

**INTRODUCTION OF FEE-BASED SHORT TRAINING COURSES FOR SUBSCRIPTION SUSTENANCE FOR NEW LIBRARY OPERATIONS IN THE PROPOSED CCMAS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

The paper examines the introduction of fee based short training courses as a way of sustaining the newly introduced library operations in the core curriculum minimum academic standard for university education in Nigeria. The newly introduced library operations are heavily subscribed in foreign currency and considering Nigeria exchange rates, there is need to think outside the box to device strategies to enable the library sustain the annual payment for the subscription. The paper is guided by four objectives, a conceptual clarification highlighting the major concepts in the paper, the concept of fee base services in the library, an overview of the newly introduced library operations in the CCMAS, ways in which libraries can sustain the subscription to the newly introduced library operations for advanced hands-on training of undergraduates for employability. This paper identified the challenges of funds to sustain the heavy subscription involved, and that caution needs to be taken to sustain the subscription and avoid putting a stop to the library operations proposed in the CCMAS. Introducing short courses for a fee will also help generate revenue which will be used to avert the challenges of funding for RDA and WorldCat subscriptions as well as the class web and other operations introduced in the CCMAS and also address a few challenges in the introduction of fee-based services, as the overall benefits of this concept are laudable.

**Introduction**

Librarians often lack prior training in entrepreneurship which perhaps is attributed to the fact that libraries have a culture of free service delivery to their users; the idea behind nonprofit-making organizations has killed the entrepreneurship skill in librarians. The curriculum in most

of the library schools fail to incorporate entrepreneurial education in the library schools. This would have in a way brought out the skills of most of the library entrepreneurs, as education and teaching facilitate a lot on the minds of the student, the librarian depend so much on scholarly education to obtain certificates and get employed were as business opportunities within the profession are taken away by others, especially by the computer scientist. This has consequently laid to a business model and potential financial gain losing out of the profession.

However, the arrival of the information age where information provided is an increasingly important commercial activity coupled with new technological Development, bringing together hitherto disparate activities in information supply,(Norris, 2007) has led to a change in the role of libraries and librarians have to deal with the information technology-born generation who have resulted in seeking information on the internet and social media. This is further worsened by new entrants into the field of information management thereby leading to an unemployment crisis.

However, libraries around the globe have introduced fee-based courses for advanced training for both physical and online learning. For instance, the Library of Congress has trainings on the cataloguers desk and class web online, and American Library Association have the CORE-CE fundamental courses for beginning and advanced graduate same with the British Library these libraries have introduced the fee-based short course on their products to enable the monies generated from the training take care of the issues arising from the maintenance of the products.

The Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for universities in Nigeria was unveiled at the 60<sup>th</sup>-anniversary celebration of the National University Commission

on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, as the sole regulatory agency of the universities and other degree awarding institutions in Nigeria. The CCMAS is a newly proposed curriculum that has also introduced monetary and annual subscriptions for library operations to work with. From preliminary investigations, most subscriptions usually fail in the library due to lack of funds available for subscription. This paper is proposing “a stitch in time saves nine”. Looking at the subscription rates involved in introducing most of the features of the CCMAS as outlined below.

The Newly proposed CCMAS encapsulates the advanced library operations. Some of the unique features of the course are as follows:

1. Introducing students to the use of Resource Description and Access (RDA) for description of resources in the contemporary library and information practice rather than continued use of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR), which till today is the practice in Nigerian library schools. The libraries in developed countries and even South Africa no longer use AACR but RDA, which the Western world embraced since 2010.
2. The use of metadata standard sets like the Dublin Core Metadata Standard Elements and Minnesota Metadata Guidelines for a description of online and electronic resources; the proposed CCMAS includes the application of computers to cataloging with emphasis on MARC, Z39.50, and other related online formats and protocols to keep pace with global standards for information sharing and exchange; classifying with online facilities like Worldcat, LC Online Catalogue, and others to key into global standards and protocols for systems interoperability.

