



Aligning Ranganathan Laws of Librarianship to today's Reality of Information Service Delivery in Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to align Ranganathan Laws of Librarianship in the delivery of information in contemporary era. The paper is a reflective piece examining Ranganathan laws of librarianship in the provision of effective information services in the context of academic libraries. The paper argued that despite Ranganathan laws have brought changes in the provision of information service delivery till date, the emergence of the digital technologies in academic libraries has opened opportunities for fast, quick and current information service provision to many users at the same time as compared to when Ranganathan first published his five laws in the 1920s. Literature review indicated that Ranganathan laws continued to be relevant to users in bridging the prevailing information provision gaps in the teaching, learning and research needs of the users in academic libraries. Various empirical studies argued that Ranganathan laws are timely and should be a continuing process of championing effective information service delivery globally. The value of the paper is to aligning Ranganathan laws to today's reality in information service delivery. The paper concluded that In spite of multidimensional development in different areas of librarianship, Ranganathan Laws are applicable till date in spite of digital technology development.

Keywords

Ranganathan laws, Five Laws of Librarianship, Information Service Delivery, Academic Libraries, Library Users

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Introduction

Ranganathan Laws exist in academic libraries to assist librarians to bridge the prevailing information provision gaps in meeting the teaching, learning and research needs of the users. The emergence of the Ranganathan laws has opened opportunities for librarians to share information services with their users (Adeyinka, Akanbi-Ademolake and Olufemi, 2017). Similarly, the delivery of

information service with the use of digital technology has influenced Ranganathan laws in shaping contemporary societies. Today, digital technologies such as robotic technology, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, social media, smart phones, digital cameras, sensors and Internet of Things (IoT) are contributing significantly in teaching and learning process in line with

philosophy of Ranganathan Laws (Singh, 2019). Many academic libraries have utilized the emergence of digital technology to improve quality research, learning and community service. In order word, Ranganathan laws have become fundamental in today's world of digital technology. The alignment of five laws provided a

evolution of World Wide Web (WWW), smart phones, tablets, robots, e-books and game machines have enabled academic libraries to develop transformation in digital technology in line with Ranganathan philosophy to provide easy access to improve communication, collaboration, education, research and learning (Howe, 2016). Many academic libraries in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and France have aligned Ranganathan laws to improve information services delivery around the world; and to enhance efficient and effective information resources provision in an environment driven by digital technology and innovations (Coldwell-Neilson, 2017). Digital technology has assisted academic libraries in assuming a thinking and innovation towards timeliness in research as well as increase discovery and creation of new fields of inquiry (Hussaini, 2019).

Despite these positive trends, recent research conducted indicates that some academic libraries in developing countries still find it difficult to aligned Ranganathan laws to enhance quality of information service delivery in academic libraries with the use of digital technology to accomplish library tasks as well as enhance access to quick information for research activities (Singh, 2019).

wider perspective of information service delivery in the present digital era as they have transformed library services from the conventional library environment to digital library environment.

Globally, the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) and the

In spite of these challenges, many academic libraries from developed countries have adopted the Rangathanan laws to enhance information service delivery to achieve the core mandate of academic institutions teaching, learning and research activities for which academic libraries exist. Similarly, academic libraries from developing countries have joined their counterparts from the developed countries to provide library services using the Rangathanan laws with the view to remain relevant in the contemporary era of information service provision (Rose, Eldridge and Chapin, 2015; Elizabeth and Ronke, 2015).

The academic libraries of 21st century depend on digital technology for information service delivery. As digital technology evolves fast and continuously, the users' information needs automatically changed and have more expectations from libraries (Coldwell-Neilson, 2013). Rangathanan was regarded as the father of modern academic libraries. The establishment of theoretical formulation of Five Laws of Library Science has shaped and continuing to shape the services of academic libraries. The development of ICTs has also helped the Five Laws with the digital technological changes and innovations that occur in the libraries on daily basis.

Interestingly, during his eighty-year lifespan, Dr. S.R. Ranganathan made contribution in many new ideas to library and information science. He wrote 60 books and about 2,000 research articles in his life. Indeed, Ranganathan was a multifaceted personality in the field of Library and Information practice. He devoted his life to the cause of development of library science in India and the world at large. Dr. Ranganathan enunciated various laws, principles, canons and theories in LIS. His theories are based on scientific principles. The databases, Internet, World Wide Web (WWW), digital contents, archives and institutional repositories of library products have paved the way to make the five laws of library science truly relevant in the modern academic library. Presently, academic libraries are performing the same traditional functions but based on ICTs and other digital technologies. The librarians in their new role have to devise methods where they are able to manage, filter the vast information base, pertinent to needs of the end user by means of developing in- house databases and making these available to other libraries also through networking and sharing available over the internet.

