

**Protocol**

The Vice Chancellor,  
The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development Services),  
The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Management Services),  
The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics and Research),  
The Acting Registrar,  
The Bursar,  
The Provost, College of Medicine,  
The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Deans of other Faculties,  
Members of the University Senate,  
Heads of Departments,  
Distinguished Academic and Professional Colleagues,  
Distinguished Non-Teaching Colleagues (Administrative & Technical),  
Your Lordships (Spiritual and Temporal),  
Dear Students,  
Members of the Press (Print & Electronic Media),  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

**PREAMBLE**

With all sense of humility and gratitude to the Almighty God, I stand here today to present my inaugural lecture, thereby fulfilling my obligations to the University of Lagos. I am a product of God's grace. My journey into librarianship was ordained by God because studying Library Science never crossed my mind as a potential field of specialisation. My heart's desire was to work in an academic environment; after my Bachelor of Arts degree from Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University) in 1992, I was posted to the University of Lagos for my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC).

My core duties as a Youth Corper at the Department of Curriculum Studies (now Department of Arts and Social Science Education), Faculty of Education, were attending to students' requests and filing departmental records. During one of my visits to the Cash Office to collect my monthly allowance, I entered the University Library just to take a tour of the facility, with the aim of comparing it with the library of the University where I graduated from. Prior to that visit, I had no idea of the career path in librarianship, but I met one of the librarians who explained to me the career

progression of academic librarianship. My dream and aspiration of becoming an academic librarian was initiated after that visit.

After the completion of the NYSC programme in 1994, I enrolled into the University of Ibadan for a Master's degree programme in Library and Information Studies. My interest in academic libraries was the premise for my choice of the University of Lagos as the institution for the mandatory three months industrial training programme in the library in 1996. After my Master's degree programme, I sought a job at the University of Lagos through an external advertisement in the Guardian Newspaper and was employed as a Librarian II on the 8th of July 2002. I worked in various departments over the years and became the University Librarian by appointment on March 14, 2019. It is noteworthy to mention that this year marks twenty-two years of unbroken professional practice at the University of Lagos, and I give all glory to God. On this note, I warmly welcome everyone seated in this auditorium and all those watching online.

Madam Vice Chancellor, with the understanding that elevation to the rank of a professor in any university comes with the obligation to deliver a public lecture to inaugurate the chair, I feel honored to deliver the 9<sup>th</sup> professorial inaugural lecture series for the 2023/2024 academic session, having been announced as a Professor by the Governing Council of this great University in October 2021. I am glad that history is made today! This is the first inaugural lecture to be delivered by a Professor of Library and Information Science at the University of Lagos since the inception of the university.

Madam Vice Chancellor, I am most grateful for your kind approval to deliver this lecture today, February 14, 2024. It is indeed a date specially reserved for me, being the day, the University Library is celebrating the third edition of a social inclusion event tagged Library Lovers' Day.

As the Pioneer Professor of Library and Information Science, with skills in strategic aspects of library development and management, I have exploited this knowledge to my advantage as a researcher at this great university. My research work transverse the whole spectrum of library science, information use and services, knowledge organisation, library management, information literacy and library services to persons with disabilities. My research and professional experiences have enriched me

through my participation in multi-sectoral activities with several institutions and scholars both at the national and global levels.

In the course of my career as an academic librarian and researcher, providence afforded me the opportunity of having direct contact with faculty and students in meeting their information needs to support teaching, learning and research activities. Meeting information needs has been rewarding but not without some challenges especially with regards to supporting students with disabilities, particularly those with vision impairment. These challenges are closely linked to the imbalance in accessing the physical library building and its holdings; the library catalogue; retrieval of books and other learning resources from the shelf; as well as accessing electronic information resources that are only compatible with the needs and reading habits of sighted patrons.

My professional and research endeavors have been devoted to an in-depth examination of the need to organise information resources and services in different contexts for ease of use; identifying the information needs of various user groups to create an environment that assures the use of library resources for all, including persons with disabilities, and promoting information literacy. In the real sense, my research has been in the area of inclusive library services. My journey into this special area started in May 2013, when I met Miss Ngozi Ukpai-Okoro, a visually impaired student in the University Library.

I was then serving as the Head of Readers' Services Department and during my routine check on usage evaluation, I met Ngozi at the library lobby looking somehow unclear about how to access the traditional author/title catalogue to retrieve the bibliographic details of two textbooks required for a class assignment. Since one of my core duties as a librarian is to provide support service to library users, I retrieved the textbooks and converted them into a machine-readable format for her to use. Thereafter, Ngozi and I established a mentor-mentee relationship until she graduated from the Department of Sociology in April 2014. Her special visit to my office for a personal picture on the day of her graduation as captured in Figure 1 further deepened my passion for providing library support services to students with vision impairment. Today, I am delighted to announce to this audience that Ngozi not only holds a BSc degree in Sociology from the

University of Lagos but also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and had her convocation in January 2024.



**Figure 1:** Ngozi's visit to my office as Head of Readers' Services Department during her graduation ceremony in April 2014.

#### **STRUCTURE OF THE LECTURE**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 The Concept of Inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals
- 2.0 Theoretical framework
- 3.0 Global and International Standards on Inclusive Services for Persons with Disabilities
- 4.0 Students with Visual Impairment in Higher Education
  - 4.1 Diverse Student Population in Higher Education
  - 4.2 Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities in Higher Education
  - 4.3 Application of Universal Design in University Libraries: Issues in Nigeria
- 5.0 Disability Support Services in Higher Education
  - 5.1 Disability Support Services at the University of Lagos
- 6.0 Contributions to the Academia and Professional Practice
  - 6.1 Research activities
  - 6.2 Professional practice
- 7.0 Concluding Remarks

8.0	Recommendations
9.0	Acknowledgements
10.0	References

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

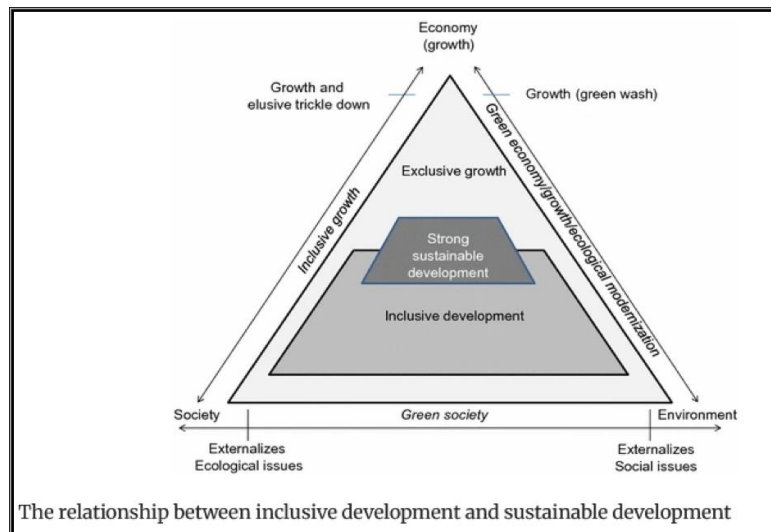
The development of libraries in Nigeria began during the colonial era with the establishment of a private library known as Tom Jones Library between 1910 and 1920. In 1932, the Carnegie Corporation of New York gave a grant of \$6000 to the Lagos Book Club and it metamorphosed into Lagos Library in June 1932. Public libraries in the Western region of Nigeria evolved from Lagos Book Club in 1967. The first academic library in Nigeria was established in the Yaba Higher College (now Yaba College of Technology) in 1934 (Iwe, 2007). This was followed by the emergence of the University College Library in Ibadan in 1948 and other first-generation university libraries, including University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), Obafemi Awolowo University (1962), Ahmadu Bello University, (1962) and University of Lagos (1962), respectively (Anyawu, 2020). The number of university libraries in Nigeria has been increasing since the 1970s with the establishment of second, third and fourth-generation universities. As at January 2024, the number of approved Nigerian universities had increased to 262, consisting of 147 private universities, 52 federal universities and 63 states universities (National Universities Commission, 2023).

Library service provision has thus evolved, such that libraries are changing from traditional methods to cutting edge information delivery mode in terms of expanded vision, which can be observed in library collection, facilities, services, staffing, and deployment of free and licensed digital resources as well as spaces. In a modern library, information resources and services are provided to a heterogeneous user population. University libraries in Nigeria have been in a state of transition in an attempt to reflect best practices in information service delivery.

