

ACADEMIC LIBRARY AS A DECISIVE ROLE IN PEACE EDUCATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

The paper reviewed the role academic libraries play in peace-education and socio-economic growth in Nigeria. The inability to access and use the necessary information resources contained in the academic library often results in conflicts, antagonisms and a lack of peaceful coexistence which have always worked against individual and societal growth. The main aim of establishing an academic library is to provide library services to scholars, researchers, students, parents, academic institutions and the general public. The paper reviewed the academic library as a decisive role which providing access to research-based and filtered information that supports a long or short-term process of reforming societies and harmonizing conflict in the society via peace education initiatives. Through the review of scholarly literature, this paper showed the academic library as a metaphor for information provision that enhances peace-education and socioeconomic growth. It established that the academic libraries gather, store, organize and disseminate relevant, viable and necessary information that promotes and supports peace-education and socioeconomic growth. It was recommended among others that the Library management and the government authority should provide adequate funds for the smooth running of libraries as well as change the poor attitude and political willpower toward education and research.

Keywords: Academic Library, Peace education, Socio-economic growth

Introduction

The overall growth of the society largely depend on the degree of socio-economic growth and extent to which peace exist among the populace. The socioeconomic growth and peaceful coexistence of any society that desire to develop remain a goal to be pursued with all available resources and structure. In Nigeria, the achievement of a socioeconomic growth and peace education initiative are paramount to all a sundry. Regrettably, achieving peace and socio-economic growth have continue to elude the Nigerian nation, despite large disposal of human and natural resources with her shore. The fact remains that academic libraries are part of the society, hence serve as a gateway through which people seek, access and use information resources across discipline which provide supports for peace education and socioeconomic growth of Nigeria.

Literature have shown that there are community of libraries and each serves different categories of people and purposes, nevertheless, every single library renders the service of providing access to information resources to satisfy the information needs of the clients. Specifically, academic libraries are built and maintained by the parent institutions to provide academic supports to the students, curriculum, faculty members and research and development of the institution. It comprises of both physical building which houses collections of information resources and the digital resources where collections and retrieval of information resources are done digitally. The fact remains that academic libraries are part of the community gateway through which the community seek, access and use information resources to satisfy their various information needs (Umeji&Chukwuji 2018; Anyim 2021).

Academic libraries have always been a major contributor to the human capacity building

and as such, they ought to play significance in promoting peace-education and economic development in the society. Evidence have shown that the lack or inadequate flow of information has worked against peace-education principles and prevented economic growth. Unfortunately, most individuals, organizations, governmental and non-governmental agencies have fail to comprehend the fact that academic libraries perform vital role as information portal that support the societal peace-education and economic growth.

According to Corkalo (2021), peace education could be defined as an interdisciplinary area of education whose goal is institutionalized and non-institutionalized teaching about peace and for peace. Peace education involves the strategic concepts of education and peace. Firstly, the concept of education involves the act of logically established transmission of knowledge and talents. It also encompasses the transmission of certain acceptable values, customs and norms of the society, whereas, the concept of peace involve the state of societal harmony, freedom, justice and absence of hostility, acrimony, violence and the presence of friendship relationship.

The need for peace education cannot be overemphasized which has become necessary instrument for development and the threat to peace have led to poor socioeconomic growth. It helps the people to acquire skills for nonviolent conflict resolution and reinforcing skills for active and responsible activities in the society. Libraries through peace education programmes offers access to information resources to users on peace, prevention of violence and social injustice. The process may occur formally through academic activities in the library and or within the community and in the wider society. Study by Gisesa (2008) revealed that conflicts are based on deficiency of information, that cases of misinformation

enhance disparity in opinions and social differences which may heighten conflicts. The library is in a better position to educate people in the community both formally and informally towards promotion of peace coexistence and socio-economic growth.