Methodology

This research used literature review as methodology. The purpose of literature review, according to Jacobs and Walker (2014), is to convey to the reader the knowledge and ideas that have been established on a topic; their strengths and weaknesses. The literature review has also several objectives, namely to show the reader that what has been studied has a connection with the present and to fill the gap between previous and current studies. The use of literature studies only adds to the opinion of researchers and does not make the results of other studies as a result of research (Creswell 2014). The author reads the original book entitled *The Five Laws of Library Science* by SR Ranganathan and compiled the five laws with the characteristic of Generation Z to be able to get new laws that fit this era

Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science

The answer comes in the application of his Five Laws of Library Science. The father of library science in India propounded the five laws of library science in 1931. Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science include:

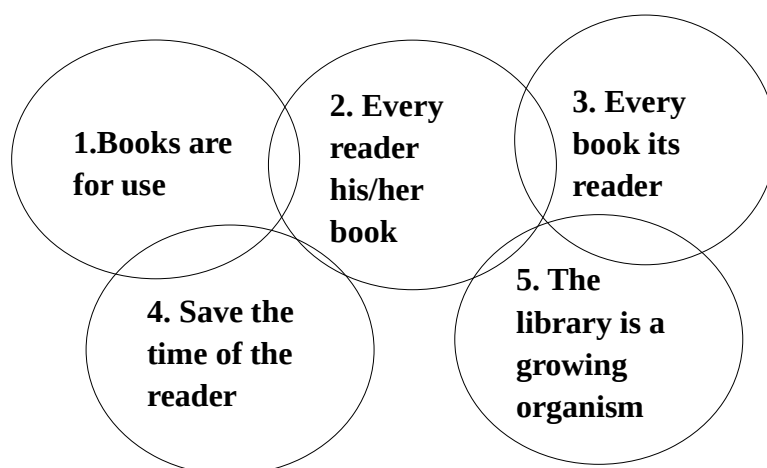


Figure 1: Theory of Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science

1. Books are for use
2. Every reader his/her book
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader
5. The library is a growing organism

1. First Law: Books are for use

The first law: books are for use. It is imperative to ensure that potential library users make use of books in the library collections. Academic libraries are established to promote teaching, learning, research and community services (Abbass, 2014). Provision of access to books and other library services are meant to enhance information needs that would serve the information needs of the users. The philosophy of Ranganathan first law of preserving books and information materials are key elements of access to information and knowledge. Despite the importance of preservation and access of books, the 21st century academic libraries of making knowledge available through digitization justified the importance of digital resources. The context of books according to Ranganathan goes beyond conventional books in the library collections. The first law emphasizes on the optimum use of information resources, facilities, and services for the benefit of the users. This is because the collectivities of library services enhance its effectiveness and use. This includes convenient location, effective signage, and longer opening hours; helping hands for using resources and services are also important aspects of ensuring easy access to information needs of the users.

2. Second Law: Every reader his/her book

The second law, "every reader his or her book," means that library users have diverse interests and that there is a book out there to satisfy each of the interests of the users. The core need is to fight for the right of users to have access to information of all kinds. However, the consistent battle against censorship and inequality to access information has governed civilization since the inception of the libraries. The responsibility of the libraries and librarians is to help users find the information they require and ensure any blocks accessing the information resources is eliminated. Inability to gain access to information and knowledge is totally against the philosophy of Dr. Ranganathan's law. In fact, the second law provides roots to the freedom to access information and knowledge in the forms of writings of all kinds and to be informed on topics that others may wish to suppress. The second law reminds librarians to be impartial in dealings with users. The implication of the second law is to ensure that users have access to their choice of the information that meet their needs satisfactorily by collecting and interpreting information, understanding the needs of users, and matching the needs with its resources.

3. Third Law: every book its reader

The third law "Every book its reader" advocates easy access to materials, and one way to do so is by putting people together with what they require. Putting books into the hands of users is the heart of the third law. The philosophy of the third law is to promote books to users for enrichment of their minds. Globally, academic libraries are launching virtual enquiry services

through their websites by accepting models created for the purpose of allowing librarians to continue to use their skills in tracking down quality information for users. The implication of the third law in modern academic libraries is to publicize the value and benefits of service oriented through promotional campaigns, advocacy, current awareness services and information literacy activities. The library should encourage its users to its services and operations by providing library services at their doorstep. It should give its users the personal touch and develop a feeling of service oriented to their users.