Madam Vice Chancellor, it is generally recognised that university libraries are service-oriented organisations that must, within the context of the institutional mission, meet the information needs of the populations they serve and thereby convert them into delighted library users. It is therefore the primary objective of any library to ensure that no segment of the population covered by the institutional mission is left behind in terms of

access to learning resources. Unfortunately, studies have shown that discussions of the role of libraries in meeting the information needs of society tend to focus only on general populations - faculty, students and staff - and not on some of the so-called special populations (for example students needing remedial studies, international students who are disadvantaged in their ability to communicate in English both orally and in written form, and students with disabilities which could be in form of mobility impairment, hearing impairment, cognitive disability and vision impairment). This lecture therefore addresses one of these populations – students with vision impairment. The need for greater inclusion of their expectations in the planning and delivery of library services is the consideration underpinning the choice of today's inaugural lecture titled: **WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER.**

The expression "what is good for the goose is good for the gander " as used in this lecture can be interpreted from figurative, proverbial, metaphorical and philosophical perspectives. The actual interpretation of the expression may depend on the purpose for which it is used. Generally, the expression is applicable to different contexts such as: equality versus inequality, inclusion versus exclusion, diversity versus homogeneity, peace versus conflict and so on. In fact, the expression is clearly demonstrated in the United Nations' Agenda 2030 which is popularly known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), given that the main pillars of the SDGs comprise: Economic inclusiveness, Social Inclusiveness and Environmental Inclusiveness. An illustration of the linkages between inclusiveness and the SDGs is presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Inclusiveness in the SDGs.** Source: Adapted from Gupta and Vegelin (2016).

The main focus of this lecture is closely associated with social inclusiveness in different ways, particularly from the lens of inclusive library services.

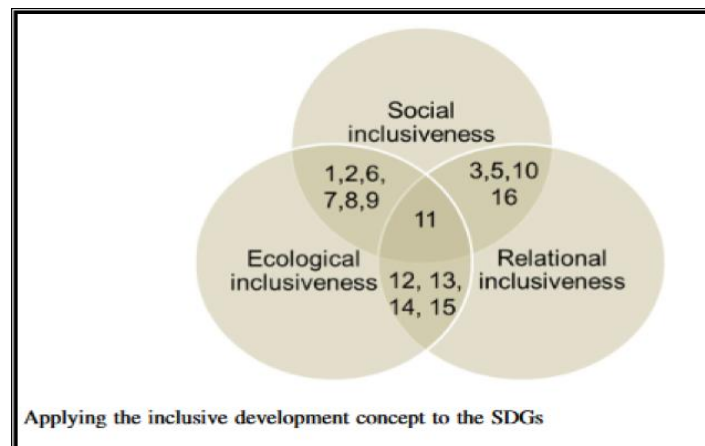
### 1.1 The Concept of Inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations document, 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' includes a declaration of the 17 SDGs and their respective targets along with follow-up and review measures. The Agenda is universal, holistic, indivisible, and non-discriminatory, with a core principle to leave no one behind. An infographic representation of the 17 SDGs is presented in Figure 3 to demonstrate the appearance of inclusion in some of the SDGs.



**Figure 3: Infographic of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**  
**Source:** <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) document has a rhetorical commitment to 'Inclusiveness'. While surveying the 17 SDGs to assess how well they represent inclusiveness, Gupta and Vegelin (2016) reported that the SDG scores well on the articulation of inclusiveness - as 11 of the 17 goals focus on issues concerning the most marginalised as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Application of Inclusiveness to the SDGs.** **Source:** Adapted from Gupta and Vegelin (2016).



Surprisingly, the above-mentioned report excluded the SDG scores on the articulation of inclusiveness in SDG 4 - Quality Education, an area in which inclusive library services are mostly required. Madam Vice-Chancellor, I wish to state unequivocally that the articulation of inclusiveness is not in doubt in the SDG 4 - Quality Education, among others. The issue of quality education as espoused in the SDGs is an area with direct bearing on library services and information science. Therefore, the lacuna that I observed in the abovementioned report of the SDG scores on the articulation of inclusiveness in the SDGs implies that the subject matter of inclusion can be found in at least 12 of the 17 SDGs.

Although the SDG document does not categorically mention 'inclusive library services' but given the importance of quality education for all and the provision of equitable and inclusive library services for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability, sustainable development goals 4 and 10 have serious implications for inclusive library services. While Goal 4 is focused on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 10 focuses on reducing inequality. The two goals play a central role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies. To achieve goals 4 and 10 everyone (government, private sector, academic institutions, civil society, and all of us) must think inclusively. To think inclusively in any educational setting is to embrace the culture of making our campuses, facilities, resources, services, learning materials, information resources and library services accessible to all in order to meet the academic and research needs of students living with various forms of disabilities, who form part of the campus population. By extension, the inclusive culture also touches on making our society and every sector of the economy; healthcare, banking, transport system and job sector more accessible for people living with disabilities.

Madam Vice Chancellor, I want to affirm the fact that the library is the repository and collective memory of any academic community, the transmitter of knowledge across time and space, and the bridge that interconnects generations. In any academic setting, everyone should see the library as the prism through which they access information, as it is essential to all human beings. The core function of every library is to provide the right information at the right time and in the right format to its

users regardless of race, religion, age, nationality, language, abilities and disabilities. Therefore, an ideal inclusive library service means more than physical integration of patrons but includes the provision of a supportive system, a welcoming culture, and an atmosphere of acceptance where each individual, regardless of ability or disability, has equal access to information resources at the time they are required, in a format that can be used, in the quantities that are needed, and where the needs of the user are understood by the staff.

In light of the foregoing, the choice of my topic for this inaugural lecture is deliberate. This is because, in my twenty-two years of professional practice, I have been touched by the marginalisation faced by a group of differently able students (students with disabilities). The cold-shouldering often arises from cultural misconceptions that students with vision impairment are incapable of any intellectual activities. If the library and the services provided therein are good for sighted students, then the expression “what is good for the goose is good for the gander” resonates well in today’s outlook on library service provision.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework adopted for this lecture is Oliver’s social model of disability. The model, which shows a distinction between the terms impairment and disability is grounded in the principle of the United Kingdom’s (UK) Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) promulgated in the mid-1970s (Oliver, 2013). The social model of disability posits that disability is not something individuals have but that which resides in the society; stressing that what individuals have are impairments such as physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments. The emphasis on the social model of disability is on the fact that disability is the process that happens when one group of people or institutions create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have. Basically, the model reiterates that people are disabled by social barriers that may be physical, attitudinal or behavioral in nature. It further outlines all the things that impose restrictions on people living with disabilities which include: individual prejudice, institutional discrimination, inaccessible public buildings, unusable transport systems, segregated education and excluded work arrangements among others (Oliver, 1990; 1996).

Basically, the focus of the social model of disability is to change the negative attitude of society, towards persons living with disabilities to a positive attitude and create an environment that simplifies life for them and allows participation in all aspects of the community's activities. (Majinge, 2014; Burgstahler et al., 2015). It has been shown that the solution to the problem of disability lies in changing society which could be achieved through the principle of universal design (Shava, 2008; Mutula, 2017). The principle envisages measures that simplify life for everyone by making products, communications and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at no extra cost. It advocates "constructing ramps alongside stairs, installing automatic doors, providing information in Braille and other accessible formats, and providing appropriate accessible technology that ensures the empowerment and full inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream society" (Shava, 2008).

Within the context of higher education, the theory of the social model of disability is critical of the way in which institutions persist in treating students with disabilities differently from their counterparts. The criticism is based on the approach of the approved method of teaching and conducting examinations which automatically exclude any individual who may not fit into the approved method. This view challenges universities to re-evaluate not just the physical barriers but also barriers which may impede learning and research activities of students with disabilities.

The use of Oliver's social model of disability as a theoretical framework to deepen an explanation of the subject matter of this lecture provides a basis for improvement in behaviour not only from an individual perspective but also from the society that created barriers which hinder access to library services for students living with disabilities. Application of this model therefore ensures that barriers to accessing library resources and facilities for this category of students are ameliorated especially at the stage of planning for students support services which has been seen as a key factor of development policy that has received global and international endorsements.

### **3.0 GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON INCLUSIVE SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Madam Vice Chancellor, inclusive practices have received international endorsement following the observations that students with disabilities, including those afflicted with vision impairment receive different levels of support. The observations underscore the importance of anti-discriminatory legislation, treaties and policy framework to define set standards for higher institutions to meet. The standards discussed here are not what only librarians should know, in fact, both educators and the general populace need to know the functionality of these global standards because they accentuate the rights of persons living with disabilities. Some of the global standards are discussed next.