Socio-economic growth is considered the hub of societal development, but its achievement cannot be attained without a viable peace education programme and access to relevant information that provide succor to the ever-presence internal and external conflicts. The increase in violent conflicts and lack of peace among the ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria have contributed to poor human capital building and consequently poor socio-economic growth in Nigeria. According to Klarin (2018), the overall development of humanity over the last decades has led to the increasingly and unfavourable changes, conflicts, wars, political and socio-economic instability, negative struggle and disagreements which deters socioeconomic growth. Despite that, education prepares a man for socio-economic well-being by providing him the opportunity to acquire the needed knowledge and skills. It also provides man the opportunity to accommodate the individual differences in behaviours, attitudes, thinking, cultures, beliefs and value system thereby imparting on him the dire need of socialization.

The library is considered as an important part of socio-economic growth in Nigeria. The library provides the educational materials which helps in the construction and reconstruction of individual mind towards socio-economic growth. It can be rightly be argued that the development of individual minds in turn yield to the socio-economic growth of the society. According to Umeji and Chukwuji (2018), libraries will help to drive and teach peace education in their various communities by providing information/knowledge resources on peace

and conflict both directly and indirectly. When this is done a great deal would have been achieved overtime having a broad minded and enlightened individual who now have better thinking and reasoning ability, who will uphold national identity rather than ethnic identity (indigeneship) which our leaders prefers.

Several determinants and variables can influence the peace and socio-economic growth of any nation. This is because the socio-economic theories/determinants involves several factors that are often outside the main stream of economics discipline. It can therefore be argued that library, peace education and other ecological and environmental factors can contribute positively or negatively to peace and the socio-economic growth or otherwise in Nigeria. Based on this premise, it is the concern of this paper to attempt identifying and discussing various logical impacts of academic library on peace education and promoting socio-economic growth in Nigeria. The paper also did an ephemeral review of literature on academic library, peace education, socio-economic growth, then discussed the challenges facing academic libraries in Nigeria.

Socio-economic Growth

Socio-economic often refers to as social economics and primarily concerned with interplay between social process and economic activity within the society. It denotes how social and economic factors affect the economy and the people. It may attempt to explain the reason a given social setting or status behave within the society which include activities and wealth. According to Tarver (2021), social economics is a branch of economics and a social science that focuses on the relationship between social behavior and economics. Bodley (1999) maintained that socio-economic growth is an elite directed process that concentrates

social power in direct proportion to increases in culture scale.

Socio-economic is therefore the process of social and economic development in a society. It is measured with indicators which include education, Sustainable Development Indexes (SDI), life expectancy, literacy, GDP and levels of employment etc (Agricultural and Environmental Data Archive, 2022). These indicators also take cognizance of changes in less-tangible factors such as freedom of association, personal safety, personal dignity and freedom from fear of physical harm as well as the extent of participation in civil society.

In essence, socioeconomic growth hardly thrive in a mist of social vices and criminality such as; kidnapping, wars, violence, armed robbery, tribalism, terrorist attacks, human trafficking, rapping, unhealthy environment, non –democratic governance and assassinations. Studies have shown the most of these social vices thrive in Nigeria. Also, Nigeria is engaged in wanton destruction of property and lives of innocent and helpless people by Boko Haram group etc without check (Asamonye, Osuagwu&Kalu, 2014)

Over the years, Nigeria has passed (and still passing) through one crises or another, prominent among them is the pogrom and civil war that took place between late 1960s and early 1970, thereafter, there has been a reoccurring incident of political thuggery, election and post-election crises that affected the entire nation. For instance, the Boko Haram and Banditry groups in the North, Kidnapping and Niger Delta Militancy in the South, Political agitation, insecurity and Armed robbery syndrome in the East and West regions of Nigeria. All these are clear indicator of the general insecurity in Nigeria.

Previous studies have revealed the libraries have socio-economic impact and play a role in community building. It contribute to economic

development by supporting early literacy and school readiness. The libraries also encourage workforce participation by providing employment information and ICT skills. Supporting the research activities by providing access to information resources for the researchers. They foster social and community cohesion, identity and diversity by enhancing healthy coexistence and well-being. It also foster cultural enrichment by developing confidence in individuals and societies. The academic libraries stimulate imagination and creativity in individuals (Aabe, 2011; Sawyer, 1996; South Ontario Library Service, 2007; Debono 2009).