4. The Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader

Time is important to every person. Time management is a key to success in life. Libraries must have the objective of saving the time of the reader. The entire journey of librarianship is about devising, designing, and developing methods, systems of organization and dissemination of information to provide the best service to their readers in the most efficient, accurate, and effective manner and thus saving the reader's time. For example, we create catalogues, bibliographies, indexes, and abstracts to save the time of readers. Saving the time of the reader also relates to how we actually organize information. Acceptance and adoption of ICT has used to save thousands of hours of the reader's time when compared to manual systems. Saifi (2019) rightly opines that considering the time of the user as a vital notion, and that all five laws of library science are transferable and applicable to the Web. Increasingly, saving the time of the user becomes navigating with

them through the Web and creating high-quality and accurate guides to information in this challenging domain. The implication of the fourth law in academic libraries ensures that the users' valuable time is not wasted in searching for material.

5. The Fifth Law: The library is a growing organism

Ranganathan fifth law states that libraries will continue to grow in the future. Perhaps we can look at digital information and conclude that the growth is not as pressing from the point of view of physical space, although this remains something that libraries struggle with. Even in the digital world, the analogue continues to be important. Book publishing remains healthy, and indeed a much less expensive endeavor than it was in 1931. Libraries will continue to struggle with space problems. This is reflected in the statistics of information generation and the acquisition of information resources of libraries of any type. Even the presence of e-resources does not stop the acquisition of new print material, and the pace at which they grow has not changed. Lancaster's dream of a paperless society is not likely to come true in the near future. The sacrifices librarians have to make between space for books shelves and space for computer terminals to deliver this ever-expanding need will continue to be an issue. One can also see the library as a growing organism in terms of staff and skills. As the library grows in services, the skills necessary to deliver these new services will also grow. Perhaps we could argue that both libraries and the profession of librarianship are growing organisms. The fifth law's implication for marketing is

adapting the library to future user needs, including mobilizing resources, dealing with uncertainty about future user needs, new services, new customer groups, new environment, etc. The library should also transform its services to keep up with other changes in the world. The library must not lag behind in adapting to new technologies. The library staff must be technology-literate.

Impact of Digital Technology Services to Ranganathan Five Laws

Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science emerged with a mindset of the 1930s when colonialism and the Second World War were still continuing. However, digital technology is not only an important key to development but also a pivot in which the world revolves in information exploitation and exploration. Safii (2019) identified that users in the digital era are not only those who register as members with proof of membership cards, but anyone in the digital age is permitted to access and get library services. Because there is a concept of the digital world and the real world, both must be considered the same, not different in terms of service. When users are allowed to read in the library, users should visit the web library and also be allowed to read digital collections. Such as scientific work services in libraries, where users can read full-text thesis, so those who open library repositories online are also allowed to read full-text. In the digital era, a concept that must be embedded is the user-centered library. This concept offers engagement in the library. The more users involved in the library, the stronger the library is needed. Examples of user involvement in the library include

collection management, full participation and feedback from patrons.

Digital technology in electronic resources involves the ability to demonstrate knowledge and competencies in e-journals, e-newspapers and e-magazines and e-books. Similarly, Ron (2015) highlights the importance of electronic resources creation and maintenance as one of the digital technology abilities that assists library users to search, retrieve and share information faster and easier.

The impact of electronic resources collections also help users to transform the services of the library; be it collection development, reference services, circulation, serial collection, cataloguing and classification and statistical record as demonstrated in the Ranganathan Five Laws of Librarianship. However, study have shown that not all users in academic libraries in Nigeria has the knowledge of electronic resources to deliver quality library services effectively (Abubakar and Adetimirin, 2015).

Aligning Ranganathan Laws Information Service Delivery in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are facilities attached to tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnic institutions, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and also research institutes (Abbas, 2014). Athanasius (2018) emphasizes that preservation and access to knowledge and information is the main mandate of academic libraries alongside supporting the mission of their parent institutions which is teaching, learning and research. Academic libraries are not just about

storing books, they are about people having access to books. This is something Ranganathan made clear in his own discussion of the first law, as he cited the historical importance previously placed on preservation of books above access. Obviously both should be of concern, but this is where the digital technologies that Ranganathan could only have dreamt of have their most vital role. In support of this statement, Bernerd (2017) states that 21st century academic libraries are no longer just a building for storage of books; they are information providers in an environment that is constantly changing with the digital resources in providing information service delivery without limitation to time and space.

