

Green Library Awareness and Inclusivity of Personnel

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Abstract

The outcome of combining inclusive personnel engagement with green library awareness is a library culture where environmental sustainability is a shared value. The awareness about eco-friendly products or services is gaining traction in the 21st century across industries including the library world. Based on this notion, this paper examines green library awareness and inclusivity of personnel. Green library awareness is important for attaining the library's sustainability goals, as it influences the willingness of personnel to accept and promote green initiatives. Focus is on green library and green awareness; ways of promoting green awareness among library personnel; benefits of promoting green awareness among library personnel; challenges of green awareness and ways forward. Meanwhile, there are numerous strategies adopted to raise awareness of green libraries in order to guarantee inclusivity. Though, there are hindrances but they do not negate potential solutions. Among the benefits derived from the initiative, is that green library establishment will improve libraries' reputation and awareness while accommodating inclusivity by emphasizing the personnel's ability to significantly address issues of development, environmental sustainability and diversity. Conclusively, every library personnel is obliged to play active roles in the establishment of green libraries through adequate awareness and necessary training focusing on inclusive workforce and spaces. The ways forward include sustainable awareness being advocated through the training of library personnel about sustainability management for inclusivity, ensuring effective communication and private-public partnership advocacy on green libraries initiative.

Keywords: Green library awareness, Inclusivity, Personnel, Diversity, Sustainable development.

Introduction

Inclusivity within the members of staff and other employees of the library is imperative for fostering an enabling and equitable environment for all stakeholders. The library management or leadership of any tertiary institution that practices the policy of inclusivity has the duty to impart knowledge and promote green awareness among the library personnel. In Nigeria today, many libraries of tertiary institutions such as universities, colleges of education and polytechnics libraries do not have immediate or long-term plans for creating awareness of sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is important to know that library provides education for all and sundry while sustainable development, which is related to sustainability, is a human development strategy that seeks to satisfy current needs without endangering the capacity of the future generations to satisfy their own needs. Academic libraries and their personnel are important resources for research, education, and the sharing of knowledge. By granting access to a multitude of information resources, they

promote intellectual development, awareness and encourage research in any field of human endeavour. In order to run their daily operations, academic libraries are expected to use a lot of energy and resources. Their substantial resource consumption, including electricity, water, and paper, results in a noteworthy environmental effect (Okoye, Peter & David, 2024).

Libraries across the globe are important institutional units that are saddled with the responsibilities among others to share resources such as books, readable materials or digital media. For these libraries to ensure environmental sustainability and ensure inclusivity of their personnel, it is important and expected that they are given the necessary support to carry out sustainability expectations such as reduction of energy emissions from materials, organizing environmental issues of concern and practicing the culture of recycling or reuse of library materials. Although, there is a vibrant new library discourse on "green" policies and practices in many countries including Nigeria, Oyelude and Alabi (2013) discovered that Nigerian libraries are only implementing "green" measures at a minimal level and rather unconsciously. This is so appalling to note.

It is worth knowing from the foregoing that, green awareness is very important for all library personnel. They are duty-bound to play active role in ensuring the sustainability of the libraries by keying into green initiative programmes and also partake in promoting the idea of inclusivity which could be possible through green awareness. However, it should be noted that such awareness is not limited to libraries that are institutional-based but it encompasses on all library staff irrespective of the locations, nature, cadres or missions.

Aim of Green Initiatives

Globally, green initiative is meant to ensure resource conservation, environmental preservation and alignment with the concerned sustainable development goals (SDGs). The instances of goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) are very germane in the green initiative advocacy while securing the future for all and sundry. Kumar (2019) submitted that green initiatives and sustainable development approach is aimed at turning environmental challenges into opportunities because the green initiative also involves green economy apart from environment issues, which is characterized by sustainable consumption and production patterns with the ability to offer numerous benefits such as job creation, poverty reduction, economic diversification and income generation.

