The Integration of Libraries, Archives and Museums In Cultural Promotion and Development in Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Culture has gained tremendous recognition in developmental discourse all over the world. However, cultural diminution has become a serious concern in Nigeria today, partly due to the incursion of Western culture to the detriment of the local ones. This exploratory study investigated the integration of libraries, archives and museums, as cultural heritage institutions, in the promotion and development of culture in Kwara State, Nigeria. The National Library, Kwara State Branch, the National Museum, Esie, Kwara State and the University of Ilorin Archives, Ilorin, Kwara State were identified and selected as cultural heritage institutions in the State. Interviews were conducted with the Heads of these institutions using a semi-structured interview schedule. The generated transcripts were analysed using the thematic content analysis. The findings show that the three institutions acquire, preserve and provide access to cultural materials; have specific strategies in place to promote and develop culture in Kwara State; collaborate in cultural promotion; and create an enabling working environment for their staff. The study recommended adequate funding of the heritage institutions for them to perform optimally in promoting and developing culture in Kwara State.

Keywords: Library, Archive, Museum, culture promotion, culture development, Kwara State

INTRODUCTION

Globally, cultures define and distinguish people. Every society enjoys its own peculiarities in norms, values, ethics, traditions, beliefs and arts, which altogether constitute what is referred to as culture. Societies therefore deem it suitable to perpetuate their cultures from one generation to another. In recent decades, culture has gained tremendous

recognition in developmental discourse, because countries have begun to view culture as an asset in eradicating poverty, inequality and discrimination, while seeking innovative development paths with full ownership by communities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2015).

In Africa, and especially Nigeria, oral tradition serves as the vehicular mechanism through which members of the society are socialised and taught cultural contents. To underscore the popularity of oral tradition in Africa, Akinwale (2012) noted that it has been used as a key method for the preservation of African indigenous knowledge for centuries. However, in line with pro-cultural commitments like preservation, conservation, dissemination and transmission, anumber of institutions have evolved to complement and supplement oral tradition. These institutions include libraries, archives, museums, mass media centers and cinema(Gibson, Morris & Cleeve, 2008).

Pubic libraries are strategic centres for promoting the culture of a people in any society they are located (Gills (2011). Other information institutions also engage inthese pro-cultural commitments of supporting and promoting cultural heritage in the society. According to Zaid and Abioye (2010), national heritage institutions like the National Library, the National Archives and the National Museums are in the forefront in preservation of heritage materials in Nigeria. By the virtue of their mandate, they acquire, organize and make heritage collections available for the patrons whose interests they were set up to serve. The need to preserve heritage materials in Nigeria was recognised by archivists and museum curators as early as the when the earliest libraries, archives and museums were established in the early 1950s.

Meanwhile, despite the common commitment to promote cultural heritage, the holdings of the recognized heritage institutions differ in the same way their missions and responsibilities are by no means the same. More so, the way they organize materials and facilitate access to their collections is remarkable different. While a library collection mainly comprises of published materials, both in print and electronic formats, an archive preserves public records of historical, legal and evidential values, usually on paper and other media (Menne-Haritz &Brübach, 2000); whereas a museum preserves and coordinates artifacts, relics, movable and non-movable cultural heritage, including sites and monuments of historical and cultural values (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004).

Furthermore, the mode of accessing the resources in each of the institutions differs. While libraries create access to information materials through both consultation and loan (open access method), archival materials are generally for consultation without loan (close access method); whereas museums make their collections available for viewing only through exhibitions and display. This thus impliesa difference in their modes of operation. Nonetheless, these institutions can work together to promote the identity of the society in which they are established. This study served as an invite to the bastions of cultural progress to see credible reasons, and galvanise them into believing that libraries, archives and museums are reliable instruments for the success of cultural promotion and development.

Problem Statement

Cultural diminution has become a serious issue in Nigeria's developmental activities (Akinola, 2013).Western culture has been observed to be growing drastically, especially among the youths, and seemingly replacing the country's intrinsic culture, values and heritage. This dominance of western products poses a threat to the country's cultural identity (Nwaolikpe, 2013) if such are not preserved and disseminated. Some previous studies have further confirmed that societies stand the risk of losing so much of their valuable heritage materials in consequence of ever-increasing deterioration, lack of co-ordination in handling records, and absence of legal policies (Popoola, 2003; Zaid &Abioye, 2010).

