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Taiwo Adetoun Akinde

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ABSTRACT

This article expresses the pride of the nationally and internationally patronised and celebrated services and resources at the Kenneth Dike Library (KDL), University of Ibadan, the first university library in Nigeria. The work outlines the Library's history from inception to date, emphasising the rarity, age, uniqueness and the relevance of its contents in the face of modern and emerging information and communications technologies. The contents discussed include print and non-print materials (for instance, electronic resources and the institution's repository), artefacts, realia, pictures, drawings, processes, services, capacity, architecture, management and personnel deployed in the main and branch libraries of the University of Ibadan Library system. The author proffers reasons why the KDL is perceived the best among other university libraries in Nigeria and highlighted ten recent "firsts" recorded by the Library which have further enhanced its reputation as the first and the best. The work concludes with a call on the private sector and good spirited individuals to support the federal government of Nigeria and the University of Ibadan towards achieving all the laudable goals of the KDL for now and the future.

Keywords: Local Content, Information Management, Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Nigerian University Libraries

INTRODUCTION

The University of Ibadan Library is the first university library to be established in Nigeria. It was established under the British colonial administration in 1948 at the inception of the University to provide, manage, and disseminate quality information resources to support the teaching, learning, research and community development activities of the University. The Library operated in a prefabricated wooden building at the Eleyele site of the University until 1954 when it moved with the University to its permanent site at Oyo Road, Ibadan. The Library was officially commissioned on November 17, 1954 (Akinde, Oseghale, & Okoroma, 2018).

As the University grows in population and in the diversity of its courses, Faculty Deans and Department Heads established libraries which they ran outside the control of the main library. By the resolution of the University Senate in 1974, however, these faculty libraries and departmental reading rooms came under the jurisdiction of the main library in order to ensure a

coordinated development of all library resources and services in the University and to effectively meet the users' information needs while ensuring easy, speedy and timely information retrieval (Odularu, 2000).

Presently, there are 27 faculty and departmental libraries. Chief among them is the E. Latunde Oladeku Medical Library, situated at the University College Hospital (UCH) in Ibadan. Notwithstanding, the acquisition, management and sometimes, the cataloguing of resources and the recruitment and deployment of personnel to these branch libraries are done centrally at the main library where the Office of the University Librarian (and most of the management staff) is located. The four-storeyed main library was named Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) in honour of the first indigenous Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Kenneth Onwuka Dike, in 1988 (as engraved on the Library building). The photographs of the KDL at the beginning and now as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.



Figure 1. The Library in the beginning (at Eleyele)



Figure 2. The KDL now

THE KENNETH DIKE LIBRARY CONTENT: THE STORY OF AGE AND UNIQUENESS

The KDL is the oldest university library in the country. It was fortunate in acquiring at its inception a number of substantial book collections, private papers and manuscripts. These include the following collections: the 10,000 volume Undergraduate Collection at the Higher College Library, Yaba; the Henry Carr Collection of approximately 18,000 volumes mainly in arts, law, and sciences; the F. Montague Dyke Collection of 10,000 books, journals, pamphlets and reprints; the Leeds Clergy Library of 1,000 volumes; the Sir Charles Orr Memorial Library of 250 volumes on Nigerian history; Sir Herbert Macaulay Library; Cowan and Cocking Collections and Evelyn Martin Libraries; the C.M.S Yoruba Mission Library; the miscellaneous collection of 9,000 volumes given by the British Council and the American Studies Collection; the Library of Madam Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti; original Arabic manuscripts of local provenance collected from several private libraries in West Africa; and more than 10,000 maps on Africa, West Africa and Nigeria (The University College, Ibadan, 1955).