Moreover, sustaining a healthy planet to live in, is one of the main goals of green initiative irrespective of the areas of application or focus as far as a healthy environment is concerned. This is a non-negotiable condition to guarantee good health for humans and all living things, assurance of decent work for labour, promotion of productive establishments, ensuring sustainable livelihoods and attaining some level of buoyancy or contentment economically. The International Labour Organization ILO (2016) reiterated the green initiative goals as means and platforms to lift up the awareness and advance the knowledge of ILO in terms of its policy response and its capacity to manage green transition as it concerns the economies in order to secure a sustainable future. ILO further emphasized that green initiative has three focal areas which include: advancing research and understanding of the challenges and opportunities for the world of work arising from a green transition; forge policy responses from the world of work in all sectors of the economy to ensure decent work and social justice for all; and build strategic partnerships at national, regional and international levels.

These aforementioned aims are indispensable in the 21st century because every sector is directly or indirectly affected, due to the fact that people are becoming more concerned about the environment, technology and economies irrespective of their status.

Green Library and Green Awareness

Personnel awareness of eco-friendly products or services in today's world is gaining traction in all fields of human endeavor in which library personnel are no exception. Promoting the awareness of green libraries among library personnel or stakeholders in the 21st century is sacrosanct as it is not devoid of many benefits including inclusivity. Mollah (2024) emphasized the need to construct green structures and build a green library that is expected to serve the need of cutting and saving maintenance costs since libraries play important roles via the adoption of green technology while promoting knowledge and information dissemination. The rationale for the establishment of green libraries is geared towards creating a sustainable and healthy environment that has the capacity to save costs, ensures effective utilization of scarce resources, and imparts knowledge to the end users. These are possible through the use of eco-friendly technology and designs for the buildings while adopting green practices into library services in line with best global practices. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, IFLA (2022) sees a green library as a library which takes into account environmental, economic and social sustainability. This body emphasized that green libraries have the capacity to promote sustainability by way of supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as creating healthy and inclusive spaces, modelling sustainable practices, environmental education, community engagement in form of workshops and seminars, driving cultural shifts towards more sustainable behaviors and reflecting the values of social responsibility.

A green library can be viewed as an eco-friendly or sustainable library with facilities that integrate ecologically friendly materials and methods into its operations and programming with a focus on environmental responsibility. These libraries employ techniques to lower energy use, save resources, and advance sustainability in an effort to lessen their environmental impact. Green libraries may focus recycling and trash reduction and use renewable energy sources like solar energy. A green library is an establishment that prioritizes environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship by incorporating a range of features and practices to minimize its ecological footprint and foster a culture of environmental awareness and action. These practices include energy-efficient design, renewable energy sources, sustainable materials, water conservation measures, waste reduction in programs, green procurement practices, environmental education, etcetera (Ashikuzzaman, 2024).

Ways of promoting Green Awareness among Library Personnel

Libraries play a vital role in addressing ecological issues by promoting environmental awareness and tackling climate change in which all stakeholders are carried along. Nigeria has a huge opportunity to promote commitment to the environment and sustainability in the nation through the development of green libraries. This is supported by Kolawole and Oladokun (2024) who demonstrated a growing awareness of environmental concerns and the dire need for sustainable solutions as well as pointing that obstacles were faced by the green library programmes of Nigerian school libraries, which mostly came from inadequate funding, poor infrastructure support, and low stakeholder awareness. However, Okojie (2024) discovered that, in order to preserve consistency and quality, these greening initiatives were typically governed by explicit policies and guidelines.