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN-CRDP) enacted the law which identifies the rights of any form of disabled persons to participate in all areas of public life. This includes jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private settings open to accommodate the general public; as well as the obligations of states party to the Convention to promote, protect and ensure those rights. Whilst articles 9, 21 and 24 of the Convention specifically stated that persons with vision impairment have the right to equal access to books, knowledge and information at the same time, cost and quality as everyone else, it is widely acknowledged, nonetheless, that students in this category continue to experience different forms of exclusion which vary depending upon the culture or class to which they belong (United Nations 2006; UNICEF, 2013).

In the United States of America, providing equitable access for persons with vision impairment is required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, applicable state and local statutes and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA approved by the US Congress in 1990, is the Civil Rights law affecting more Americans than any other. It was created to eliminate discrimination in many areas, including access to private and public services, employment, transportation and communication. Most libraries are obligated under Section 504 and some have responsibilities under Section 508 and other laws as well (Schmetzke, 2001; Herbert, 2021).

Prior to the adoption of the ADA in the United States of America, most university libraries had at least some rudimentary access programmes as most colleges and universities are recipients of federal funding and, as such, obligated to the provisions outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act since 1973. With the Act in place, most universities have created more welcoming and inclusive learning environments with a sharp focus on information resources and assistive technology which students with vision impairments can access to facilitate academic and career success (Moon *et al.*, 2012; Barger 2016). The Act propelled university libraries to review their facilities, collections, and services, introduce innovative programs, and make necessary modifications where necessary to meet the needs of students with vision impairment.

Pursuant to ADA compliance, the American Library Association (ALA) became more active in its efforts to promote documents to support library services for persons with various degrees of disabilities. Specifically, the ALA Governing Council passed the Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy in 2001. This group in 1998 committed to five areas (later changed to seven) as guiding principles for the future, one of which is equitable access to information and library services (Cassner *et al.*, 2011).

Library and Information Science (LIS) literature has reported that experiences of students with vision impairment in universities in the United States have changed over the years for a variety of reasons, including issues of architectural access becoming a regular consideration of many campus facilities, increasing use of electronic technologies and e-learning resources in all aspects of learning, increasing use of computer-based testing materials and tutorials, increasing presence of assistive technologies on campus, production of assistive hardware and software, and the increasing compatibility of such software with general-use information and computer communication technologies; increased enrolment of universities admitting students with various degree of disabilities, including those with vision impairment. Moreover, disability service personnel are becoming an essential component of most campuses' student affairs divisions, providing not only direct student support but also serving as consultants to faculty, administration and other staff areas on issues of accessibility. Eckes & Ochoa, 2005; Scott, 2009; Peña, 2014; Kim & Lee, 2016; Young, *et al.*, 2016; and Higher Education

Compliance Alliance, 2017) also reported that most universities in the United States of America have gone beyond meeting the basic anti-discriminatory requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act by creating and implementing a flexible, comprehensive inclusive library services designed to help students with vision impairment meet their academic, recreational, directional and other special needs.

In the United Kingdom, higher education is equally bound by the same overarching anti-discrimination protections. The United Kingdom Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which has now been repealed and replaced by the Equality Act 2010 (EQA) introduced measures that have direct implications for higher education institutions. Specifically, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) specifies that programmes and services must be made available to persons with disabilities (Harris and Oppenheim, 2003).

Over the years, the debate on inclusion has moved from high-income countries like the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom to medium and low-income countries, where the official policy of educating persons with vision impairment alongside their peers who are fully sighted in an educational setting has been adopted. In 2008, Malaysia passed the Persons with Disability Act which affirmed that persons with disabilities have equal access to public facilities, healthcare services, libraries and recreational activities. As a matter of fact, Malaysia, ratified the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, stating that it is a matter for national legislation, and acknowledges the principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunities as provided in the convention as vital in ensuring full and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with vision impairment (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011).

Although Nigeria attained independence in 1960, it was only in January 2019 that the Discrimination Against Persons with Disability (Prohibition) Act 2018 was passed into law, as part of efforts to eradicate discrimination against persons with disabilities. The Act which seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have unimpeded access to various places, including buildings, also includes clauses that ensure that this category of persons is not discriminated against in the fields of health, education and

training, social life, culture, sports, recreation, employment, public and political affairs, housing, and many others. Passing the act into law is a major disability inclusion milestone indicative of the country's increasing prioritisation of disability mainstreaming which guarantees that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else to participate in all areas of public life (Aliyu, 2019; Ogwezzy, 2019).

In June 2013, members states of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) adopted the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled. Marrakesh Treaty is an international legal instrument that has undoubtedly created an enabling legal environment in that it makes it easier for persons with vision impairment to access works protected by copyright. Ratification of the Treaty by governments was considered a top priority as opined by Ambassador Webson who affirmed that most developing countries do not have a library service that is focused on providing any form of book to people living with vision impairment, he therefore urged governments to ratify the treaty because of the opportunities it gives to all citizens. Only twenty (20) countries were required for the Marrakesh Treaty to enter into effect but as at June 8, 2023, one hundred and twenty (120) countries around the world had ratified the treaty. Nigeria signed the Marrakesh treaty on June 28, 2013, ratified it on October 4, 2017, and entered into implementation on January 4, 2018. (Bontekoe *et.al.*, 2019; WIPO, 2022).

Since its adoption, the Marrakesh Treaty has been welcomed as an important milestone to address the challenges of accessibility, and has been considered a crucial step forward in ensuring the realisation of the human rights of persons with vision impairment and their full participation in society. Otiye & Barat (2023) affirmed that the legal implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty is attracting growing attention, mostly with reference to specific jurisdictions across the globe, which also looks at its broader impact on accessibility, it links with the Sustainable Development Goals or at the role played by libraries in implementing it.

Madam Vice Chancellor, libraries are bound by the global and international standards highlighted in this lecture since they are facilities provided to meet the information needs of the population they serve.

#### **4.0 STUDENTS WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Higher education refers to all formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, colleges, technical institutes, and vocational schools. It is a complex enterprise that goes beyond the realm of individual faculty members and programmes of study to include various stakeholders and oversight bodies. The result is that institutions of higher education face numerous pressures and challenges. For example, faculty pursue their scholarship, funded research, consulting and teaching; other actors, including accrediting organisations and oversight bodies expect educational programmes and institutions to meet their stated mission, maintain quality assurance and foster student learning; while students generally pursue academic success.

Madam Vice Chancellor, vision remains a vital actor in the development, progress and well-being of every student in higher institutions of learning. The importance of vision for academic fulfillment speaks for itself as about 80 percent of all school tasks are believed to be facilitated by functional vision. Vision impairment in itself covers a range of different eye conditions and varying quality of sight. Persons living with vision impairment could be experiencing low vision, partial sightedness, short-sightedness, long-sightedness as well as total blindness. They live with visual system defects which affect their ability to perform daily activities of life. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (2021) reported that 1.1 billion people are living with vision impairment globally. The estimates and prevalence of blindness as cited by the agency are as follows:

- ❖ 43 million people are blind (crude prevalence: 0.5%)
- ❖ 295 million people have moderate to severe vision impairment (crude prevalence: 3.7%)
- ❖ 258 million people have mild vision impairment (crude prevalence: 3.3%)
- ❖ 510 million people have near vision impairment (crude prevalence: 6.5%)

It is noteworthy to mention that students with vision impairment formed part of the global statistics in the education system from primary to higher education. Various studies have identified some very significant difficulties faced by students living with impaired vision. Such difficulties include the inability to rely on visual signals such as:



1. Eye contact or gaze and smiles in social exchanges;
2. Inability to imitate behaviour and so cannot learn through imitation;
3. Poor or limited social interactions;
4. Show deficiencies in physical skills and general physical coordination on account of restricted mobility training;
5. Poor exploration and tendency to be isolated;
6. Inability to read and write print, media, color ratios, lighting and screen,
7. Rely on alternative formats such as braille, large prints, talking books or audio recordings and electronic materials to access library resources
8. Require assistive technology tools to aid the learning process (Okeke 2001, and Adetoro, 2023).

For students with vision impairment, coming to a university is an opportunity to prove that they can be economically useful if given an opportunity for higher education. In the context of inclusiveness, when an individual's disability is related to vision impairment, his or her visual needs must be carefully evaluated and selected so as not to under-estimate the impact of the impairment on his or her daily life, including social engagement and participation in campus life activities. Therefore, part of the quality assurance mechanism in higher education is stakeholder's insistence that institutions must be in full compliance with existing laws and should be able to influence policies and change institutional cultures towards inclusion.