The Library's Africana Collections showcase works published by Africans, Nigerians and/or works written by foreigners about Africa, Nigeria and the University of Ibadan staff publications. To enhance access and retrieval of its increasing resource, the Nigeriana Sub-

collection was moved, of recent, from the Africana Collections in the Reference Section and was made to operate as an independent unit. Apart from being made a selective depository of the Carnegie Institute of Washington which donated 131 volumes of its publication, the Library was the legal depository for all Nigerian publications until 1970. Consequently, under the Publication Ordinance of 1950, it received two copies of every work published in Nigeria and it continues to receive to date, through the National Library of Nigeria, a complimentary copy of all publications produced in the country (Akinde, Oseghale and Okoroma, 2018). Hence, the Publication Ordinance Section has been tagged, in-house, as “a library inside the Library.”

Federal, regional, state, local governments’ and intergovernmental publications (e.g., UN, OAU, ECOWAS, among others) can also be found in the Document Section of the Library. Local cultural artefacts, sculptures, art works and realias of great value are preserved and conserved for study and research purposes and are kept, for security reasons, in a section of the Office of the University Librarian. There are special and rare collections of art works, drawings of reputable artists, pictorials of events, buildings, national, local and the University dignitaries from the colonial era to present placed in strategic locations in the Library and at the Exhibition Area of the Reference Section (as in Figure 3).



Figure 3. Exhibition and the Reading Area of the Reference Section

The University of Ibadan Library system is one of the largest university libraries in West Africa with a collection estimated at well over one million volumes (Ekpenyong, 2005). The magnitude and speciality of this collection attracts students from all over the country. The users of

this great library include undergraduates, graduate students, academic and non-teaching staff, other members of the university community (e.g., UCH senior staff and alumni/alumnae), students and staff of other higher learning institutions in and outside the country who are specially introduced by their librarian and any researcher with serious reasons for using the library for study and reference. In all cases, claims of scholarship and research are always given the first consideration (Oladele, 2007).

As observed by Dow, Meringlo and St. Clair (1995) regarding academic libraries and confirmed by Akinde, Oseghale and Okoroma (2018) in KDL, graduate students are heavy users of the KDL resources that cover the core areas of their field and the theory of their discipline. However, the currency and speciality of materials will depend upon the subject and nature of the graduate degree. From the author's observations of consultations and use of the Library resources and services by students and researchers from universities in and out of Nigeria, it can be said that the Library stack unique and rare collections that can not be found in any other universities in Nigeria and that being the first university library in Nigeria, it sets a good, efficient and effective tradition of library services for other academic libraries to follow. Its age remains its advantage as observed.

The Library, which seats about 1,250 users in addition to staff offices and space for the collections (University of Ibadan, 2010), has a commercialised bindery for book repair and binding graduate students' dissertations and theses. The KDL opens to users by 8:00am to 9:00pm Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 2:00pm on Saturday, and 5:00pm to 9:00pm on Sunday all year, but remains closed on national holidays with notices given in advance. Registered users are permitted to borrow a predetermined number of books for certain numbers of days (depending on users' status) at the Circulation Desk of the Library during its operational hours (see Figure 4). The General Reading Room on the ground floor is open daily when the University is in session and all day long during examination period.

Worthy of note is the traditional drum which is always beaten by the Library Porters at intervals, and at least three times, to warn staff and users dispersed on the four floors, extension and basement of the imminent closure and to summon or draw their attention during emergencies. This cultural piece is as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 4. Circulation Desk



Figure 5. The KDL Call Drum.

For emergencies and disaster management, fire extinguishers and buckets of sands are placed at strategic locations to arrest fire disaster. In addition, food and drink items are not allowed in the KDL to prevent insects and mice and the consequent hazards on the majorly paper-based library information resources. However, a commercialised Coffee Room was provided for light refreshments and entertainment for students, staff, and library visitors. It is regretful to note that the Coffee Room, which was sometimes privatised, is presently moribund. The cleaning of the Library and its environment is contracted out to the private sector while the clearing of grasses and trimming of its surrounding trees are handled by the University's Works and Maintenance Unit and Tree Management Committee. Ramp and elevator provide accessible movement in and around the KDL; though, the elevator is presently under maintenance. The Library has an electrical power generating plant installed for electricity back-up.