Factors of Socio-economic growth

Socio-economic growth is seen as the social and economic developmental process within a given society. In fact, some factors are used to ascertain the extent of socio-economic growth in a given society. These factors include:

- Occupation
- Education
- Income
- Wealth
- Living environment (Where someone lives)

Peace Education

Peace is an important ingredient that keeps the society on the wheels of progress. Peace is seen as freedom from fear of physical, psychological and emotional harm, whereas education involves the deliberate transformation of a man and acquisition of skills and knowledge through the process of teaching and learning. According to Education Encyclopedia (2021), the understanding of the concept of peace has changed throughout history, and so has its role and importance in the educational system from the very beginnings of the institutionalized socialization of children. Peace education is a values-oriented field that aims at cultivating in learners the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and

behaviors upon which a culture of peace is predicated (UNESCO, 1995).

UNICEF (2011) defined peace education as the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. This approach conforms to the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework of Action which calls for the promotion of an education that helps children and young people to acquire skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict as well as social and ethical values.

The act of peace education teaches about contemporary social, political, economic, ecological, and ethical problems, discovering the root causes of each conflict and creating nonviolent social strategies to manage the multiple manifestations of violence. Educators contend that schooling typically emphasizes the mind, intellect and knowledge over compassion and empathy, thereby exacerbating an existing dichotomy between mind-body, subject-object, rationality, emotionality and science-art (Kester, 2010). Through peace education one can gain insight, experience which help to develop attitudes, skills and behaviour to live in oneness with each other by way of nurturing the value of non-violent attitude to issues, love, trustworthiness, and respect for one another.

When discussing the evolution of peace education, however, there have been a few important points in history that defined its aims and actions. Therefore, peace education could be defined as an interdisciplinary area of education whose goal is institutionalized and non-institutionalized teaching about peace and for peace. Peace education aims to help

students acquire skills for nonviolent conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of the values of peace (Corkalo, 2021).

According to Gumut (2006), education for peace is in two forms, the formal and informal.

1. **Formal Peace Education:** This type involves the practice of formal education/school system with laydown curriculums and programmes. Through this form of education, we get the knowledge on (Ourselves and others, Inequality rich and poor, our environment and the World tomorrow), Attitude on (Human dignity, Curiosity and appreciation of others culture, Empathy, Justice and fairness) and Skills (enquiry, Communication skills and tools, Grasping concepts, Critical thinking and Political skills, negotiation) (Gumut, 2006).
2. **Informal Peace Education:** This is another form of peace education which is done through the processes of socialization and initiation. It is done within the family, peer groups and community spheres. According to Gumut (2006), much peace education takes place in informal settings where people gather for work or leisure. This is done through socialization and initiation process within the community and the families just as it is in the formal sector-school, this one primarily addresses attitudes and aims to have a direct impact on individual's personal behavior. Peace education here requires a more relaxed atmosphere, a more open and welcoming setting that encourages people to engage in the important but tasking issue and reflecting on their very own behavior, attitude and ultimately working out better alternatives for the future. It has the capacity to make people become aware of their bias and

prejudice and of course that of the society too (Gumut, 2006)

On the other hand, the growing literature on peace education reflects a dynamic field. Harris (2004) divided peace education into five categories: international education, development education, environmental education, human rights education, and conflict resolution education. Peace education are deliverable in quite a number of ways. It can come in the form of workshops, talk shows, road shows seminars, conferences which libraries can organize. Also publishing of peace story books for children, designing, producing and distributing peace promoting posters, badges, caps, T-shirts, banners, billboards etc. Promoting peace education through mass media such as radio, television, newspapers and social media platforms, text messages etc. In fact, all agents of socializations, family, worship centers and schools are involved in peace education processes.