As part of the compliance to equality and diversity strategy, universities all over the world, including Nigeria, are increasingly admitting students with vision impairment into various academic programmes. However, as their population keeps rising, studies have reported that adequate attention has not been given to their growing learning complexities (Zhang *et al*, 2020; Schles, 2021). With vision impairment seen mainly from the medical and charity lenses in educational practices, stakeholders across universities have different understandings of disability inclusion in classroom settings. One of the noticeable complexities is the fact that the peculiar needs of students with vision impairment continued to be ignored, including access to library resources and facilities (Cory 2011; Bodaghi, & Zainab, 2013; Mutula & Majinge, 2016;).

Despite the noticeable complexities, it is observed that many institutions are taking a joined-up approach to promote equal opportunities for students with disabilities, including those with vision impairment. Although, every institution is unique, with its own location, students' profile and institutional priorities, however, studies have reported that a range of sources of support have been developed through cross-sector partnerships with an emphasis on providing measures to support the rights of students with a vision impairment to access learning resources like their sighted counterparts (Deines-Jones, 2007; Wanderi *et al.* 2009; Acheampong & Dogbe, 2020).

Madam Vice Chancellor, I conducted a study on the exclusion of persons with visual impairment in Nigerian university libraries in 2017, and discovered that one of the challenges facing the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession is inclusiveness; reaching out to the entire population served and meeting the information needs and expectations of all faculty, staff and students who need the intellectual atmosphere and content of libraries. The study recommended that librarians need to stop making assumptions about different members of populations, listen to their needs and expectations and factor the results of that listening into the development and improvement of service delivery. The recommendation was in tandem with the checklist of conditions published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Standing Committee of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) to promote inclusiveness for a diverse population.

#### **4.1 Diverse Student's Population in Higher Education**

Higher education is an academic environment where many youths acquire skills that will enhance their marketability. In higher education, a diverse student population fosters a plurality of perspectives. It creates an opportunity for students to come together, challenge each other's ideas, learn new perspectives and grow as individuals. It is such diversity that creates both richness and challenge within a campus setting. Since student populations in a diverse environment exhibit a variety of different characteristics, it is expedient that faculty, management and stakeholders recognise such characteristics, including those of ethnicity, age, race, language, gender, socioeconomic class and disabilities. Studies have shown that modern approaches to accommodating diversity on campus in

higher education are changing from teaching to the average student to more inclusive methods that afford quality and equitable learning opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities.

The United Nations classifies persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. It further distinguishes between the terms “disabled” and the related “impaired” and “handicapped,” noting that:

- **an impairment** is an abnormality or loss of physiological, psychological or anatomical structure or function. Essentially, impairments are disorders at the **organ level**, for example, blindness, deafness, paralysis;
- **a disability**, which an impairment causes, is the “restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.” It is a limitation in function **at the level of the person**, for example, difficulty in seeing, hearing and moving about (as shown in the pictorial representation of disabilities in Figure 5);
- **a handicap** is a “disadvantage resulting from a disability.” It exists within **the context of socioeconomic roles**, placing disabled people at a disadvantage when compared to non-disabled people. Examples of a handicap include being unable to use public transportation, being socially isolated, and being confined to bed.



**Figure 5:** *Pictorial representation of disabilities.*

Madam Vice Chancellor, in addressing the gap in the paucity of data on the experiences of students with visual impairment (SWVI) in the usage of library information resources and services in Nigerian university libraries, my study on “Information Provision for Students with Visual Impairments in Nigerian Universities: Charting a Course from Project to Service Delivery” revealed that the information needs of students living with visual impairments are diverse (Zaid, 2017a). Extant studies noted that this category of students encounters numerous challenges which does not enable them to engage in campus life equitably (Eskay and Chima, 2013; Lourens and Swartz, 2016; Phukubje and Ngoepe, 2017; Lenn, 2019). Such challenges include but not limited to:

- ❖ Physical barriers
- ❖ Social isolation
- ❖ Lack of accessible environment (such as accommodation and transport)
- ❖ Behavioural and emotional challenges
- ❖ Level of patience from lecturers and staff
- ❖ Struggles with finding assistive/adaptive technology tools
- ❖ Limited accessibility to learning resources
- ❖ Inadequate educational structures
- ❖ Lack of structured disability support services

- ❖ Limited time between classes which can make transit within campus difficult
- ❖ Stigmatisation and discrimination
- ❖ Financial problems etc.

The identified challenges extend beyond the more obvious issues of physical access to the areas of access to programmes and services. For example, students with disabilities present different learning styles, physical accessibility needs, sensory differences, and a litany of other deviations from the assumed needs and abilities of their non-disabled counterparts. Libraries associated with institution of higher learning are in a unique position to assist in addressing some of these challenges due to the central role they play in supporting the larger goal of education. Unfortunately, many academic libraries vary in their ability to provide comparable levels of assistance, just as institutions also vary in the degree of academic resources they can provide.

In an attempt to gain a full understanding of this phenomenon and understand the implications, particularly within a library setting, this lecture will address one category of students with disabilities for which my research and professional practice have made a great impact - students with vision impairment.

#### **4.2 Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities in Higher Education**

Madam Vice Chancellor, in 2018, I conducted a study on inclusive education policy as a platform for library services for students with vision impairment in Nigerian Universities with lessons from the United States of America. Data was obtained through the use of questionnaires from 104 students with vision impairments in Nigerian universities on how university libraries are meeting their information and academic needs, and service delivery mechanism deployed by university librarians in 12 universities in Nigeria and United States of America (USA). The findings of the study were published in the Journal of the Nigerian Library Association. This study has serious implications for the development of inclusive practices in academic libraries in Nigeria.

To remove barriers to learning and give all students equal opportunities to succeed, it is important to understand what makes a library inclusive. Since

most groups in educational institutions are diverse with respect to background, culture, gender, identity, language, socioeconomic status, age, abilities, learning preferences, and myriad other characteristics, a number of approaches discussed in the literature consider a broad audience in design practices. Of the proactive design approaches, Burgstahler (2020) opines that there is no approach that addresses greater user diversity than Universal Design (UD).

According to the Centre for Universal Design, UD is the design of products and environments to be accessible and usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. To narrow the scope, this definition can be modified. For example, to apply UD to teaching and learning activities, this basic definition can be modified to “the design of teaching and learning products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design (Burgstahler, 2020; Alcaraz-Rodríguez *et.al.*, 2021).

Characteristics of any UD product or environment are that it is accessible, usable and inclusive. Common features of UD include: step-free entries, curb ramps, levers, wide doorways and handheld adjustable shower heads, etc. Whether we are talking about learning strategies or physical space, Universal Design operates by a set of principles designed to maximise access by everyone. The seven principles, established by the Centre for Universal Design were developed to guide the design of any product, service, or environment. They follow along with an example of the application of each.

- ❖ Equitable use. The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. A website that is designed so that it is accessible to everyone, including people who are blind, employs this principle.
- ❖ Flexibility in use. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. A museum that allows a visitor to choose to read or listen to a description of the contents of a display case employs this principle.
- ❖ Simple and intuitive. Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or

- current concentration level. Science lab equipment with control buttons that are clear and intuitive employs this principle.
- ❖ Perceptible information. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities. Video captioning employs this principle.
  - ❖ Tolerance for error. The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. An educational software programme that provides guidance when the user makes an inappropriate selection employs this principle.
  - ❖ Low physical effort. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue. Doors that open automatically employ this principle.
  - ❖ Size and space for approach and use. The design provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility. A science lab with adjustable tables employs this principle.

These principles address the needs of persons with disabilities, including those with vision impairment in a way that is not stigmatising and beneficial to all users. By starting with a focus on creating a design for a wide range of users, the overall usability of an environment or product is increased without unnecessarily adding to its cost. This approach also eliminates the need for design modifications later when either abilities or circumstances change. Additionally, a universal design approach avoids the pitfalls of implementing segregated accessibility features that are often viewed as “special”, which may even be more expensive and not aesthetically pleasing.