World over, libraries, archives and museum are important promoters of culture through the direct or indirect information services they render to the public with the heritage materials in their possession. However, resource management is an essential part of the information profession. It was therefore considered important that this study finds out how these heritage institutions in Kwara State manage their resources in a bid to ensure cultural promotion and development.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. investigate how libraries, archives and museums acquire, preserve and create access to cultural materials in Kwara State;

2. identify the strategies put in place by libraries, archives and museums to promote and develop culture in Kwara State;

3. find out the working conditions of personnel in libraries, archives and museums in the State;

4. identify the kind of collaboration that exists amongst libraries, archives and museums in Kwara State on cultural promotion and development;

5. find out the challenges faced by libraries, archives and museums in their efforts towards the promotion and development of culture in the State;

LITERATURE REVIEW

Libraries, archives and museums are cultural heritage institutions that collect, create, and steward a plethora of cultural materials (Meanwhile, Schumacher et al, 2014). They are heritage institutions that traditionally bear the responsibility of preserving the intellectual and cultural resources produced by the society (Choy et al., 2016). While this is a significant task for these institutions, providing the general public with access to the objects and collections they preserve is also of great importance (Dietrich & Pekel, 2013).

Cultural heritage is an asset for every functional society, not only to preserve but also transmit and propagate the culture from one generation to another. Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts (cultural property) and intangible attributes of society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations (Dietrich and Pekel, 2013). In a supporting view, Nwaolikpe (2013) affirmed that, "culture plays a role for societal transformation and development, for the stability of a society is ensured through the transmission of cultural values".

The Australian Ministry for the Arts (2014) recognize museums, libraries and archives as institutions of cultural heritage for long. A library is majorly concerned with information carriers like print and non-print materials, electronic and digital, audio-visuals, etc., while an archive houses almost similar materials; however, museums deal with objects like artefacts, monuments etc. Using the National Libraries, National Archives and National Museums in a social survey to examine the popularity of heritage institutions in Nigerian, Zaid and Abiola (2010) found that the National Library was the most popular heritage institutions in Nigeria, followed by the National Museums and the National Archives.

Cultural promotion refers to the provision of avenues to ensure cultural education, consciousness and development (Samuel &

Chimeziem, 2011). As noted by Claude and Zamor (2013), well-functioning cultural promotion may in multiple ways have positive influence on the development of neighbourhoods. Nwaolikpe (2013) believed that communication is one phenomenon that can help promote and develop culture. Rotich (2012) proffered cultural tourism as an efficient means of promoting culture, enumerating the benefits to the host as including reciprocity, community pride, tolerance and a stronger sense of ethnic identity. Corbett and Boddington (2011) also observed that many cultural heritage institutions are adopting the use of digital technologies to advance the promotion of culture in the society, funding being the only impediment.

Attaining cultural promotion to integrate societal values in people is a task for heritage institutions. Stakeholders should therefore stimulate collaboration among all cultural institutions to activate synergies that will be beneficial to all (Daley, 2015). "While the traditions and historical areas of expertise in archives, libraries, and museums may differ, the new challenges facing all collecting cultural institutions are best addressed in concert, in an inter-disciplinary forum that explores multiple solutions and takes advantage of many skills" (Trant, 2009).

The employees of heritage institutions are also important stakeholders in cultural promotion. Employee motivation and development are key to the success of any organization. In a survey conducted by Warriach and Ameen (2010) on Library and Information Science professionals in university libraries of Pakistan, it was found that LIS professionals were more interested in opportunities for learning and career development, because there are fewer opportunities available to develop themselves. Igbokwe (2011) believed that salary is a vital aspect of job satisfaction and performance.

Nigeria is a society with abundantly-rich cultural heritage embedded within the diverse ethnic groups. Some of these cultural heritages are language, marriage rites, burial rites, birth rites, dressing, greeting, music, folklore, religion, and other tangible cultural monuments, natural sites and cultural landscapes (Nwegbu, Eze, & Asogwa, 2011). Some of these cultures have died due to western culture's factor and therefore need to be revitalized. Iyorwza (2014) believed that the mass media and other information institutions in Nigeria have been instrumental in the promotion of foreign culture at the expense of Nigerian indigenous culture.

METHODOLOGY

Being an exploratory research, a qualitative research design was used to carry out the study. The three recognizable cultural information

centers in Kwara State were identified and selected as study site. These include the National Library, State Kwara Brach, the National Museum, Esie, Kwara State and the University of Ilorin Archives, Ilorin, Kwara State. The Heads of the three cultural information centers were purposively selected and interviewed to address the study's research objectives.