The above-listed features and objectives expected from the CCMAS sound beautiful but have so many challenges for the Nigerian society. Most of the libraries that can afford the

subscription rates of this library operations are few as funding is a problem for the Nigerian library. Some academic libraries that can afford it might find it difficult to sustain the subscription due to the fluctuation of the dollar exchange rate.

However, to prepare for the adoption of the new curriculum, libraries need to prepare to render services that can impact practical skills to students after graduation, to enhance the theoretical aspect of what they have learned in school. The introduction of a short course for practical skills and online training to the newly introduced library operation will not only impact skills but also generate money for the library to sustain the subscription rate the library might incur, in a way creating sustainability and ensuring the availability of the operation for students to learn and libraries can also use the operations to work to be in line with the global community. As fee-based as it may look this proposal of introducing short courses on the newly introduced library operations by the CCMAS will help the library move inline with the global standard and also sustain the subscription rates which are usually the problem for the collapse of most monetary subscription rates introduced in the development of libraries in Nigeria. Despite the beautiful picture earlier painted about information, the 21st century libraries still find it to a large extent, difficult to meet up with the information needs of its modern clients. To this end, the study will focus on library fee-based services on the introduction of the newly proposed library operation in the CCMAS for sustenance of subscription rates.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify fee-based services for graduates student employability.
2. To find out the newly proposed courses for LIS students in CCMAS.

3. To ascertain ways of sustaining subscription of library operation.
4. To identify challenges of sustaining fee-based for employability.
5. To identify strategies for sustaining fee-based services for employability.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Concept of Fee-Based Services for Graduate Students Employability**

In the opinion of Neal in Akidi and Chukwueke (2019), a successful library provides a range of Expensive resources that most individuals cannot afford and provide a well-established mechanism of information acquisition and dissemination that is accessible to most people. There are indeed different schools of thought concerning libraries charging fees for some library services. In this regard, Ekoja as cited in Akidi and Chukwueke (2019) points out that, those who are arguing in favor of fee-based services are gaining the upper hand in the debate because many compounding variables have made it expedient for libraries around the world to look outside their traditional sources of funding to raise additional funds to be able to sustain the level of services which hitherto, normal funding was able to take care of.

Fee-based libraryservices have become important because funding for library resources and infrastructure has remained very low thereby necessitating the need to argue by charging fees for certain services. Moreover,libraries need to be self-sustaining financially; hence the importance of fee-based services will now stand as a policy. In the same development, charging fees in the library helps to improve the standard of library service to users. Furthermore, value is usually added to any service that has a price tag, so fee-based services in a library are the

institution and among the community of users thereby increasing opportunities for improved usage. Okeke (2013) citing (Anyaku and Nwosu, 2010).

The major rationale why fee-based services are introduced is simply to expand and make readily available information needed by library clients. Namara (2010), sees fee-based services as a series of activities involved in ensuring that librarians continue to meet the needs of their customers and live the right value in return. Library and allied information centers are duty-bound to their clients and this duty can be effectively carried out only if sufficient financial resources are made available, and the only way to ensure this is through fee-based services.

#### **Areas of Fee-Based Training in the Academic Libraries**

The academic libraries are libraries that are designed to serve the needs of the parent organization they serve. They are libraries located in the tertiary institutions especially universities, Polytechnic, colleges of education. The libraries are established in the tertiary institution of higher learning and have a budget for funding the libraries through internally generated revenue and external funding like the TETFUND and other grants.

However, recently with the introduction of the global practice library operations introduced with heavy subscription has prone the introduction of the fee-based training as most of the services can't be rendered for a fee. The areas mapped for consideration are as follows:

- Technical sections workshop
- Webinars
- Short conferences
- Online trainings

- Modules for self training
- Mobile apps training
- E-resources trainings
- Download and customization of library softwares trainings

### **An Overview of the Newly proposed courses for LIS Students in CCMAS**

The CCMAS has been developed to train graduates with theoretical and practical knowledge of Library and Information Science, which is the area concerned with the acquisition, processing, preserving, and dissemination of needed items of information and information itself. It is an improvement on the previous BMAS because it is intended to produce graduates that have the requisite knowledge, skills, competencies, and capacities to respond to the dynamic library and information needs of modern-day users. It is tailored towards the production of graduates who can go beyond being passive organizers of other people's knowledge to being ICT competent and active generators of knowledge such as institutional repositories, editing of Wikipedia entries, and other open access resources, thus contributing to the universal availability of information. Graduates of library and information science can compete with their peers anywhere in the world.