On personnel capacity, the KDL has about 30 academic staff with the minimum qualification of Masters in Library and Information Science (MLIS) or related field of study and more than 70 other staff (para-professional with a minimum of National Diploma in Library and Information Science and support staff with a minimum qualification of five credit passes including English and Mathematics in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination). This staff capacity has been found to be grossly inadequate and highly stretched because of the need to deploy staff to branch libraries to replace those who have retired or resigned from the services of the KDL in recent times. However, it is praiseworthy to note that the Library can boast of many of its academic staff who have successfully completed doctorate degrees from universities in and out of the country, recently.

THE KENNETH DIKE LIBRARY CONTENT: THE STORY OF RELEVANCY INSPITE OF AGE

To address the global paradigm shift from print resources to electronic-based information resources, the KDL has subscribed to a number of electronic journals, databases and databanks which users can access for free, with or without library-provided passwords while on campus and off campus via the library webpage on the University of Ibadan website or the publishers' websites. Furthermore, a task force was convened in the 2009/2010 academic session to automate library operations and especially, the card catalogue with the deployment of Virtua, an integrated web-based library management software, supplied by the VTLS Incorporated, the United States of America and later in 2015/2016 with an indigenous, proprietary software made for the KDL named UI-ALA by Mr. A. Babarinde, a Nigerian computer scientist. As soon as the new software is fully deployed, the KDL Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) will be hosted on the Internet to enable access to the bibliographic details of its resources, circulation and reference services from anywhere in the world. Presently, the OPAC is accessible to users within the Library (the OPAC is as shown in Figure 6 below).



Figure 6. The KDL OPAC

The Digitisation Chamber, another recent innovation which replaced the moribund Microfilm/Microfiche Unit, was created for the conversion of manuscripts and rare collections into machine-readable format to conserve and preserve African and/or Nigerian literary heritage, provide multiple electronic access to rare, fragile and/or aged, important and not-easy-to-replace print resources, and enhance the visibility of faculty research/intellectual output via the University of Ibadan Institutional Repository and the virtual library housed in the KDL. As the Repository is being populated with the University of Ibadan collective research works, faculty members are

enjoined to submit their research publications to the Library through their Department Heads in order not to be left behind. Furthermore, a computer laboratory (e-resources Unit) which housed 100 internet-ready computers, scanners and network printers has been provided for student and staff to search and retrieve literature and print at affordable prices. A view of one of the processes in the Digitisation Chamber and the Computer Laboratory are shown in Figures 7 and 8 below.



Figure 7. One of the processes in the KDL Digitisation Chamber



Figure 8. The Computer Laboratory (for e-resources search and retrieval)

In addition, reprographic services are provided via commercial photocopying and document delivery to prevent theft, mutilation of print materials and other library crimes perpetrated as a result of insufficient access and inadequate resources. However, the fair use policy of the Library informs users on the number of pages they are allowed to duplicate. The KDL also housed an e-classroom, an electronic learning facility with an electronic board, a multimedia projector and modern computers for interactive Library Staff Seminars and other hands-on IT trainings. The e-classroom could also be leased for postgraduate lectures and seminar/conferences organised by persons in and out of the University on approval and at a fee. The computers in the e-classroom were recently changed to modern PCs that combines the Central Processing Units (CPU) with the Monitors (the photograph of the Seminar Room/e-classroom before and now is as shown in Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 9. Seminar Room /e-classroom (Before)



Figure 10. Seminar Room /e-classroom (Now)

Moreover, Carrels (individual study rooms) are provided for senior staff, researchers and postgraduate students for private study on a first-come, first-served basis. For record and aesthetic purposes, Halls of Fame (for example, Figure 11) for past vice chancellors and university librarians were placed strategically on the walls by the flight of stairs to the first and second floors of the Library for general information, education and admiration. Furthermore, artificial flowers in beautiful vases, gold plated guides and solid glass doors grace the Library (see Figure 12).