Goals of Peace Education

Peace education is set to achieve some certain goals which include among others:

1. **To respect all forms of life:** Peace education provides the opportunity for individual to have due regard for the wishes, opinions, feelings and rights of others and to accommodate the individual differences in behaviours, attitudes, thinking, cultures, beliefs, value system.
2. **Engage in social justice activities.** They also strive to help students appreciate inter-cultural diversity, learn the skill set for peaceful thereby imparting on him the dire need of socialization
3. **To teach students how to manage conflict without violence:** Reardon (1999) opined that the development of learning that will enable humankind to renounce the institution of war and replace it...with the norms of a peaceful society (as

articulated in) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains a core of the peace education task

The peace education employs proactive approach unlike conflict resolution method. The proactive approach aims at preventing a conflict in advance by educating individuals, groups, and the society the need for peaceful co-existence base on equity, non-violence approach to issues, social justice, respect for individual opinion and expression, while conflict resolution employs the reactive or retroactive approach, for the fact that conflict resolution processes usually arise after crises have already occurred.

The inevitability of conflict in a society is certain. It is a part of life. It is neither good nor bad in nature. The evidence of good and bad nature of conflict could be present simultaneously in a society, consequently, it exposes the inequality, the differences in needs and interest that exist in the society. The negative side of conflict occurs when the approach to the conflict is aggressive and confrontational vice versa. However, it is possible to adopt a proactive approach to resolve the difference to get a positive result by the use of peace education approach.

There is a correlation between peace and socio-economic growth. A nation where there is peace and democracy, there will be both harmonious co-existence and economic growth via adequate financial distribution and allocation to various institutions. Accordingly, there will be an improved human capacity building that can transient to higher income per capital and finally to a viable socioeconomic growth.

On the other hand, peace education and the library complements each other in the society. Studies have shown that the role of peace education is not complete without a functional library. According to Umeji and Chukwuji (2018), libraries provide the needed

information/knowledge carrying materials, known as information materials or resources, which comes in different formats and ranges from books to audio/visual materials and lately e-resources. The library of all ages and types (national, public, academic, special, school and private) have been in the business of acquiring, processing, preserving and disseminating these recorded human knowledge from inception of human civilization to date.

Academic Library

Academic libraries are owned by a higher education institutions which serve the purpose of supporting the students and university faculty members' research as well as the institution's curriculum. An academic library could be a physical building that contains information resources or the digital/virtual library collections. It includes college, polytechnic and university libraries. The major objective of academic library is to provide support to its patrons by giving access to learning and teaching materials irrespective of the level (Oyegunle 2013).

The academic library helps to drive and teach the intricacies of socio-economic growth by providing access to related information/knowledge resources. When this is done a great deal would have been achieved overtime having a broad minded and progressive individual who now have better thinking and intellectual ability. These progressive individuals can now comprehend and resist the urge, inducements and instigations to start violence, rather know how to harness the available resources for socioeconomic well-being (Adegbija, 2018).

Academic libraries also provide a range of services for leisure time activities, personal cultivation and development of personal and skills. In addition, academic libraries have impact and value by being a physical place for research, providing current awareness

services, a researchers' meeting room, and a place for studying and contemplation. They also provide a range of services for research, curriculum support, leisure time activities, individual capacity building and development of personal skills.

Other types of library includes:

- **Special library:** This type of library is built to serve a particular group of people such as Law firm, Medical library and other professional bodies/associations.
- **Private library:** This is an individual-owned collections of library materials. It is usually for private/family use.
- **Public library:** A library built, funded and maintained with public fund that is accessible to the public and operated by the civil servants.
- **National library:** A library specifically built for the nation at large. It has the duty of collecting and preserving the literature of the nation within and outside the country

Roles of Academic Libraries in Peace Education and Socioeconomic Growth

Academic libraries decide what information they should disseminate to individuals, groups and the society. This is a reflection of the fact that libraries acquire resources based on their collection policy. They also organize, store, manage, and disseminate information to the users. The library role to peace education and socio-economic growth include:

A. Peace Education

The role libraries play in the development of the peace education is quite huge and crystal clear and these include thus:

Media or resource centre: Academic library serves as the media or resource center to the very heart of the educational enterprise and also functions as the educational central learning laboratory (Dike, Ngwuchukwu, & Anyim, 2020).

