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LOBBYING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING SURVIVAL OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: IMPLICATION FOR ADVOCACY

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Abstract

This study dealt with lobbying strategies for promoting survival of academic libraries. Survey was the research design used. Three states (Anambra, Benue, and Enugu) in Nigeria were covered. Five university libraries were purposively chosen. All Librarians were used. The instrument used was questionnaire, which has four clusters dealing with the four specific objectives of the study. The information obtained from respondents was analyzed using mean. From the result, it was seen that lobbying in academic libraries is very necessary. Our leaders need to know about issues facing libraries. Furthermore there is poor funding of universities. The study also revealed that lobbying is best done face to face in communication. On the other hand hindrance factors identified include that librarians have not always been willing to get into politics and the absence of professional lobbyists and marketers within the library profession. Suggested remedies include that librarians should be able to make case for the existence of the library and also they should seek for ways to improve their services. Some of the recommendations include that: Librarians should begin to lobby, University libraries should team up to secure support and Library education curriculum should include training in lobbying and marketing.

Introduction

The sub-theme “ lobbying and advocacy” is apt and timely because these are the concepts any organization must buy for survival and relevance. Librarians should adopt these strategies for survival.. For Nigerian academic libraries to be positioned as agents of socio-economic and democratic advancements leading to good governance, they will need to undergo real paradigm shift in their structure, activities and service delivery approaches. This call for paradigm shift is premised on the need and desire for change not just a change within library structures and activities but holistically worldwide. This include that libraries are at crossroad and also that their positions are being threatened by ICT based information providers, agencies and brokers. It is only through networking among library institutions, collaborations with other related bodies like library Association as well as advocacy and lobbying among other that libraries can survive (Kionge,2011)

Academic libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnic , colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, colleges of technology and also research institutes (Akporhonor, 2005). Singh and Kaur (2009) stressed 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 and research. The academic library is a social service organization that is capital intensive. Money is needed for building, physical facilities, books, journals, electronic resources, personnel, etc. (Ehigiator, 1997).Academic library is a library that is attached to an academic institution above the secondary level, serving the teaching and research needs of students and staff. These libraries serve two complementary purposes: to support the school's curriculum and to support the research activities of the university faculty and students. The support of teaching requires material for class readings and for students. (Wikipedia,2013)

Abubakar (2011) said that academic libraries in Nigeria are at a crossroad. This is because they are operating in an era of dwindling finances where resources (financial and materials)do not meet basic needs. Nigerian academic libraries derive the greater part of their funds from the government (both Federal and State). Okiy (2005) stated that of all the different types of libraries in Nigeria, only university libraries have a clearly defined policy of funding, because they are allocated 10% of the recurrent annual budget of their parent institutions. We do not know how many university librarians can acknowledge receipt of the 10% of the recurrent budget stipulated by NUC for libraries from their parent institutions

Many a time academic libraries are referred to as the heart or hub of their parent institutions. There is a paradigm shift from traditional library and information services to information super high-way which has dramatically changed the environment to e-environment and this has invariably necessitated that libraries and their librarians should be proactive and do what they are not doing before in order to survive the economic and technological downturn and that bring us to lobbying and advocacy. To be effective, political marketing, like lobbying requires political conflicts and contradiction, lobbying is, at its best, conflict resolution. Lobbying does not have a clear-cut beginning or end but is an unending process. What is important to understand, however, is that as the decision-making process advances, the lobbyist's prospects of influencing anything get smaller and smaller all the time.

Kionge, (2011) sees lobbying as one of the ways in which advocacy work can be done. It is a particular kind of advocacy where influential individuals are booked and lobbied using strategies like face to face, persuasive meetings, focus group discussion, and memorandum and appeal notes. He went further to state that advocacy is influencing for change, it is a strategy of working with other stakeholders (building synergies) through a strategy of changing their attitude, opinions, as well as stirring their participation, interests and commitments in addressing the issues at hand.