Figure 11. Hall of Fame for the VCs



Figure 12. The Circulation Section Approach

THE KENNETH DIKE LIBRARY CONTENT: ON BEING THE FIRST AND THE BEST

The Kenneth Dike Library, apart from being the first university library in Nigeria, has indeed recorded some firsts in recent time, which are listed as follows:

1. The 24/7 library service, especially during examination periods, is the first of such in any Nigerian university library;
2. The recent publication of the University of Ibadan Journal of Library and Information Science by Emerald, a leading international publisher of repute. This is the first of its kind by a university library in Nigeria. There are plans to publish three issues in one volume annually. The Journal is presently in its third volume;
3. In-house trainings for the library senior staff to develop the capacity of its senior personnel towards better service ethics, delivery and feedback. Library Senior Staff Seasonal Training has been initiated by the reconvened Research and Development Committee to expose library senior staff to best professional practices. Resource persons with necessary and relevant expertise are being invited from within and outside the University;
4. Efforts at training the university academic community. Apart from using its website and social media to create awareness of new accessions and promote the use of library resources, the Library moved a step further in training some faculty members in available electronic resources, information and digital literacies, literature search and retrieval skills, citation and references management and plagiarism awareness and detection, to encourage an informed, productive and visible faculty;
5. Aside the indigenous UI-ALA proprietary library management software earlier stated, a library software has been developed locally in the KDL. This software will soon be deployed to manage the bibliographic information and contents of students' projects and dissertations which are almost becoming a nuisance and threat to the library environment because of the usual space constraint as a result of the increase in student enrollment without a commensurate building expansion. The last extension to the KDL is the Postgraduate/Research Library which was added more than three decades ago;
6. An easily accessible and fully air-conditioned Chat Room with a plasma flat screen television and easy chairs and tables, one of its kind in the South West, Nigeria, has been recently provided at the middle of the first floor of the KDL for patrons' academic discussions, leisure and socialisation;
7. A sub-unit within the Systems Unit was recently created with the mandate of monitoring and harnessing emerging technologies to keep the KDL a step ahead in training its staff on how to deploy relevant information and telecommunications technologies for library resource and service management;

8. An active library website, served by inverter-powered 24/7 servers located in the System Unit with staff trained to offer online user support services, is another recent development. Other units of the Library, such as Reference and Cataloguing, are also provided with inverters as an alternative power source for effective and sustainable service delivery;
9. For an inclusive library service, the Library has recently acquired an electronic braille set for visually impaired patrons. This will be available as soon as the library staff are trained in its use, operations and management;

The library, with the support of the university administration, has recently renovated the old but solid library building in order to preserve the architectural heritage of the KDL which has attracted both national and international attention based on the number and nature of requests daily received from local and international institutions and individuals for research/study visits, tours, internship and volunteering. Most of the library visitors always leave with pictures of the KDL structure and copies of its celebrated contents for further study and treasure!

The KDL has been perceived as the best university library in Nigeria as a result of its rare, aged, unique, and relevant contents, the appreciable national and international patronage and these ten pacesetting firsts highlighted above, among others. However, the ten firsts would not have been achieved without the support of the University of Ibadan Management and the able administration of the fifth substantive university librarian, Dr. B.A. Oladele, the two-term university librarian between 2006 to 2016; the sixth substantive and present university librarian, Dr. Helen Komolafe-Opadeji, the university librarian from 2016 to date; the esteemed members of their management teams (including the Deputy University Librarians: Mr. S. Akinyode, Mr. C.O. Ola, Dr. Josephine Igbeka, Dr. Beatrice Fabunmi and other senior staff members such as Mrs. Bolarinwa Adeyemi) and the ever-committed library staff members.

Nonetheless, the author humbly acknowledges past substantive university librarians (Prof. W. J. Harris, 1948 – 1968; Mrs. T. Olabisi Odeinde, 1972 – 1987; Mrs. Olufunmilayo G. Tamuno, 1988 – 1998 and Late Mr. Ikem, 1999- 2003), past acting university librarians (Late Mr. S.S.A. Odularu and Dr. Mrs. Georgina D. Ekpenyong) and their teams who laboured to lay the foundation that the present management and staff are building upon. We are committed to ensuring that the labours of our past heroes shall never be in vain!