Furthermore, to ensure and develop a culture of environmental responsibility and inclusivity among library personnel in order to create sustainable practices with a clear focus, there is the dire need for the leadership or management team of libraries across the globe to promote green awareness in the following ways:

(i). Organizing Environmental Training, Workshops and Conferences: The importance of professional development programmes in the career of professionals cannot be overemphasized. These programmes come in form of training, workshops, conference or seminars. Kolawole and Oladokun (2024) emphasized that as part of the role of green libraries in promoting sustainable practices in Nigerian society, environmental education is required as the hubs for knowledge dissemination for all stakeholders concerned. Green libraries can offer valuable resources and programmes focused on environmental education, helping communities understand the importance of sustainability. Green libraries could serve as platforms for community involvement by organizing workshops, seminars, and other events that promote environmental awareness, eco-friendly living and ensuring inclusive spaces. Also, Devine and Appleton (2023) affirmed that environmental education does not only seeks to inform, but to engender lasting behavioural change.

(ii). Formulation and Implementation of Green Policies and Guidelines: To ensure effective green library, green policies and guidelines should be formulated and implemented. Emmanuel and Okojie (2022) emphasized that the prospects will look bright because most libraries are in the process of reviewing their policies, operations and practices in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring full integration of the concept of green libraries into the system. These policies are expected to harness the opportunity that diversity brings to the fore. They will also give everyone access to the information and opportunities that the library provides.

(iii). Awareness Programmes: Ajani, Tella and Enakrire, (2024) found that libraries in developed nations across the globe have shown remarkable success in spite of the range of obstacles through awareness programs like green building projects, community engagement initiatives, cooperative partnerships, the development of digital resources, creative environmental awareness initiatives, and a dedication to ethical environmental stewardship. Moreover, awareness program would create a conducive and accessible environment for all members of the community irrespective of their background, status, cadres, or capabilities.

(iv). Proper funding: Adequate funding to put the necessary infrastructures in place and their maintenance is very germane. For instance, the government or proprietors supervising these libraries activities and their staff have the responsibilities to ensure digital services and other infrastructures are in good condition. Ukutegbe (2024) submitted that the government is expected to provide sufficient funding for ICT infrastructures for different units or sections of the school system while the school administrators are expected to ensure that, the tertiary institutions have the appropriate ICT resources in place. Moreover, the conditions of libraries in many countries require urgent attention and proper funding as Okeuhie et al (2022) noted the deplorable state of public libraries that have declined over the past years as a result of the influence of the combined effects of economic and political situations which has adversely affected the maintenance of these libraries, hence proper funding is required.

(v). Provision of Sustainable Library Facilities and Equipment: To ensure that green initiative is sustained in the library culture, there is the need by the concerned authority to provide sustainable library facilities and equipment for the libraries to function effectively and attain their goals. This is necessary as Panda, Sharma and Sati (2025) asserted that green libraries seek to reduce their environmental effect through energy-efficient architecture and eco-friendly building materials.

Benefits of Promoting Green Awareness among all Library Personnel

Humans are diverse in nature, hence they are always tending towards diversity. In order to promote green library awareness, all the stakeholders including library personnel must channel their efforts towards its sustainability and inclusive spaces. As a result of this fact, Okpidi-Urhibo (2023) emphasized that public awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives aimed at important stakeholders, and instructional initiatives should all be part of the efforts to highlight the positive benefits of green libraries. Also, Emmanuel and Okojie (2022) posited that awareness is strategic tool for the implementation of green libraries by academic librarians and concluded that establishing green libraries will raise the profile and reputation of libraries in the community by highlighting their capacity to make significant contributions to environmental sustainability and development challenges, therefore highlighting their ongoing significance to humanity.

Green libraries awareness among library personnel are not without gains. Enang and Kolawole (2024) submitted that even in remote communities, green libraries can be established to promote health and well-being, environmental preservation, academic possibilities, and cost savings. The benefits of having a green library that has eco-friendly reading and inclusive spaces include: environmental conservation because green libraries use sustainable materials, energy-efficient lighting, natural ventilation, and other green techniques in their operations and design to minimize waste, save energy, and preserve natural resources as well as accommodate all their stakeholders. In Nigeria, where pollution and deforestation are major environmental issues, green libraries are crucial for encouraging sustainable habits and mitigating environmental effects.