#### **4.3 Application of Universal Design in University Libraries: Issues in Nigeria**

Universal design principles can be applied to our environments, products, and services, including university library environments, resources, and methods of service delivery to make the learning goals of the institution's mission achievable by individuals with diverse characteristics, including wide differences in abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, attend, organise, engage, and remember campus activities. Thereby the learning goal of the university would be achieved by means of flexible curricular

materials and activities that provide alternatives for students with different abilities and disabilities, including students with vision impairment. Scholars have opined that rather than memorise the principles that underpin universal design, librarians should work toward compliance with the principles by following these three simple guidelines:

- ❖ Provision of multiple ways for various categories of students to use the library and to evaluate what they have used;
- ❖ Provision of varied patron engagement strategies within the library;
- ❖ Provision of technologies, facilities, services and resources, to individuals with a wide variety of disabilities (Zaid, 2019)

Madam Vice Chancellor, the application of these principles and guidelines makes a library accessible, equitable and inclusive for students with disabilities, including those with vision impairment. University libraries might question the need to consider issues related to accessibility for students with vision impairment in their policy or decision-making process. On face value, the extent of the issue may not seem to justify more than cursory exploration, but when explored in greater depth, the strategic advantages become more apparent.

Within university libraries in Nigeria, Library and Information Science (LIS) literature have reported that persons living with vision impairment face numerous challenges. These challenges include access to the physical library buildings, access to information resources, and lack of services that are tailor-made for them. While issues pertaining to accessibility emanate from architectural designs that do not take this category of persons into consideration, challenges related to access to information resources, on the other hand, result from lack of appropriate information resources and assistive devices (Ekwelem 2013; Ijadunola *et.al.*, 2022; Adetoro, 2023). However, the most salient issues that require exploration can be categorised into three main arguments: efficacy, logistics, and messaging. Efficacy relates to the level of service provided, the overall ability to meet the needs of stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, accrediting organisations and other oversight bodies), and cost-effective allocation of scarce resources to maximise impact. Logistics covers the areas of policies, procedures, best practices, and daily operation. Messaging relates to the positioning of a library both within its institution and in the larger field of library and information studies.



In terms of efficacy, university libraries in Nigeria cannot ignore the facts related to their changing demographics. No longer can it be assumed that only a small percentage of the users of a library will present needs different from those of the traditional patrons. Available information depicting national trends of enrollment for students with disabilities, including those with vision impairment in higher education shows a steady increase in the last three decades (Zaid, *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, the increase in number of this category of students admitted into different academic programmes including humanities, social sciences, law, management sciences, etc. with related differences in library service needs suggests that the scope of the impacted population is worthy of greater consideration. By taking a more holistic approach, there is a greater likelihood of being able to increase the usability of library resources, services and facilities, thereby increasing the overall satisfaction of both patron and institutional stakeholders.

In Nigeria, many universities are facing difficult budgetary situations, making monetary resources scarcer and increasing the need to get the most out of every naira spent. The current process of reaction to student's needs as they arise has not proven to be the most effective use of resources, yet due to institutional obligations to its community and other stakeholders, universities continue to participate in this piece-meal approach to addressing issues of access. Within library facilities, using a universal design approach allows for the greatest level of flexibility and long-term usability of investments. One example of how universal design can prove to be more cost effective and efficient is in the area of technology. Rather than purchasing multiple licenses of assistive technology software that is then installed on designated accessible computer stations within a library, universal design suggests the use of key-served software that can be accessed from any computer connected to the institution's network. This not only reduces the number of licenses that may need to be purchased, it also decreases the amount of personnel time needed to install and support the software on individual machines while it allows for greater flexibility for the user. In light of the increased reliance upon technology within information sharing on campuses today, it is important to look at the needs of patrons from a larger picture view rather than through a narrower individual-needs focus.

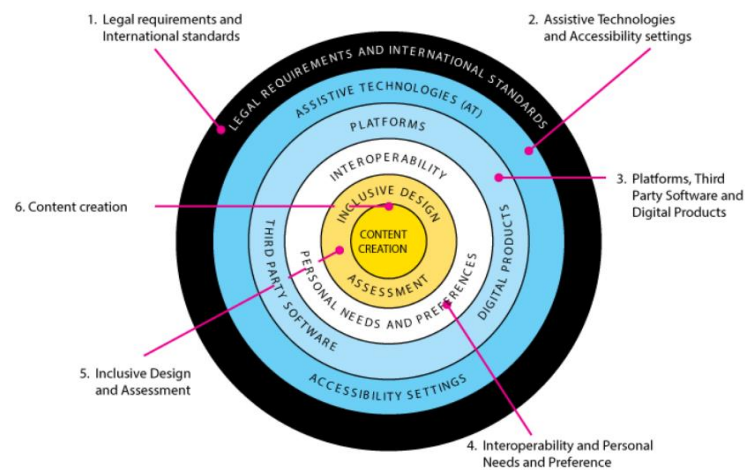
The next logical argument for consideration is the issue of logistics. While librarians certainly have the greatest level of expertise within their field of library and information science, collaborations with other resources on campus allow libraries to create better-informed policies. Simple suggestions can include the formation of new, or collaboration with existing units that address issues of accessibility and /or universal design. Out of these forms of collaborations, libraries can access existing resources to augment staff training, develop new and innovative policies in areas such as technology, or provide support for the reorganisation of staff or facilities. For those institutions that are in the midst of larger-scale changes, such as expansion of existing library facilities or the building of new library buildings, using the concept of universal design in the early planning stages better ensures that the new facilities or buildings have the maximum usability. By considering issues of accessibility through the lens of universal designs, institutions can shift from reactionary policy-making to long-term strategising.

In terms of messaging, university library administrators can use the principle of universal design to develop the internal and external messages they wish to convey. Librarians can position themselves both politically and academically as cutting edge professionals by showing a willingness to integrate new and innovative approaches into library services and policies. Additionally, libraries can use the opportunity to review existing data sets and evaluations of policy and procedure best practices or provide the collection of such data for dissemination within the field. Cross-pollination of areas of expertise and experience within the institution creates opportunities for greater integration of library priorities and values into the larger institution. Externally, libraries can seek regional opportunities to collaborate and increase the overall efficacy of new approaches to accessibility.

It is very worrisome that students living with vision impairments still suffer exclusion in accessing information from university libraries. My study on the exclusion of persons with visual impairment in accessing learning resources in the top ten university libraries in Nigeria revealed that the scenario impedes the scholarly experience of visually impaired students. A collaborative research with Alabi and Olatise on Open Educational Resources (OER) accessibility for students living with vision impairment in

the open knowledge era is an indication that stakeholders in higher education in Nigeria need to give serious attention to the issue of inclusion, equity and diversity as done in developed nations.

Madam Vice Chancellor, consideration of accessibility, especially from a universal design approach, opens up the potential for libraries to maximise their institutional value and effectiveness. The legal, monetary and social justification for responding to the issue of accessibility within higher education is extensive. Accessibility signifies usability of a product, service or facility regardless of one's ability or disability. For libraries to be inclusive for students living with vision impairment, learning resources and the platform hosting the content must be accessible. The concept of accessibility specification to learning resources is explained in Figure 6.



**Figure 6:** *Accessibility Specifications: Content creation & Laws that govern accessibility standards.* **Source:** IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2012.

The first layer of the accessibility specification in Figure 3 indicates that there are two legal requirements in line with international standards guiding accessibility to learning resources. The second layer emphasises that consideration should be given to assistive technologies in accessibility settings so that those living with vision impairment can access content through the use of screen readers, text-to-speech software and other assistive tools. The third layer in the ring indicates that content creators

(i.e. lecturers and instructional designers) must give credence to interoperability so as to meet the personal need and individual preferences of students with vision impairment. The last segment of the specifications recommends that content development must also follow inclusive design and assessment.

## **5.0 DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Madam Vice Chancellor, in parallel with educational, social, technological and legal changes in higher education, disability support services have evolved rapidly with stakeholders addressing increasingly complex issues on their campus. In fact, some scholars have reported that disability support had undergone rapid expansion, and grew into a full-fledged profession within higher education (Madaus, 2015). By definition, disability support services in higher education are those institutional support services specifically provided to ensure that the impact of a student's disability on their studies is as little as possible by putting in place supports enabling them to compete on a more level playing field with their non-disabled peers.

Disability support services enable students to fulfill their academic potential and participate in all aspects of university life. Technically, providing support to students with disabilities, including students with vision impairment is the responsibility of student support not academic support. The communities that university libraries serve are diverse and all indications point to the fact that they play major roles in identifying and meeting the information needs and expectations of students including those with disabilities.