Lobbying is a strategic planned and informal way of influencing decision-makers. Characteristics are open (two way) communication influencing by linking the interests of different stakeholders, creating win-win situations and investing in long term relationships with decision makers. (Sloot and Gaanderse, 2010). Lobbying according to Ileri (2013) means the attempt to influence those who make policies, the legislators. In libraries, it means seeking to influence public officials e.g council members, committee members. Ileri further advises that libraries should come up with well thought of strategies for fundraising and lobbying if they have to survive in this era of great competition and information explosion. For academic libraries to compete favorably with regards to new shift in information services, they have to lobby to have the support of all the stakeholders in the institutions. Mlenga (2013) sees advocacy as a sustained effort by librarians and library associations to keep libraries and the work they do in the minds of the people who make the decisions that affect libraries. Issues in library advocacy include funding, accessibility for specialized groups, intellectual freedom, preferential treatment given to libraries as compared to other sectors amongst many. Apart from

librarians; library users, community members, friends of the library, library committee and board members etc can be library advocates

Authors like Simmons-welburn, McNeil and Welburn (2007) argued that in recent years interest has grown among librarians on developing strategies that garner support for library initiatives and influence policy decision-making. This practice according to them characterized academic libraries as increasing advocacy among faculty and administrators using influence and persuasion. To support lobbying and advocacy in libraries. ACRL president stated that:

‘‘We can no longer act like we have a captive audience on our campuses. We need to become advocates and convince others to help champion our cause to meet the mission of our colleges and universities to better serve our students and faculty. We can and shouldn’t do it alone’’(Alire,2005)

The need arises for advocacy and lobbying because academic libraries are not immune to having their funding or programmes jeopardized by changing political environment. Academic libraries are not considered crucial as compared to other sectors like health, education, roads and they don’t spend a lot of money so are not considered being big players. Libraries are confronting with many problems mainly due to the challenges posed by technological developments; therefore it is important for people to know what library is all about, what they do, and where they are. (Mlanga,2013) .He was of the opinion that successful advocacy combines lobbying activities with marketing and public relations. Advocate efforts should be directed towards major stakeholders, elected officers in the universities, council members, library committee, directors of institutes, deans and heads of faculties and friends of the library. Whoever is advocating for library should be active in the community, understand the power structure and be highly connected.

Yang(2010) in narrating their challenges of catapulting their institute from being a polytechnic to a comprehensive academic institute face many challenges in the transformation of their library because they need additional fund to provide academic resources supporting newly built disciplines such as bioscience, engineering etc. He explained many strategies he used to lobby governing bodies for library funding. First, he communicated clearly by making sure the governing board, vice-chancellor and bursar are regularly updated on the library’s financial

requirement. He also tasked library champions or what you may call friends of the library to help in outreach. The practice is to make the key professor of each discipline responsible for helping spread the good word. He also advice that a library director today must not only struggle for enough budget, but balance the different requirements.

Libraries can also lobby publishers to change e-book policies. Some publishers refuse to sell e-books to libraries, or do so at high cost. In strategizing for a way out, the dauphin and Cumberland county library systems are asking patrons to join them and libraries around the country in lobbying publishers for improved e-books service and availability for library users(Bell,2012)

In order to be relevant, libraries and librarians should get involved in campus wide groups that set research, policies, maintain and be in fore front in grant seeking. Taking a leadership role in grant-getting can help academic library better serve its constituents and strengthen its own position (Downing,Doepker.and Bonnet,2009)What they are actually saying is that libraries should tell the community who they are? What they do? Where they are and where they will be? In that case library will be relevant to the entire institution and invariably yield good result when lobbied.

The problem with library in general and academic libraries in particular is that we are not involved in politics (not politically minded). A lot is happening in our institutions and it is only lobbying and advocacy can save us. University of Nigeria Nsukka library is experiencing some challenges partly because only the University librarian is a member of the senate. For example, the teaching of “the Use of library” and where it will be domiciled. Another experience the library is undergoing is the issue of practicing librarians becoming professors from the library; many people have been met, lobbied. The library were asked to find out how other libraries do their own even those without library schools, meanwhile the library has not come out yet with any finding

There is yet another urgent issue libraries should lobby and advocate for now, the issue of 10% of university budget going to the library. We know that many academic libraries are not receiving this money and we think it is high time libraries woke up to brace the challenges. This means that university librarians and other top library managers should belong to association that matter in the university such as staff club, ASUU etc and get closer to elected offers especially

university bursar. Even though the National University Commission (NUC) ordered that the amount should be released to library but you will agree with us that, not many universities comply. Libraries should come together, strategize and find a way to deal with this problem. We suggest that the only thing ‘’is for libraries to be proactive, service and user oriented’’ and in that case, the administrators and other stakeholders will listen to them when they lobby and advocate.