Facilitate planning and learning programmes:

Libraries provide educators with access to relevant curriculum information and professional development materials within and outside the educational system and opportunities to cooperatively plan, implement and evaluate learning progress which integrates information resources and technologies.

Support teaching and learning programmes:

Anyim (2016) provided a clear picture of the roles of the academic library in the higher institution and states that university library is an intellectual resource center of the university that supports teaching, learning, and research for enhancement of knowledge frontier of students, teaching and non-teaching staff of the university. The Library helps the education sector in Nigeria in the training of professionals in different fields through its provision of information materials required for the academic program of the institution, provision of research information materials required for the academic programs, dissemination of the existing and new information, provision of adequate security for accessible information materials and provision of resources and research support for students and faculty (Anyim, 2020).

Provide a gateway to educative information:

According to Kalu (2020), Libraries provide educative information through which useful and educative information can get to every segment of the society. For instance, In Sri Lanka, the e-Academic library NenasalaProgramme is a government-run initiative to increase digital literacy and access to technology among the nation's poorest residents living in remote rural areas. The Nenasalas offer instruction in basic computer skills, guidance on accessing information through the Internet, and a wide variety of locally relevant knowledge (Kalu, 2021)

B. Socio-economic Growth

In every modern society, libraries all together help to circulate needed information resources/services to the respective sectors of the economy leading to the growth and development of the nation. The role of academic library in socio-economic growth are numerous and includes:

Helps to improve knowledge and skills: Sobalaje and Ogunmodede (2015), observe that without libraries, no meaningful educational effort can be carried out, as library services improve knowledge and skills for positive productivity and a tool for economic revival. The pivotal role played by libraries is one of the factors which help in the development of a society.

Provides support for human resources development: The library contributes to socio-economic development by supporting educational advancements, human resource development, business entrepreneurship, technological innovations, and social skills. This marks a major shift in the perception of libraries as centers for mere passive and recreational reading, to active research institutions and socio-economic development agents (Anyim, 2021).

Enhance research and development to improve economic activities: The libraries champion the development of the nation by enhancing the cause of education and academic research. The degree through which nation embark on research and development determines the standard of life and socio-economic growth attainable of such a nation. Arguably, a nation advances in relation to its achievement

in research and development programmes which transients to socio-economic growth. The library therefore is crucial for the intellectual and scientific advancement and elevation of the people and the society. It is an indispensable element of the absolute well-being of the citizens and that of the nation at large (Orji &Maekae, 2013).

Challenges academic library in promoting peace education and socio-economic growth in Nigeria

In Nigeria today, libraries are face with several issues that are preventing them from providing efficient and effective services to the people. These include among others:

- **Poor conditions of service:** Poor conditions of service to the librarians working in academic library have led to the shortage of personnel in the profession. Consequently, young librarians usually prefer employment in a more-paying establishments for the reasons of better salary, frequent promotion and study leave with pay which is not obtainable in most libraries setting. (Okafor, 2020).
- **High illiteracy level:** Studies have shown that countries with high literacy rates have very low rate of the kind of tolerable and avoidable crisis. According to Achitabwino (2007) the greatest barrier to information provision in Malawi by libraries for the promotion of democracy and socio-economic issues is high illiteracy rate, noting that most of the information is in print and over half of the population of Malawians cannot read and write, and that affects their national development. This is also applicable to Nigeria and most other African states. According to UNESCO, 65 million

Nigerians are illiterate and 10.5 million children of school age are out of school. Arguably, a high illiteracy rate in the country, getting people to read or comprehend concepts, tolerate others, communicate effectively, critically analyze information will affect peace education initiatives and socioeconomic growth (Achitabwino, 2007).