Madam Vice Chancellor, this section of the lecture will provide an overview of how universities in some countries are identifying the needs of students living with vision impairment and providing support services to ensure the fulfillment of their academic potentials. I will end the section with general disability support services at the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

In the United States of America (USA), Jaeger (2018) reported that most institutions have expanded their support and advocacy for students with disabilities. For example, the author reported that the University of Nebraska, Kearney, provides equal access and opportunity to students

with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of the educational environment. The institution arranges for someone to sometimes assist students with vision impairments in class and ensures that class lectures are made available to them in a form they can use, while the library has special equipment with which they can access learning resources from computer screens (Hebert & Savaiano, 2021).

In the same vein, Digbohrou (2019) stated that the university library system at the University of Pittsburgh has developed a solid working relationship with the Office of Disability Support Services as staff are trained to provide any services required to meet the information needs of students, including those with vision impairment. Gallaudet University, which is the world's only liberal arts university for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, has a purpose-built Office for Students with Disabilities that works closely with staff from the library to ensure that library services are fully equitable, accessible and inclusive.

Access to electronic resources is becoming the key issue for inclusion programmes for students with vision impairment, and closely tied to the provision of assistive tools. Bhardwaj and Kumar published their research findings on how universities in New Delhi were providing support services to students with visual impairment. Top on the list of services provided is access to e-resources in addition to accommodation, specialised services, furniture, provision of sign language, interpreting and note-taking services, physical access arrangement and alternative formatting. Basically, the main tools which allow students with vision impairment to access and use learning resources are assistive technologies which serve as mechanisms for inclusive library services. Assistive technology tools are changing the way students living with vision impairment think, learn, and communicate. Some assistive technologies specifically for persons with vision impairment are categorised in Table 1 with images of some presented in Figure 7.

**Table 1:** List of assistive technologies specifically for persons with vision impairment.

<b>1. Hardware</b>
Braille Embosser
Low vision reading machine
Kurzweil reading machine
Computers with Accessibility features
Optical scanners
CCTV
Talking Scientific Calculator
Hand-held scanner/Digital Scanner pen
Digital voice recorder
<b>Specialised Keyboards</b>
Keyboard Overlay
Braille keyboards
Large print keyboards
<b>2. Software</b>
Software packages such as: <b>Screen reader software:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jaws</li> <li>• Dolphin EasyConverter</li> <li>• WindowEyes</li> <li>• NVDA</li> </ul>
<b>Screen magnification software</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom text</li> <li>• Magic</li> </ul>
<b>Voice recognition software</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech-to-text</li> <li>• Text -to-speech</li> </ul>
<b>Optical character recognition (OCR) for use with flatbed scanner</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Book</li> <li>• Kurzweil</li> <li>• Claro Read</li> <li>• ABBYY</li> </ul>
<b>Braille translation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duxbury</li> </ul>



**Figure 7:** *Images of some of Assistive Technologies.*

### **5.1 Disability Support Services at the University of Lagos**

Madam Vice Chancellor, various universities are in one way or the other working to promote inclusion of students with disabilities, including students with vision impairment into mainstream campus life. However, there are paucity of data in Library and Information Science (LIS) on disability services colleges and universities are providing to address challenges.

The University of Lagos admits students with disabilities, a greater number with vision impairment. The university does not have a separate Office of Disability Support Services; however, the Students Affairs Unit, whose goal is to enable all students, including those with disabilities to access university study programmes and reach their academic potential works closely with the library and other units in ensuring that students' concerns/ requests are accommodated. Some services provided include:

- ❖ Adapted accommodation
- ❖ Help from volunteers
- ❖ Provision of financial aids
- ❖ Examination support
- ❖ Strong relationship with the library to support student's needs and expectations
- ❖ Counseling services on a case-by-case basis.

Other than the support services from the Student's Affairs Unit, the university library has integrated inclusiveness in its mainstream services to ensure that students with disabilities have access to library resources, services and facilities; especially the over seventy (70) students with vision impairment who are spread across faculties of Law, Arts, Education, Social Sciences and recently Management Sciences.

The good development started with the establishment of a Braille centre at the Akintunde Ojo building by the Soroptimist International of Eko, a non-governmental organisation in 2010. The Braille centre was equipped with one Braille Embosser for the transcription and production of any materials into either Braille or Compact Disk for students with vision impairment. In order to better meet the academic and information needs of this category of students, the Soroptimist International approached the management of the university library to transfer the management of the Braille centre to the University of Lagos Library.

The transfer process was concluded in 2015; however, only a small percentage of the population of students living with visual impairment come to the library. This may not be unconnected with the slow acquisition of required assistive technology tools, lack of human and material resources and lack of required training skills for librarians. In charting a new course for expanded and inclusive library services, the library management designed a project plan approach as strategies to integrate the information requirements of students with vision impairment into mainstream library services.

The Library inclusion plans for students with vision impairment comprise the following:

- ❖ Phase 1: Feasibility assessment and physical space requirements
- ❖ Phase 2: Procurement and installation of additional Braille Embosser and appointment of a blind or visually impaired staff
- ❖ Phase 3: Training of library staff and beneficiaries
- ❖ Phase 4: Sustainability plan
- ❖ Phase 5: Branding and launching.

### **Implementations**

Plans have been implemented with the following results:



- ❖ Access: A ramp was created to address physical barrier
- ❖ Resource Centre: A dedicated resource centre called” Visually Impaired Resource Centre (VILC) located at the library basement was established
- ❖ Procurement and Installation of hardware and software: A Braille Embosser, carrel furniture, and other hardware and software were procured.
- ❖ Appointment of Technical Staff: A visually impaired staff, on Technical cadre was appointed to manage the resource centre.
- ❖ Provision of library resources in an accessible format (such as braille, audio and web-based materials).

## **6.0 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACADEMIA AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

### **6.1 Research and Scholarship**

Madam Vice Chancellor, as a Professor of Library and Information Science, I am elated and grateful for the impact and result of my contributions in this field. In my publications, I have strived to address rising issues within our society, academia and the larger world with contributions and findings that propel our field forward. Consistent with my research activities, I have presented papers at national and international conferences in Nigeria, Africa, Europe, and the United States of America, and have deployed the exposure and experiences gained at those conferences to improve library service delivery at the University of Lagos. I have grouped my contributions to knowledge under the following areas of research:

- (i) Library Services to Persons with Disabilities
- (ii) Information Use and Services
- (iii) Knowledge Organisation
- (iv) Information Administration and Management
- (v) Information Service Structures

#### **i. Library Services to Persons with Disabilities**

As shown in several publications, I have examined the need for a more inclusive library service, considering the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. **Zaid et al., (2023)** addressed the accessibility challenges faced by students with visual disabilities in higher education. We focused

on the Open Knowledge Movement and its role in creating equitable access to Open Educational Resources (OERs) for this specific student demographic. By opening up the intersection of the Open Knowledge Movement and accessibility for visually impaired students, we did not only highlight a demanding issue but also contributed to the ongoing discourse on inclusivity in higher education. Through the exploration of practical strategies and initiatives that make use of the Open Knowledge Movement to enhance access to educational resources for students with visual disabilities, we provided applicable insights for LIS professionals, educators, and policymakers.

**Zaid et al., (2023)** also investigated the challenges associated with inclusivity in the Open Knowledge Movement within the context of higher education in Nigeria. The plight of marginalised individuals who are often excluded from the benefits of the Open Knowledge Movement within the Nigerian higher education system was established. The paper contributed to the evolving discourse on openness and inclusiveness. It serves as a prized resource for library and information science professionals, educators, and policymakers, showcasing how the principles of openness can be effectively harnessed to create more equitable educational environments. By contextualising Nigeria, the paper contributed not only to the understanding of local challenges but also provided a framework for addressing issues of inclusion in diverse higher education settings globally.

The search for the appropriate policy strategy to promote inclusive library practices has been at the forefront of public discourse in Nigeria.; thus, **Zaid (2018)** examined the capability of inclusive education policies as a framework for arranging and implementing library services that cater to the special needs of visually impaired students in Nigeria. By drawing lessons from the United States of America, where inclusive education practices and library services have been more established, the paper furnished an understanding of how such policies can be adapted and implemented effectively in the Nigerian higher education context. The lessons drawn from the U.S. experience offer a framework for Nigerian educators, librarians, and policymakers, guiding them in the formulation and implementation of policies that promote inclusive education and ensure equitable access to library resources for all students, irrespective of their visual abilities. **Zaid (2017b)** also examined the depth of information

provision for students with visual impairment at the University of Lagos, defining the outcomes of a collaborative project and the efforts made by the library management to integrate the information requirements of SWVI into mainstream library services. The study which was conducted at the University of Lagos, garnered a diverse population of students and staff from different parts of Nigeria. The University of Lagos library is currently meeting the information needs of students with visual impairment through the use of innovative technology. By offering a detailed account of the journey from project initiation to the establishment of continuous service, my work revealed the practical steps, challenges, and successful strategies employed in ensuring effective information access for visually impaired students.