A director today must not only struggle for enough budget, but balance the different requirements. But a little bit of strategy can go a long way. Lobbying therefore is the art of influencing and informing an elected official; with budget for academic library services becoming tighter, libraries are being asked to develop new skills in marketing, fundraising and lobbying in addition to the traditional skills required for information management

It is in the light of the above, that academic libraries in Nigeria in particular need to come together, network to strategize on ways to advocate and lobby for material, fund and human resources in order to meet up with the technological challenges in this information age

Purpose

The general objective of the study is to investigate lobbying strategies for enhancing the survival of academic libraries in Nigeria. Specific objectives include:

1. Ascertain the need for lobbying in academic libraries
2. Find out various ways academic libraries can lobby
3. Find out obstacles that militate against lobbying in academic libraries
4. Examine ways the obstacles can be tackled

Literature Review

Lobbying has been a long age phenomenon that is not well pronounced in libraries especially in Nigeria . For instance, an European agency ‘‘EBLIDA’’ is the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations .According to EBLIDA(2009)their main goal since 1992 is to lobby for libraries in Europe .EBLIDA lobbies to defend and promote the interest of the library, archive and information sector and professionals in Europe. EBLIDA and NAPLE in 2009 proposed a library policy for Europe(also known as the Vienna

Declaration) unified Europe, offering equal rights and opportunities for all its citizens, with a common European library policy, etc. EBLIDAS continued in 2012 with a position paper. ‘European libraries and the challenges of e-publishing’ released during the joint conference EBLIDA and NAPLE forum held in Copenhagen (Denmark) in May 2012 . From the discussion above it means that lobbying and advocacy goes on until result is actualized. You continue lobbying until result is achieved

According to Meraz(2002) who stated that successfully managing libraries begins by securing funding and favorable library policies. Whether one reports to a city council, a university board, or a corporate division, securing budget funds – and, for that matter, most other operational resources – is a process of justification, persuasion and commitment. Knowledge of lobbying techniques is useful in promoting library needs to decision makers. Three areas related to lobbying can be of benefit to library managers. These areas are: positioning oneself to be an effective lobbyist; making the most out of the “lobbying meeting”; and the lobbying arena.

It is clear that by sharing expertise, building partnerships and alliances, it is possible to address common issues much more effectively than when working alone. What is special is that potentially the most powerful form of cooperation is advocacy at the national and international levels. It is at this stage that Mark(2007) opined that It is essential for academic library associations to work together at the political level to move their agenda forward. Examples are lobbying about copyright legislation (nationally, or within the EC or at WIPO); or promoting the cause of Open Access. The unique value of LIBER is to provide a forum and a platform for European research library associations to explore and benefit from cooperation and their shared strength.

Borges(2005) gives a quick and easy approach to library advocacy, with regard to the ongoing needs of keeping in touch with stakeholders due to poor or reducing government funding for libraries in the USA. This often tied to “Who” the library knows and his ‘article’ gives a direct ‘how to’ approach that can be used throughout the local, state or federal lobbying process especially in meeting the sophisticated demands of library users. This approach ties funding to patron activities, such as reading electronic resources and programme .According to Turja .(2008) librarians have not usually been very active in political sense. He went further to state that. “he has studied the activities of the parliamentary groups, but he does not know of a single occasion in which representatives of the library sector have been invited to hearings by the parliamentary groups. Teachers and other groups have been heard by different groups on several

occasions. So librarians should become more engaged in politics, if they wish to have the voice of the library sector heard more forcefully also within parliamentary groups”

Simmions-Welburn et al (2007) carried out an exploratory attempt to open the prospect of observing advocacy as a strategy to exert power and influence beyond the walls of the library to other campus-level decision makers of measuring advocacy in-action among Deans and Directors of Academic Libraries. They were able to place their study within a broader context of power and influence exercised by deans and directors in their effort to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do” Their result was in line with prior research in the field on efforts to study executive lateral influence

McFarlin(2005) in his study suggested fertile ground for further research on influence as a way of analyzing advocacy as a way for libraries to get things done on collage campuses, as a way of seeing how library deans and directors cope with organizational politics. Meadowcroft (2013), summarized some lobbying tactics used by NGOs such as, being well briefed, knowing the timetable of decision making on the issue in question, particularly if the party or the committee involved is known to be discussing it privately; Well developed; that is think through the tactics of your approach; Well behaved, that is don't ever become angry! Always remain cool and polite, whatever the provocation; well judged, be careful about your use of the media. Good media coverage can often be very useful to lobbying but, if you have appointments with members, it is not usually wise to let your case appear in the press before your meetings; Well written ,remember that most people are very busy and that they may well find it difficult to draft motions or amendments or items of legislation. If it is legislation you are seeking then it is therefore important to have what you want him or her to do, drafted in a form which is easy to use; well prepared, try and build up a good reference library on your subject. It is not too difficult - particularly with the immense potential of the Internet; Finally, If you have a good case, you can enhance it by good strategy and good tactics. If you haven't a good case, you're likely to be found out!