Academic libraries are at the forefront of providing information services to their respective users in order to support their teaching, learning and research needs. Scholars have emphasizes on the important of providing information services that would meet the information needs of users as emphasize by Ranganathan in his second laws. Digital resource services assist librarians in academic libraries to facilitate easy access to information beyond the traditional service delivery (Abubakar and Adetimirin, 2015). Okiki (2011) posits that academic libraries have been transformed into digital and virtual environment where books and journals are now available as e-books and e-journals.

The developments in digital technologies and specifically the paradigm shift in library services with the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Internet services, electronic resources, digital collections and other digital technology services

have led to advancement in digital resources in academic libraries and among librarians (Atram, 2017). The role and position of librarians have dramatically changed (Anyim, 2018). Idiegbeyan-ose and Ilo (2013) observes that the rapid pace of development in the field of digital technology and the advent of networked information services have prompted librarians to acquire knowledge of digital technologies to advance digital information delivery.

Academic librarians now experience global trend, which is characterize with a fundamental shift from traditional information environment to an electronic environment where emphasis is placed more on digital technologies in acquisition, organization, processing and communication with the use of digital resources such as electronic books, electronic journals as well as online databases (Azubuike and Azubuike, 2016).

The contemporary practice among librarians in academic library services in the 21st century is being propelled with an information explosion and the inclusion of digital technologies in all aspects of library services (Huynh and Do (2017). Ottong and Etim (2015) noted that librarians are adopting digital technologies as a means to replace the manual methods. This involves the use of computerized and digital technology system, which provides opportunity for online information services.

The 21st century academic libraries are characterized by digital and virtual environments where wireless and digital resources have grown rapidly in the past decade and users search for information via digital devices to retrieve information from

across the world (Davies, 2016; Howe, 2016; International Telecommunication Union, 2017). The advent of ICTs and the evolution of World Wide Web (WWW), smart phones, tablets, robots, e-books, game machines and even light bulbs have assisted the Ranganathan laws to be effective and efficient in the delivery of information services to users to enhance quality learning and research output (Howe, 2016).

Globally, the alignment of Ranganathan Laws has given rise to new modes of organizing, processing and accessing information resources in the libraries. With the emergence of Web 2.0 and web 3.0 technologies, cloud computing, social media platforms and electronic resources, libraries now assume new thinking and new role of meeting the need of ever growing and dynamic society (Hussain, 2019). Interestingly, Ranganathan laws anticipate digital technology innovation as a by-product of information and communication technology to library services. Many university libraries have been increasing their digital resources to ensure efficient and effective information resources provision in the technology driven environment. Digital resources have exploded in popularity and use. They enable innovation in teaching, and increase timeliness in research as well as increase discovery and creation of new fields of inquiry (Ahmad and Panda, 2013).

Digital resources allow access to networked information resources such as bibliographic databases, remote library catalogues, bulletin boards, discussion groups, downloading remote files, acquiring software, ordering and subscription of online information materials and communication with other libraries

(Ayoku and Okafor, 2015). Today, digital resources have enhanced access to digital collection of information resources (Annunobi and Emezio, 2016). Odu and Omosigho (2016) observe that since the penetration of digital resources, there has been a steady growth of online access to information which has transformed the whole concept of libraries into a global-information-connected community. However, using digital resources to provide library services require initiatives to drive digital technology service to enhance digital literacy of academic librarians.

Conclusion

Due to exploration in digital Technology, there are so many changes in academic libraries globally. Information is growing rapidly. Digital technology is the only solution to manage and organizes the services of academic libraries in a proper way. Today's reality of digital resources application and services permits all human activities. Dr. Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science was written seventy four years back and in spite of having so many changes in Library world; these Five Laws still fits in today's context. Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science are applicable to all fields of library activities. Now we have entered into the digital era. In spite of multidimensional development in different areas of library work and service and their enrichment with the application of modern technology Five Laws of Library Science are equally applicable till date, since its inception. Today ICT application permits all human activities. Five Laws of Library Science was written over eighty years back and in spite of having so many changes in Library world,

these Five Laws are still relevant in today's context. The reinterpretation of five laws provided a wider perspective of information service delivery in the present digital era as they have transformed library services from the conventional library environment to digital library environment. The five laws are the source and sum of all the practices of the times, yesterday, today and tomorrow. Even eighty years of its origin Ranganathan Five Laws are very much popular and applicable in this present electronic and digital era. These Laws can never be obsolete as long as human civilization and culture exist and consigned to oblivion in spite of the digital divide and the information literacy barrier.

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