- **Poor funding:** Generally, Nigeria's education system have been under funded for rather a long time. The successive government have failed to implement and improve on a number of policies designed to increase educational funding. For instance, the policy to allocate the minimum 26% budgetary allocation of the national budget to education as advised by UNESCO, in addition to the National University Commission (NUC) policy that 10% of every universities budget should be allocated to the university library, but then again these policies are not done.
- **The issue of power supply:** Power supply in Nigeria and other developing countries of the world remain a nightmare. It is estimated that over 42 percent of Nigerians do not have access to on-grid electricity. Accordingly, Nigeria loses over \$26bn annually (equivalent of two percent of its gross domestic product due to lack of reliable electricity (Word Bank Report, 2021). The issue of power supply also hinders the libraries from providing adequate services to the people. For instance, most modern libraries are virtual/digital in nature and they require uninterrupted power supply, unfortunately virtual libraries cannot function effectively in Nigeria considering the issue of power supply.

- **Poor reading culture:** Several issues such as lack of functional libraries in schools, defective educational system, etc are responsible for poor reading culture in especially Nigeria. According to Istifanu (2021), the negative effect of a poor reading culture is enormous. Poor reading culture has negative effects on the society and also the individual. At the societal level, it creates knowledge gap and retards development. A society with a poor reading culture is bound to have leadership crisis because of a dearth of knowledgeable leaders. Akinola (2021), lack of government policies and ability to understand processes of formulating policies and implementations is a major challenge in our society. At the individual level, poor reading culture impedes personal development and success in life.
- **Outdate/irrelevant information library materials:** According to Muiz (2018), the library is expected to be a place of up-to-date resource. From daily newspapers to weekly journals, bulletins, contemporary textbooks and everything in-between. The reverse is the case in Nigeria libraries, the pitiable state of the books and other library information resources are without new or current materials. In addition, the failure of library authorities in implementing noble policies have affects the libraries provisions of current and relevant information materials that would promote peace education and socio-economic growth.
- **Inadequately trained personnel in librarianship:** Training of library personnel will help them cope with the 21st-century library challenges;

enhance them to become better librarians as well as give them opportunity on how to understand and apply the policies guiding the library. Obviously, if adequate training is given to the library personnel, the impact on their performance and overall productivity of the library will be immense (Bamidele, Omeluzo, & Imam, 2013).

- **Poor infrastructural base:** An added problem is that of existing infrastructural facilities in most academic libraries. For instance, no good internet access, most academic libraries are operating on converted building structure not originally designed for library; there are rather too old reference materials, no rooms for serious readers especially those carrying out research works and usually no separate rooms for music library and audio-visual materials, no room for facility such as cafeteria within the library that could add as a relaxation centre to the library users.

Nevertheless, there has been a tremendous improvement in service provision within Nigerian academic libraries in recent time. For instance, there is no area of library operations to which the ICT has not been applied with remarkable positive impact, but the impacts are still too microscopic to be observed (Abubakar 2011).

Conclusion

An academic library is a centre of knowledge where information are accessed and used to satisfy various information needs of the clients. It has the potential for being a vital point for research and creation activities and provides succor for researchers, students, teachers and the general public. Base on this, the paper observed that academic libraries play substantive role in equalizing the

possibilities of supporting the attainment of high degree of peace education and socio-economic growth of a nation via providing an avenue where education, culture, political, entertainment and business spheres of life meet.

Recommendations

The paper recommended the following:

1. The management of academic libraries should improve on the content and scope of their resources by acquiring relevant peace and socio-economic promoting materials for the patrons and this will definitely affects the libraries efforts in upholding the much needed peace education and socioeconomic growth.
2. Library management and government authorities should fund academic libraries for smooth running of their activities.
3. The authority must encourage the notion of research and development via changing the poor attitude and political will-power toward education and research.
4. Academic libraries should sensitize their immediately environment through cooperate social responsivity programs.
5. Government should introduce peace education and coexistence in school curriculum both at the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

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