An interview schedule was developed as the instrument for the study and the three respondents (Heads of the three cultural information centers) individually gave informed consent to participate in the study. The interview was a semi-structured interview with the interview schedule bearing open-ended questions to explore all areas of the study objectives.

The three interviews to gather data for the study took place in the month of April, 2017. Each interview was held at the office of each of the respondents and took an average length of 45 minutes. A digital recorder was used to record each interview session.

The data analysis was carried out using a thematic content analysis (the coding system). The researchers personally transcribed the recording and codes generated from the transcripts were grouped into categories under the study areas: material acquisition, processing, preservation, dissemination and updating.

RESULTS

Management of Cultural Heritage Materials

The three areas of managing cultural heritages in libraries, archives and museums as explored by this study are: acquisition, preservation and dissemination.

Acquisition of Materials

The information obtained from the respondents showed that there were diverse mode of acquiring materials into the institutions. While legal deposit, procurement, gifts and exchanges were the major modes of acquiring cultural materials into the library, the museum acquire its heritage materials through gifts, compensations and temporary donations from original custodians of the materials. Data obtained from the Archive showed that heritage materials were mostly acquired into the institution through purchase and donation.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage Materials

The data obtained from the study showed that general cleaning and fumigation of the institutions was a common strategy for material

preservation. Digitization was also identified as a common strategy being used by these institutions, although that remains a dream for the Archive. However, owing to peculiarities, these institution also have specific preservation strategies. The Library makes use of an undisclosed offsite preservation centre and its bindery section to preserve heritage materials. The museum digitizes concrete images on CD-ROMs to minimize or prevent contact with the real materials. The Archive also make use of acid-free files and boxes for long-term preservation of the materials.

Creating Access to Cultural Heritage Materials

Findings from the study revealed that the library utilized reference services, readership promotion campaigns and extension services to create access to it cultural heritage materials. It was also showed that cultural tours, exhibitions and street shows were the major ways through which the museum create access to the materials. However, access to materials at the archive was reported to be granted based on users' request.

Strategies for Promoting Cultural Heritage

The three institutions were noted to be concerned about cultural promotion and development. The strategies being adopted to actualize this include encouraging publications in indigenous languages integration or attendance at local events and visitation to traditional rulers and places in Kwara State. In addition, the Library also continuously appeal for adherence to the legal deposit laws in order to have all culturally-related publications in the library, while the museum and archive also utilize radio stations to promote their cultural resources to the public.

Working Condition of Heritage Institutions' Staff

This aspect of the study was further subdivided into motivation, incentives and inspiration sources of the heritage institutions' staff. Findings revealed that staff of the heritage institutions are motivated via sponsorship to seminars and workshops, on-the-job training, cordial working relationship, as well as timely remuneration and promotion.

The study further revealed that in the three heritage institutions, staff incentives are allowances embedded in their salaries, while the inspiration sources for staff was reported to include leadership commitment and dedication, professionalism in chosen career and how interesting the job of an individual staff member is.

Collaboration among Heritage Institutions in Kwara State

The study showed that there is an existing collaboration between the National Library and the museum. This was reported to be importanrt since the two institutions render social services to the users. The study also revealed that the museum often consult with other information institutions in rendering its services. However, no external collaboration was reported for the archives.

Challenges Experienced by Information Institutions in Promoting Cultural Heritage

The study discovered that the three heritage institutions face similar challenges with inadequate funding. Other challenges confronting the institutions as revealed by the study included lack of permanent site or building for the institutions. Specifically, the National library considered non-compliance of the public with the legal deposit law to be a challenge in their service delivery, while the museum considered public perception or non-appreciation of the museum as a major challenge.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the role of libraries, archives and museums on the promotion and development of culture in Kwara State, Nigeria. The first objective was to investigate how libraries, archives and museums acquire, preserve and create access to cultural materials. The research findings on the acquisition of cultural materials corroborated the study of Kimura et al. (2014).The principles of acquisition identified by the interviewees also reflected harmony with those established by AMA (2014). On perseveration, it was revealed that preserving cultural objects should not prevent access so that one the purpose of their preservation is not jettisoned. This resonates with submission of Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa (2011).

