *IFLA's Programme Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World ALP: A proposal for the Future*. Stockholm: Swedish Library Association.
- Brophy, P.** (2005) *The Academic Library*. London: Facet Publishing
- Eze, S. P.** (1999). *Information and education in democracy*. A Seminar paper presented at the 1999 NLA Annual National Conference and AGM. At Port Harcourt River State, Nigeria
- Ifidon, S.E and Ifidon, E.I.** (2007) *New Directions in African Library Management*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Kanyengo Christine** (2006) *Managing Digital Information Resources in Africa: preserving the integrity of scholarship*. Paper Presented at the Conference on Bridging the North-South Divide in Scholarly Communication on Africa. Threats and Opportunities in the Digital era. Leiden, The Netherland 6–8 September 2006.
- Nwalo, K.I.N.** (2000). *Society, development and Libraries*. Ibadan: Centre for External Studies, University of Ibadan,
- Michael Gorman** (1997). *What is the future of cataloguing and cataloguers?* 63rd IFLA General Conference - Conference Programme and Proceedings - August 31- September 5, 1997., available at <http://archive.ifla.org/IV/ifla63/63gorm.htm>. Accessed on 24th June 2011
- Oyadonghan, J. C.** (2010). *Information Flow Patterns in Organizations: The Library in Focus*. available at <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/oyadonghan.htm>. Accessed on 5th March 2011
- Ranganathan, S.R.** (1963). *The Five Laws of Library Science*. Bombay: Asia Pub. House.
- Rubin, R.E.** (1998) *Foundations of Library and information Science*. New York: Neal Shuman Publishers.
- What is good governance? Available at www.unescap.org/huset/gg/governance.htm accessed on 28th June 2011.