Turja (2008) discussing lobbying in Finland, suggested cooperation, ‘‘ the broader the coalition supporting the matter, the more effective lobbying will be’’. For example, the association of Finnish Pharmacies and state library Bureau came up with the idea that books and medicine could be transported to rural districts together. So combined shipments of medicines and books were, in fact, carried out with the aid of state funding for a few years, hence their combined advocates and lobbying yielded result

Methodology

The research design for this study was descriptive survey. Area of study covered three states of Nigeria, namely Anambra, Benue and Enugu. The rationale for choosing these states was that the three researchers reside and work in these three states. Five universities namely: Anambra State University ,Uli; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka both in Anambra State; Benue State University, Markurdi, University of Agriculture,Markurdi both in Benue State and University of Nigeria in Enugu State were purposively selected and eighty librarians of those universities form the population of the study. For sampling, all the Librarians in those institutions under study were used. In all, eighty questionnaires were distributed representing total number of librarians in those universities while sixty one were collected from respondents and used. Questionnaire was the instrument used in the study. There were forty-two items in four clusters covering the four specific objectives of the study. The information obtained was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Tables and bar chart were also used for clarity.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Need for Lobbying in Academic Libraries

S/N	Items	Mean	Std Deviation
1	Our elected leaders need to know about issues facing libraries and the public we serve	3.5686	.500
2	Poor or inadequate funding	3.3922	.695
3	Poor awareness of values of libraries	3.3725	.662
4	Competition in attracting funding	3.3333	.739
5	It is a means of getting support of all sectors that matter	3.2941	.576
6	Poor infrastructure e.g. building, electricity	3.2941	.642
7	Poor reading culture	3.2941	.672
8	Libraries are not considered as essential as other sectors e.g. health, education	3.2549	.977
9	Limited access to policy makers	3.2353	.764
10	Non existing legal framework	3.2157	.673
11	Lack of political will for library development	3.1569	.703
12	Lobbying is a skill required for information management	3.0980	.700
13	Absence of an overall coordinating body	3.0784	.717
14	Inadequate and unqualified staff	2.9412	.810

This study has shown that lobbying in academic libraries is necessary for various reasons. The two reasons with the highest means as shown on table 1 are:

- (1) Making elected leaders to know about issues facing libraries and the library publics, and
- (2) The fact that there is poor or inadequate funding in institutions where the libraries exist.

The finding of this study agrees with Kionge (2011) who says that lobbying is a kind of advocacy where influencing individuals are booked and lobbied. These influencing individuals could be the elected leaders who need to know about the library. Ileri (2013) has it that lobbying means an attempt to influence those who make policies. In an academic library these could be the institution`s Council members and the Library Committee/Board members. Furthermore, Milanga (2013) suggests that lobbying activities should be directed towards major stakeholders, elected officers in the university, Council members, Library Committee, Directors of Institutes, Deans and Heads of faculties .Another reason for lobbying is as identified by Ileri (2013) who advised

that libraries should map out strategies for fund raising and lobbying in order to survive in this era of great competition and information explosion.