The philosophy of the Programme is to train graduates with the requisite skills and competencies to function in the 21st-century library and information environment. Graduates of the program should be capable of getting libraries and information centers to communicate in space and time to be able to respond to the dynamic information needs of society.

The objectives of the Programme are to:

1. Produce Library and Information professionals for all types of libraries, information, and documentation centers;
2. Equip the graduates of the program with relevant theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and techniques to develop and enhance their job performance;
3. Encourage the spirit of inquiry and creativity among the Library and Information professionals so that they are capable of understanding the emerging concepts of the role of information in a complex multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and largely non-literate society like Nigeria;
4. Provide prospective Library and Information professionals with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments and to make them adaptable to any changing situation; and
5. Provide an understanding of the role of the new communication technology (such as the Internet) in the handling of information.

The newly propose CCMAS also encapsulates the advanced library operations. Some of the unique features of the course are as follows:

Introducing students to the use of Resource Description and Access (RDA) for a description of resources in the contemporary library and information practice rather than continued use of Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR), which till today is the practice in Nigerian library schools. The libraries in developed countries and even South Africa no longer use AACR but RDA, which the Western world embraced since 2010;

The use of metadata standard sets like the Dublin Core Metadata Standard Elements and Minnesota Metadata Guidelines for a description of online and electronic resources;



Some objectives of the proposed CCMAS are the application of computers to cataloging with emphasis on MARC, Z39.50, and other related online formats and protocols to keep pace with global standards for information sharing and exchange; classifying with online facilities like Worldcat, LC Online Catalogue, and others to key into global standards and protocols for systems interoperability; and emphasis on practical infopreneurship for entrepreneurial skills acquisition in Library and Information Science.

### **Ways of Sustaining Subscription of Library Operation**

The above-listed programs which are newly introduced to the CCMAS have a huge subscription tag attached to them, and most of the subscription comes in foreign currency, due to the dwindling economy of our country academic libraries can normalize the fee-based library services in the library to continue the subscription without stopping on the way for lack of funds. This proposal is supported by the ascertain by Idhalama and Krubu (2018) who view another growing problem with fee-based services in libraries as the upcoming changes in the information profession. Believably, the advent of computers with their wide applications to information storage and retrieval brought a profound change to librarianship. To keep abreast with the changes

Academic libraries can introduce short courses in areas of automation using open source software, intends of download and customization of the software like Koha, Dspace, greenstone, etc

Secondly, the short courses can also focus on the use of RDA and the changes as well as the application and the difference with AACR. Based on the huge amount of money involved in

subscribing to RDA the short advanced course for both practical training of undergraduate and postgraduate students of the library and information science can generate monies and these monies can be used to fund the subscription and sustain it.

Another point is the subscription to the world catalogue, LC online which is the classification web, and the cataloguers' desk, all require a lot of millions of naira, libraries which could subscribe as a requirement for NUC requirement might end up abandoning it on the way, therefore short courses can also be introduced in these areas in order to generate monies to sustain the subscription approximately the class web cost \$375 for single user which is the least subscription, While the cataloguers' desk cost \$525 for single user and the least on the subscription list, joining the Worldcat also requires some subscription which is not free and the cost is huge, these fees are usually why most libraries have to stop on the way when the economy or budget becomes very tight. But with the introduction of the fee-based services covering these areas monies generated from the short course can also fund the subscription, that way there will be reasonable sustainability.

**Grants:** Libraries can as well seek grants from other organizations and the federal government, to enable them to continue with subscriptions.

**Donations:** Some persons are moved by supporting a good course if the project is result oriented, it can be philanthropists, alumni, private companies, and individuals. By showcasing the vision and mission of the project and its achievement in the long run people are moving to support the program to be able to sustain it.