Through a meticulous examination of websites of top ten universities in Nigeria, **Zaid (2017c)** identified the pervasive exclusionary practices that hinder access for persons with visual impairments. The investigation provided a concrete basis for recognising the digital barriers that impede the educational experience of visually impaired individuals, stressing the critical need for inclusion in the academic stratum. By engaging with the challenges faced by persons with visual impairment in accessing academic library websites, I provided a guide for improving web design and content delivery to be more SWVI-user-friendly. My stance in proposing solutions contributed to the practical implementation of accessible web practices that could spawn a more inclusive educational environment in Nigerian academic institutions. Moreover, my research not only serves as a wake-up call for academic libraries in Nigeria but also holds broader significance for web designers, policymakers, and educators globally. By addressing the specific context of Nigerian academic libraries, the paper contributes to the evolving body of knowledge on inclusive web design practices applicable in diverse cultural and educational settings. This research serves as a catalyst for raising awareness and instigating positive changes in the digital accessibility landscape while promoting equitable access to educational resources for individuals with visual impairments.

## **ii. Information Use and Services**

In the area of Information Use and Services, I have contributed a collage of seven publications that focus on aspects relative to information use and services such as the role of the BOF E-Reader in building a drive for

reading culture; the place of the library in socio-economic development; the need for information accessibility and utilisation, and more. **Zaid (2021)** explored the suitability and impact of the BOF E-Reader initiative. In the paper, I revealed how efficient the BOF E-Reader initiative could be in stimulating and nurturing a reading culture. The paper not only addresses the many challenges of declining reading habits but also presents important practical lessons and strategies for utilising technology to encourage and enhance reading engagement. As important as reading is to the development of minds within a society, it is concerning that the love for reading and learning has waned. This is why the BOF E-Reader initiative serves as a case study in demonstrating and describing how electronic devices can be harnessed to inspire a commitment to reading, to inspire a devotion to learning.

**Zaid and Egberongbe (2020)** unfolded the interconnection between library science and socioeconomic development. We investigated the specific impact of libraries in alleviating poverty, majorly among the youth in Lagos State. The study filled a knowledge gap, deepening the understanding of how libraries, traditionally seen as repositories of knowledge, can actively address socio-economic problems. The paper depicts the responsibility of libraries in empowering, guiding, and managing the youth through access to information, education, and skills development. We stressed that access to relevant information, education, and skills acquisition can reduce the level of poverty in our society. Another veritable contribution made through this paper is premised on its unraveling of the practical responsibilities tied to library professionals, policymakers, and stakeholders who are involved in youth development and poverty alleviation. The findings posed in this paper portend the importance of well-formed initiatives, resource allocation, and community engagement as causal factors that can forge the competence of libraries in addressing poverty among the youth. Contextualised around Lagos State, Nigeria, the paper adds to the discourse on the need for libraries in a society by emphasising the proactive contribution of libraries to larger developmental goals.

**Zaid et al., (2016)** examined the informational needs and sources among women undergoing treatment for breast cancer in Lagos State, Nigeria. We brought to light the challenges of affected women in this region. One

of such challenges is the limited access to well-tailored information. This is why we reiterated the urgent importance of well-structured information dissemination strategies. We also deciphered that there are personal limitations on the part of women navigating the complexities of breast cancer treatment. A keen look into these limitations helped in suggesting resources that could be deployed to improve the entire healthcare outcomes. One prominent aspect of this paper is its exploration of diverse information sources utilised by women in Lagos State. By investigating the channels through which women seek information, we provided insights into the existing support networks and possible avenues for targeted interventions. This embellished the purview of the interplay between social-cultural and technological factors influencing information-seeking behaviour, thereby contributing to the development of well-constructed communication strategies in the scope of breast cancer management. We reinforced the importance of context-specific information provision in healthcare settings. By highlighting the relevance of information needs within the local socio-cultural landscape, we contributed not only to the never-ending academic discourse on breast cancer but also offered practical ideas for healthcare professionals and policymakers. Our findings possess the vibrancy to guide the development of culturally sensitive and accessible informational resources that would rebuild the quality of care and support for women undergoing breast cancer treatment in Lagos State, Nigeria. In the attempt to estimate the access that families have to proper healthcare information, **Popoola and Zaid (2008)** also consider the strategies employed by health workers and evaluate the impact of these efforts on community awareness and decision-making regarding family planning. The paper infers that health workers can also be key influencers in spreading accurate and accessible information to families.

**Zaid and Popoola (2010)** demystified how information defines the quality of life among rural Nigerian women. The paper evidenced the inseparable relationship between information access and the well-being of women in rural settings. The paper also expressed how information can be a catalyst for improving the modus vivendi of women in rural communities. We spanned our research beyond the realm of challenges that women situated in rural communities experience by magnifying the transformative quality of information in empowering these categories of women and enhancing various aspects of their lives in the areas of health, education, and

economic opportunities. We sketched a framework that pans toward broader discussions on the intersection of information access and quality of life in rural contexts globally. This added to a growing body of literature proclaiming the importance of targeted information interventions in addressing socio-economic disparities while engineering holistic development. Since access information plays a dependable role in shaping opportunities and transforming individuals, this research enriched our thought on how the dissemination of strategic information can positively affect the lives of women in rural areas, contributing to the broader discourse on development, gender equality, and information access.

**Zaid (2011)** examined the awareness level and usage patterns of computer-based library services among final-year students at the University of Lagos. My research revolved around a critical segment of modern library services, where technology performs a central function in information dissemination. I systematically assessed the level of awareness and engagement with computer-based services, and provided worthwhile suggestions for the growing needs and preferences of university students; and this contributed to the larger intellectual dialogue on the integration of technology in library services. **Zaid (2008)** further analysed how advancement in digitalisation, especially the internet, can strengthen traditional cataloguing and classification practices. My research serves as a foundation for future developments in library science as it would guide professionals in adapting and maximising the capabilities of the internet to optimise cataloguing and classification processes.

**Popoola and Zaid (2007)** explored the activities of faculty engagement with library information products and services, enlivening the challenges and opportunities in the process of disseminating scholarly resources. The findings portray factors influencing the awareness of faculty members in the context of the information landscape within Nigerian universities. We also informed the need for strategic improvements in library services and resource dissemination in Nigerian universities. We studied the factors that affect faculty awareness and usage patterns and laid a foundation for developing targeted interventions and initiatives to enhance access to library information products. This research not only addressed a specific context but also contributed to the broader discourse on effective library

services in academic institutions, offering insights that can be applied to similar settings globally.

**Zaid and Olatise (2016)** also traced the historical development of library services, assessed the current state of affairs, and envisioned future trends or possibilities, whilst presenting a comprehensive overview of the paradigm shift in information service delivery within the Nigerian higher education context. We juxtaposed past, present, and future perspectives, which led us to infer valuable suggestions concerning the obstacles, innovations, and directions for improvement in the evolving landscape of library services. Our detailed analysis of past practices and the examination of current trends provides a foundation for understanding the factors that have influenced information service provision over time. Also, the forward-looking approach towards the future of library services offered a roadmap for anticipating and adapting to emerging trends and technological advancements. One very important contribution of this paper lies in its ability to inform strategic planning and policy formulation for university libraries in Nigeria.

### **iii. Knowledge Organisation**

Two of my publications are grounded on subjects relevant to the advancement of knowledge organisation in libraries. **Odumuyiwa et al., (2020)** measured the role of implicit collaboration in the crowdsourcing process. We addressed the relationship between knowledge organisation and crowdsourcing. We surveyed how collaborative efforts can enhance the effectiveness of organising information. The work transcended the outlook of theoretical discussions, as we stated concrete examples and revelations regarding how implicit collaboration can be applied to improve knowledge organisation processes. The research serves as an important resource for knowledge organisation professionals, researchers, and practitioners, lending a conceptual framework and practical guidance for incorporating implicit collaboration into crowdsourcing activities.