Meanwhile, the result of preservation of cultural preservation is not yet satisfactory. Similar findings were reported by Akor (2010), Ovowoh and Iwhiwhu (2010),and Ekwelem, Okafor and Ukwoma (2011). The challenges of electronic and digital means of preservation and dissemination remained as highlighted by Umudike et al. (2011). On their dissemination, the myriad of approaches used by the heritage institutions can yield results if further strengthened. Furthermore, the existing modes of accessing the cultural heritages are admirable, but could be enhanced by user orientation and other innovative use of ICT. Nevertheless, the dissemination of the cultural information obtained from the study resonated with the submission of The National

Commission for Museums and Monuments (2010), Chigbu and Ezema (2011), Daley (2015) and Bradley (2005).

With the second objective, the study identified the strategies put in place to enable libraries, archives and museums promote and develop culture in Kwara State. The interviews confirmed that the cultural heritage institutions strategise to promote culture through campaign against legal deposit evasion, encouraging publications in indigenous languages, attending local programmes, visit to traditional rulers, involving local communities in programmes, media coverage of cultural programmes, tourism development, public lectures, seminars and publicities. The finding was in line with the submission of Nwaolikpe (2013) who regarded communication as one phenomenon that can help promote and develop culture. Rotich (2012) also noted that cultural tourism is an efficient means of promoting culture. However, the low use of ICT for this purpose did not fall in line with the report of Corbett and Boddington (2011) and European Commission (2014) that digitization, electronic resources and the internet were used for the promotion of culture. Nevertheless, the use of media coverage and radio programs by the heritage institutions aligned with the submission of Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa (2011) that mass media, heritage club seminars and workshops are necessary for cultural promotion.

Further, the study also determined the working conditions of personnel in the library, archives and museum. It was revealed that the heritage institutions' staff derive motivation from salary increment, promotion, on-the-job training and academic advancement, sponsorship to workshop, seminars and conferences, words of encouragement from leadership, and cordiality between them and the management. However, their incentive sources, as revealed by the study, included allowances embedded in their salaries, while their sources of inspiration included professionalism and leadership's commitment and dedication. Sorensen and Peuter (2011) earlier confirmed this by explaining that if their job is challenging, interesting, rewarding and they have satisfactory relationships with their employers, information managers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, perform their jobs more effectively, and be more motivated to innovate.

Considering the fourth objective of this study, it was confirmed that collaboration among the information institutions for cultural promotion is only existing on the micro level. Zaid and Abioye (2010) had earlier described that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC) of the United Kingdom and the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) are formal institutions that combine efforts and operations for

enhanced services in developing their cultures. This resonated with the submissions of Allen and Bishoff (2002), Diamant-Cohen and Sherman (2003), Lester (2001), Brown and Pollack (2000), Yakel (2005), Geber (2005), Morris and Cleeve (2007) and Aina (2008).

The last objective of the study was to inquire the challenges experienced by information institutions in their efforts towards the promotion and development of culture. The challenges as revealed by the study included lack of permanent site/building, evasion of legal deposit obligation, poor reading culture of citizens, insufficient fund for procurement of materials, low patronage, inadequate ICT facilities and low rate of indigenous publications. This agreed with an earlier finding by Nwegbu, Eze and Asogwa (2011) that the Nigerian heritage institutions' predicament of ICT problem drastically sets them back in their pro-cultural commitment. Meawnhil, Iyorza (2014) also revealed that the media and other information centres are responsible for the outburst of western culture and its dominance over Nigerian indigenous tradition because they inadvertently promote the former over the latter.

CONCLUSION

To an appreciable extent, the National Library of Nigeria, Kwara State Branch, the National Museum, Esie and the University of Ilorin Archives and Documentation Centre are striving hard to ensure cultural promotion and development as part of their objectives and functions, but some observable challenges have are militating against their optimal performance in this regards.

The three heritage institutions examined in this study are ready to integrate cultural development and promotion into their services if adequately funded and supported. They have put in place strategies to ensure cultural development and can serve as important facilities that will protect Nigerian culture from being totally eroded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

i.   Government should provide adequate fund to finance major activities and services of the heritage institutions to protect our culture.

ii.   Befitting permanent sites/building should be provided as a credible abode for these institutions.

iii. Libraries, archives and museums should conduct enlightenment and sentisization campaign to inform the public of their roles in cultural promotion.

iv. Indigenous publications should be promoted to document the culture of different communities and societies in Kwara State in order to increase the cultural treasure of the State.

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