Displayed below (Figures 13-18) are the photographs of all the substantive university librarians in their academic gowns as principal officers of the University of Ibadan.

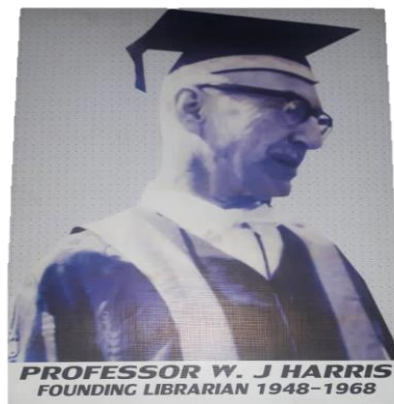


Figure 13. The 1st substantive University Librarian (UL)



Figure 14. The 2nd substantive UL



Figure 15. The 3rd substantive UL



Figure 16. The 4th substantive UL

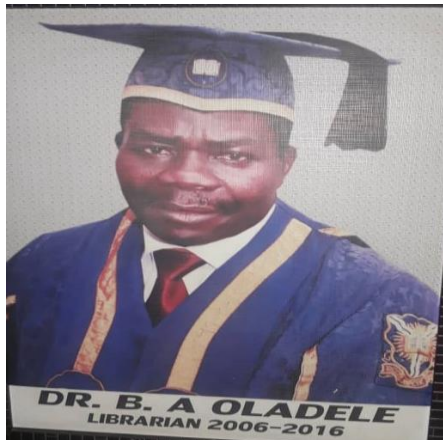


Figure 17. The 5th substantive UL



Figure 18. The 6th substantive and present UL (2016 -)

CONCLUSION

In sum, the University of Ibadan's history of educational exploits can not be told without mentioning the contributions of the KDL in providing information resources for staff and students to support its teaching, learning, research and community service mandates. Therefore, the Library ought to be celebrated as the titanic literary and cultural repository which has adequately and sufficiently assisted the University of Ibadan to fulfill these mandates in its more than 70 years of existence and 66 years of producing university graduates.

Thus, in this spirit of celebration, the cooperation and support of all is solicited and anticipated towards achieving all the laudable goals of the KDL for now and the future. An instance of the area where the Library needs support is in the acquisition of a luxurious bus to convey staff on evening and night duties to and from bus-stops proximate to their homes (because of the hazards associated with staff movements at these unholy hours) and to aid staff members in attending training and social events organised outside Ibadan with ease.

Furthermore, to offer a sustainable library service and support the lean accommodation provided by the University Housing Committee, private/public partnerships could also be useful in building a housing unit that will be dedicated to library staff who may wish to stay overnight (when duty calls) or live on the University Campus at little or no cost. A philanthropist recently donated some resources and gave the Reference Section of the KDL a facelift, which demonstrates a lasting support and kind gestures for the Library.

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About the author

Dr. Taiwo Adetoun Akinde was engaged as Librarian II by the Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan in 2008 and has risen to the position of Principal Librarian. A Cataloguer between August, 2001 and January, 2016; she was certified as a Chartered Librarian by the Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria in 2011 and a Member of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) since 2001. She has authored and/or co-authored books and articles published in refereed, peer-reviewed local and international Journals. Her area of research interests is in the application of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to teaching, learning and research; library

automation; indigenous knowledge/local content collection, digitization and dissemination; book publishing and continuing professional education. Dr. Akinde, who was appointed the Faculty Librarian of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan on the 19th of January, 2016, obtained a Ph. D degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Ibadan in 2017. An editor, blogger and seasoned Christian counsellor, she is the author of the books “Marriage: foundation, expectations and realities” and “What to consider before marriage: A Christian perspective.”