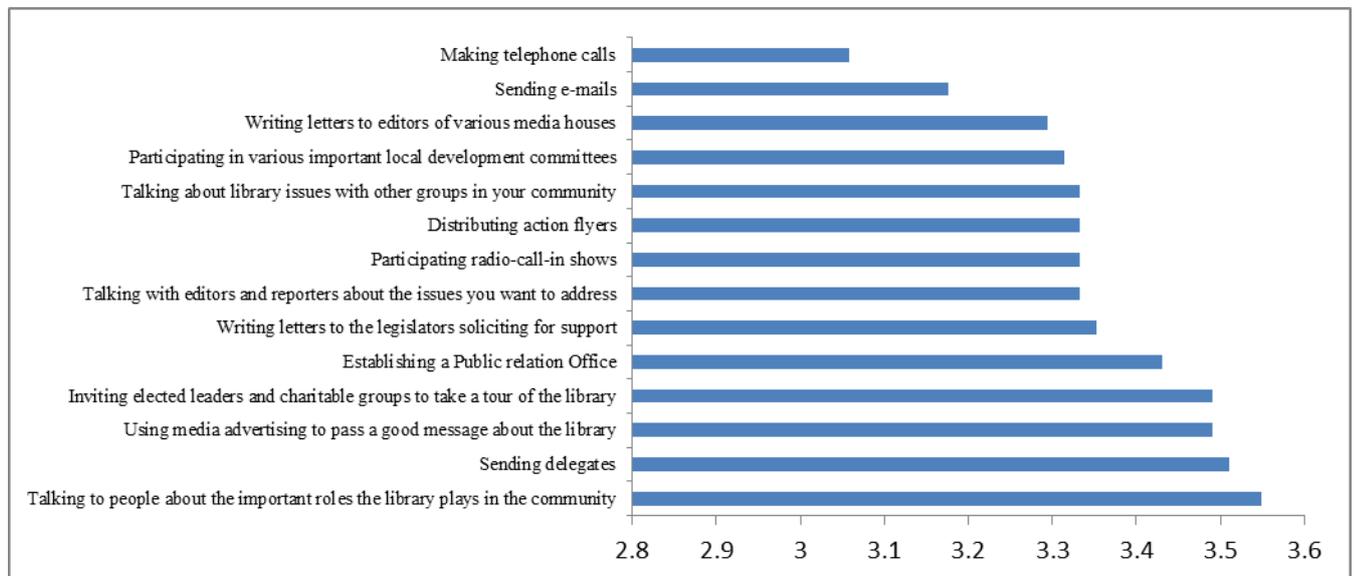


Figure 1: methods of Lobbying in Academic Libraries

It could be seen from figure 1, that there are several ways of lobbying in academic libraries. It is also seen that the two ways with the highest means are firstly talking to people about the important role the library plays in the community and secondly sending delegates. In both ways, direct or face to face contact is involved. This is in agreement with Kionge (2011) who says that influencing individuals are booked and lobbied using strategies like face to face, persuasive meetings and focus group discussion. This study also reveals that making telephone calls and sending e-mails are not preferred ways of lobbying. Of course for effective lobbying the lobbyist needs to see whom he wants to lobby.

Table 2: Factors Hindering Lobbying Activities in Academic Libraries

S/N	Item	Mean	Std deviation
1	Librarians have not always been willing to get into politics	3.4706	.758
2	Lack of professional lobbyists and marketers within the library profession	3.4510	.757
3	Perceived expenses involved	3.1373	.825
4	Donors not being convinced on why donation should go to the library	3.0980	.878
5	Legislators or other officials' refusal to listen to librarians	2.8627	1.020
6	Donors not having the required fund	2.6667	.993
7	Librarians lack of desire to improve service delivery	2.6078	1.041

Table 2 shows that several factors hinder lobbying activities in academic libraries. The two items with the highest means are that: (1) librarians are not always willing to get into politics and (2) there are no professional lobbyist and marketers within the library profession. The fact that lack of professional lobbyists and marketers hinder lobbying in libraries supports Ireri's (2013) call for librarians in Kenya to develop new skills in marketing, fund raising and lobbying in addition to the traditional skills required for information management. This call goes on to add that librarians need to lobby to have the support of all the sectors that matter in order to survive. Other factors that hinder lobbying in academic libraries as identified by the respondents include: Parent institution not being fully supportive of library development; Librarians cannot by-pass the vice chancellor to go to lobby outside the university. It is important to know that lobbying can be either within or outside the institution. It depends on the purpose; the library does not advertise itself through its activities and programmes; NLA at various levels is not doing enough as a body