### **Challenges of Sustaining Fee-based Services for Enhanced Employability of Librarians**

The dwindling finances or financial crisis all over the world have intimately led to the inability of libraries of anytype to sustain their services and even institute a new programme like e-current awareness services, e-SDI services, mobile phone services, and even common rover services in their library. On this note, Nwofor (2009) reported that librarians have not been prepared to make the economics of generating these needed funds from library services to support the dwindling library finances. Some schools of thought are afraid of university management's decision against it, while others remained indifferent to the possibility of its success.

Furthermore, another growing problem with fee-based services in libraries is the upcoming changes in the information profession. Believably, the advent of computers with their wide applications to information storage and retrieval brought a profound change to librarianship. It has been noted that fee-based services in Nigerian academic libraries have not gone beyond user Registration fees, levying charges for lost or over-due books, and photocopy charges (Obodoeze, 2007). Ifidon (2005) further reported that even the existing fee-based library and information services in Nigeria are not well and adequately managed. The author stated further that library staff offers fee-based services just as routinely as any other ordinary library services, not maintaining the records of the transactions in such a way as to assist management in their decision-making process. Pitiably, where fees are charged, there is little or no planning element to make it contribute meaningfully to library development.

There are quite several issues that accompany the introduction of fee-based services in libraries. For instance, Ifidon (2005) cited Veazi who analyzed the American Library Association (1967) standard which stipulates that the rights of the individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, nationality or social and political views. Veazi further argued that charges affect use in most cases, that some of the clients would drop the service altogether while others would reduce the use they make of them.

In a country like Nigeria where ICTs are slowly but surely and steadily gaining acceptance, it may be a herculean task to introduce fee-based services in a library and expect effective patronage. Sequel to this, Anyaoku (2012) argued that looking at the situation of Nigeria, it will be difficult to convince users to pay for services not considered very useful due to the availability of the internet which has contributed to the existence of numerous information houses, many people have gone into the job of information provision for instance, cybercafés. Anyaoku however concluded by saying that the library is therefore facing strict competition in wooing users. This implies that if fees are introduced the possibility of losing the already gained is glaring but as a matter of urgency fees need to be introduced but in certain areas that doesn't affects the users, but for those who come in for research findings, grant writings and self training for skill acquisition and further learning.

### **Strategies for Sustaining Fee-Based Services for Enhanced Employability of Librarians**

The challenges of introducing fee based services in the library especially for academic libraries is the ideal behind losing users who are students and struggling to feed ask to pay for a reading environment, but this paper has proposed areas where fee based services can be introduced to avoid losing the already gained users of the library for lack of money, these who

want to acquire skills, research on areas around the community and further some training in areas of the library operation for self confidence can also be charge a fee. Monies generated from the short courses training can be used for the subscription of the newly introduced library operation in the CCMAS.

Training can be both online, webinar, and physical training and some other services can be fee-based and the money channelled into the program, libraries can sponsor a proposal to management to make it an institution policy and also implement it at the management level. Sensitization and awareness creation for the newly introduced short courses for increased patronage.

## **CONCLUSION**

Fee-based library service is not a new concept to librarianship, but in Nigeria and other sister African countries very few libraries have practiced it; the trend is still at its infant / nascent stage. This paper examined the concept of fee-based services in libraries, and the situation of fee-based services in Nigeria but with caution to the newly introduced CCMAS and the challenges of funds to sustain the heavy subscription involved, caution needs to be taken to sustain the subscription and avoid putting a stop to the library operations proposed in the CCMAS. Introducing short courses for a fee will also help generate revenue which will be used to avert the challenges of funding for RDA and WorldCat subscriptions as well as the class web and other operations introduced in the CCMAS and also address a few challenges in the introduction of fee-based services, and the overall benefits of this concept are laudable. It must therefore be stated here that despite the few challenges highlighted, fee-based library services must never be undermined if the library institution is to be taken out of its current state of stagnation and

recession. African libraries especially those in Nigeria are known to be lagging in areas of funding, ICT facilities, and human resource development.

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