Another benefit is cost savings. Green libraries can save a lot of money by using less energy and water, maintaining their buildings for longer, and using sustainable building materials. Budgetary restrictions may prevent investments in services and infrastructure in a resource-constrained system such as the Nigerian system, but affordable green techniques provide a workable way to increase library sustainability and efficiency. The health and well-being of both library staff and patrons are other benefits. These are enhanced by sustainable reading areas, which provide healthy indoor environments that encourage study and creativity. Natural lighting, better air quality, and environmentally friendly features can all improve library users' satisfaction, reduce stress, and sharpen concentration and productivity. In Nigeria, where urbanization and industrialization are the main contributors to air and water pollution, green libraries offer a solution for those seeking clean and healthy places to read and learn.

Furthermore, Sivaprasad, Thanuskodi and Nagaiah (2024) added that the green library sets an example for everyone to be involved in promoting green inclusive spaces, lowering the price of green structures, and utilizing recyclable, eco-friendly materials. By increasing public understanding of the design and functionality of ecologically friendly buildings, greening libraries can generate a sizable market for these structures and their raw materials.

Furthermore, green library awareness goes a long in ensuring inclusivity of its personnel by advocating that the library employees reflect the diversity of the community it is serving where all the members of staff feel valued and also practice mutual respect. In the aspect of human resource practices such as recruitment, diversity and inclusivity will be promoted during the hiring process which would make the library world a multi-cultural environment.

Challenges of Green Library Awareness among its Personnel

The initial costs of starting a green library from scratch are always very high. However, it should be noted that everyday upkeep is essential, requiring consistent work and appropriate staff training. Other crucial factors to take into account include maintenance expenses and workforce distribution (Sivaprasad, Thanuskodi & Nagaiah, 2024). Despite growing recognition of the significance of environmental sustainability, Adeyemi et al (2024) stressed that there is no empirical support for green library practices in Nigerian academic libraries. Understanding the current status of green library practices in academic libraries and the difficulties they face nationwide is made harder by this disparity which has become a source of concern.

Suggested Ways of Mitigating the Challenges

There are numerous ways of mitigating the challenges of green library awareness among its personnel. Tariq and Khalid (2023) emphasized that more sustainable growth can be greatly aided by information technology (IT). Technologies related to information and communication have the capacity to both exacerbate and lessen environmental degradation. The goal of green information technology (IT) is to address sustainability concerns associated with IT.

The use of eco-friendly materials and technology is imperative towards overcoming the obstacles to green library awareness. This is supported by Onnoghen et al (2024) as they encouraged organizing seminars, workshops, and training sessions on climate change and plastic waste management for different categories of students and library users.

In addition, Hussin and Hafit (2018) submitted that the government is expected to find initiatives to create awareness worldwide by making a collaboration with other non-government organizations such as Nature Society to have a campaign or create activities that promoting the green technology.

Conclusion

The libraries authority, stakeholders and every member of staff of the libraries should partake actively in the green initiative towards ensuring sustainable green libraries through adequate awareness and necessary training while ensuring inclusive workforce and spaces. The library personnel should note it clearly that a green library marks the start of a new era of green recovery and is beyond being green but it is not without its attendant challenges which are surmountable.

Way Forward

It is hereby suggested that sustainable awareness should be fostered by training libraries personnel about sustainability management for inclusivity and the green libraries idea, which will pave the way for a bright future for the green libraries project. As part of the effort to ensure successful green library awareness, effective communication is key. Stakeholders are expected to communicate effectively using cost-effective means and materials such as posters, banners,

ecological symbols, literary works, pamphlets, fliers etc. which can be seen, felt and understood by everyone connected to the library whenever they access the library. It is also quite important to have private-public partnership engagement in the programme of green library awareness because the government cannot do it successfully all alone.

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