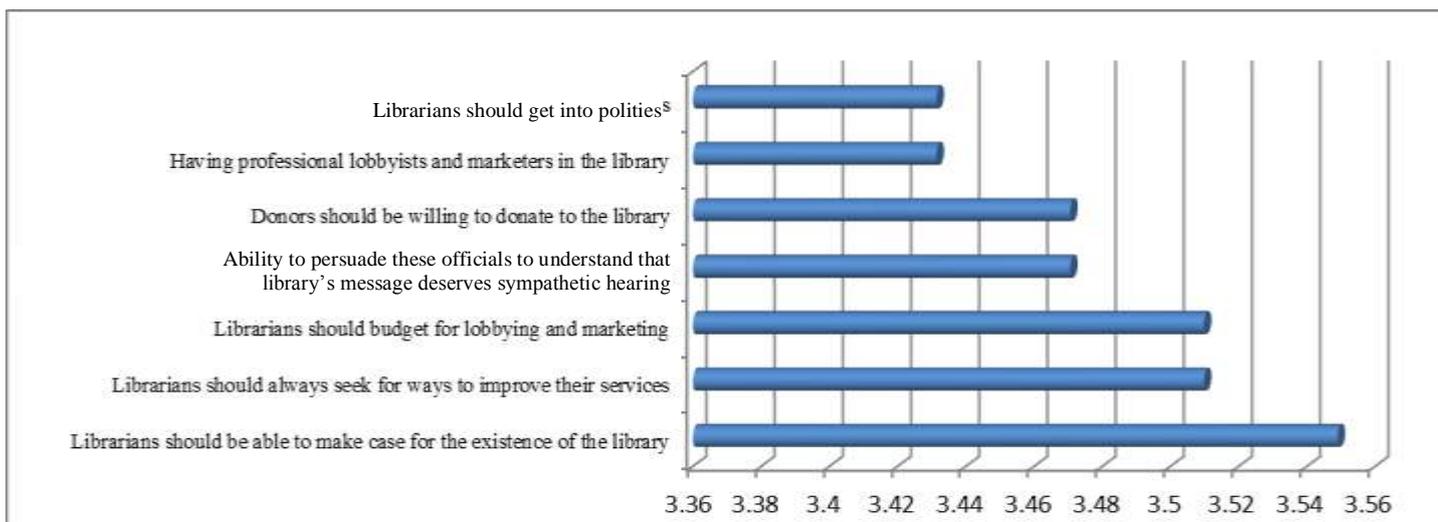


Figure 2: Ways of dealing with Hindrances to Lobbying in Academic Libraries.

From figure 2, it could be seen that all the methods itemized, help in dealing with lobbying problems in academic libraries. However, the three methods with the highest means are: (1) Librarians should be able to make case for the existence of the library. (2) Librarians should always seek for ways to improve their services. (3) Librarians should budget for lobbying and marketing.

This study shows a support to Turja's (2008) finding that librarians need to become more engaged in politics, if they wish to have their voices heard. Furthermore, the respondents suggested other methods of dealing with hindrances to lobbying in academic libraries. These include: There should be less political instability in the country to allow stability in projects; Librarians should endeavor to impress their vice chancellor to carry them along as he seeks for funds; Librarians should belong to groups like Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and senior staff club in their universities; NLA should champion the course of libraries more. There are success stories of Library Associations in other parts of the world. For example, Kenya Library Association lobbied with the government and contributed to the curriculum and establishment of Faculty of Information Sciences at Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya. They also lobbied with government on review of terms and conditions of service for librarians working in the civil service.

Conclusion and Recommendations

(1) It is evident from this study that lobbying and advocacy are very important for academic libraries to survive in this era of economic quagmire. The need for lobbying as identified in this **study include:** Making elected leaders to know about issues facing libraries and the library publics, and the fact that there is poor or inadequate funding in institutions where the libraries exist. The study identified various ways academic libraries which include: talking to people about the important role the library plays in the community and secondly sending delegates. Problems were identified and ways of tackling were suggested. In view of the above problems, the following recommendations are being suggested

1. University librarians can improve their resources by forming co operations among themselves. This can involve inter-library lending, cooperative acquisition, exchange of information materials and library consortia which involves network of libraries in order to enable them share current materials in form of e-journals, databases, books and computer software for various purposes.' University libraries should team up to secure support.
2. Training on ways and means of lobbying should be carried out and included in the library education curriculum
3. There are many strategies for lobbying and advocating for academic libraries. The University or College librarians must be a political person, belong to university senior staff club where decisions are been taken, involve in consultancy services in all the academic unit in the institution, provide services like scholarly communication and intellectual property to all faculty members, be a strong member of professional association both locally and nationally because association provides a forum and vehicle that allows the voice of librarians to be heard. Librarians should also be strong members of academic staff union of universities. The librarians should work with the board to implement a library system advocacy plan, identify supporters who understand the library's service needs and approach decision makers in person for support for the library's programme

It is expected that if those suggestions are adopted, academic libraries will use their strategies to advocate before policy makers and it will result to policy guide line.

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