**Zaid and Alabi (2020)** contributed to the knowledge base on Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives in Nigerian universities. We posed suggestions concerning the problems and strategies for sustaining such programs. This work examines the orbit of OER implementation in the context of Nigerian higher education and supposes necessary

information on the influences of longevity and effectiveness of Open Educational Resources initiatives. The research, therefore, softened the understanding of complexities associated with sustaining OER efforts, a critical aspect for the advancement of open and accessible education in developing regions like Nigeria. The strength of this contribution is present in its detailed exploration of practical strategies and recommendations for ensuring the sustainability of OER initiatives in Nigerian universities. **Zaid et al., (2013)** also examined the challenges and accomplishments encountered in the realm of cultural heritage preservation, while providing a graspable overview of the state of training programs within the Nigerian educational context.

#### **iv. Information Administration and Management**

I have planted my derived understanding on the ground of Information Administration and Management as shown in some of my publications. **Popoola and Zaid (2015)** researched the convoluted interplay of leadership effectiveness, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and information management within the specific context of packaging companies. We investigated these foregoing influences collectively and enriched existing knowledge on the nature of managerial roles and the critical components that contribute to successful leadership in the Nigerian business landscape. The paper's key uniqueness and contribution dwells within its identification of the relationships between leadership effectiveness, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and information acquisition and utilisation. The research findings offered relevant notions aligning with the managerial competencies required for success in the packaging industry, by providing a critical understanding of the factors influencing decision-making processes. We did not only contribute to the academic discourse on organisational behaviour but also offered experimental implications for companies seeking to promote the effectiveness of their managers. This work serves as a resource for both scholars and practitioners, creating a deeper assimilation of the dynamics that shape effective leadership and managerial performance in the context of Nigerian packaging companies.

In bid to accentuate the notion of creativity as a force of change, **Zaid and Oyelude (2012)** discussed the role of creativity and innovation in the development of academic libraries in Nigeria. We asserted that creative



and innovative practices are important in library development, situating our assertion around Nigerian academic libraries. The research and publication serve as a resource that advocates for a shift towards a culture of creativity and innovation within Nigerian academic libraries. By showcasing successful realistic instances of innovative practices, we molded a foundation for the development of strategies and policies that can birth a more adaptive and responsive library environment. The work reemphasised the importance of embracing creativity as a driving force for positive transformation.

It is expedient to affirm that financial sustainability contributes largely to the continuity and functionality of any institution. This is why **Zaid (2008)** assessed the financial dynamics within university libraries in Nigeria. With a focus on Internally Generated Revenue within the range of university libraries in Nigeria, I was able to offer novel ideas for library administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders planning to strengthen the financial health of their institutions. My research successfully attempts to improve the financial sustainability of university libraries. Through my findings, I put in place structural hypotheses for wise decision-making, guiding library administrators in developing effective strategies to diversify revenue streams and maximise internally generated funds. I also marked the importance of financial self-sufficiency for university libraries to maintain and enhance their services.

**Olanlokun and Zaid (2007)** critiqued library exhibitions as an effective public relations strategy. We utilised the University of Lagos Library as a case study to consider the practical aspects of how library exhibitions can be strategically used to increase public perception and engagement. By examining the experiences and outcomes at the University of Lagos Library, the research enlarged the importance of library exhibitions in not only showcasing valuable resources but also in promoting a sense of community engagement and connection. The case study approach added a practical dimension, as we were able to weigh tangible examples and lessons learned from the University of Lagos Library experience.

**Zaid (2004)** documented the experience of the University of Lagos in automating library records using Glas Software. Through this research, I stressed the challenges and benefits associated with the adoption of library

automation technology, by providing a detailed account of the University's specific experience with Glas Software. I shared this practical case study and contributed to the existing literature on library automation while offering a real-world perspective on the implementation of technology to streamline library operations, modify accessibility, and improve overall efficiency. My contribution serves as a benchmark for other institutions considering or undergoing similar library automation projects. The experiences, lessons learned, and outcomes discussed in my work have become a worthy resource for professionals and administrators seeking guidance in the effective utilisation of library automation systems. My work, therefore, adds practical wisdom to the field of library and information science, aiding the continual improvement and optimisation of library services through the integration of technological solutions.

#### **v. Information Service Structures**

Some of my research works have expanded the frontiers of knowledge in the areas of information service structures.

**Zaid and Alabi (2021)** contributed noticeably to the body of knowledge by evaluating the complex landscape of open educational resources (OERs) initiatives within Nigerian universities. Through the lens of sustainability, we proposed strategic solutions for maintaining the activeness and longevity of OER programs in the context of Nigerian higher education. This is particularly important given the nature of educational environments and the possible impact of OER on enhancing accessibility and quality of education. We discovered the difficulties attributed to sustaining OER initiatives in Nigerian universities and recommended solutions. These difficulties include issues such as resource constraints, technological infrastructure, and institutional support. The recommendations we provided are not centrally applicable to the Nigerian context but also offer a broader perspective for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders worldwide who are engaged in or contemplating the implementation of OER. This research thus served as a practical guide for boosting the success and impact of OER initiatives, causing a more inclusive and accessible education landscape. We also contributed to the scholarly dialogue on open learning by rehashing the importance of context-specific approaches. We recognised the specific challenges and opportunities within the Nigerian higher education system, and we were able to present

a unique understanding that can inform future research and policy development in both regional and global contexts. Our contribution expanded toward the development of theoretical frameworks that can guide discussions on open and distance learning, enriching the broader discourse on the developing nature of education in diverse settings.

**Zaid (2019)** examined the underexplored areas of academic librarians' involvement in the context of OER and also added depth to our understanding of the larger implications of librarianship in the digital age. By researching the specific challenges and opportunities experienced by academic librarians in adopting and promoting OER, I made positive remarks on the transformative power of these resources in the Nigerian higher education system. My research contribution would serve as a guide for librarians hoping to strengthen their engagement with OER, as it is fleshed with the understanding of the barriers faced and successful approaches employed within the Nigerian university context.

**Zaid (2017a)** added knowledge to the field of public health and library science by spelling out the crucial role librarians play in spreading health information and promoting awareness of high blood pressure. I researched the awareness levels of residents in Lagos State, Nigeria, regarding high blood pressure which is a prevalent health concern. The paper crystallises the function of librarians as information intermediaries who can bridge the gap between healthcare knowledge and the general public, thereby contributing to the entire well-being of a community. Admittedly, the study offers practical possibilities for librarians and health professionals by highlighting specific strategies and approaches that can enhance the dissemination of health information related to high blood pressure. In this work, I strove to emphasise the need for collaborative efforts between libraries and healthcare institutions, advocating for targeted health literacy programs and initiatives. By delineating the librarian's role in health information dissemination, I did not only advance academic knowledge but also provided actionable recommendations for practitioners who are on a journey to a more informed and health-conscious society in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Zaid and Okiki (2014)** examined the barriers attached to the establishment of institutional repositories (IRs) in African institutions. We

made clear the importance of outgrowing traditional obstacles, such as technological limitations and resource constraints, to create opportunities for the development of effective institutional repositories. We addressed the complexities of building collaboration in the African context through our recognition of the diverse institutional landscapes and unique challenges faced by libraries in the region. By documenting successful strategies and lessons learned from our experiences, we were able to provide guidance for librarians and institutions seeking to establish or enhance their IRs. We concluded that partnership among diverse stakeholders, including librarians, researchers, administrators, and IT professionals would ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these repositories.

**Zaid et al., (2014)** made a significant contribution to knowledge by addressing the critical intersection of indigenous agricultural knowledge preservation and sustainable food security in Nigeria. With a focus on the efforts of agricultural research libraries, the research illuminated the essential role these institutions play in documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge that is necessary for ensuring long-term food security. The study not only showed the importance of preserving traditional agricultural practices but also elevated the indispensable role that research libraries can play in facilitating the exchange and utilisation of indigenous knowledge. By delving into the specific context of Nigeria, our work provides eye-opening perspectives into the challenges, as well as the success involved in documenting indigenous agricultural knowledge within the country. The findings contributed to a wider understanding of the connection among traditional knowledge, academic research, and practical solutions for achieving sustainable food security. As agricultural practices face global challenges in our world today, this research work offered a distinct perspective that can influence policies and initiatives not only in Nigeria but also in other regions planning to integrate indigenous wisdom into contemporary efforts for food security and agricultural sustainability.

Similarly, **Zaid and Abioye (2010)** contributed to the field of cultural heritage preservation by noting the significance of collaboration among museums, libraries, and archives in Nigeria. We presented the intrinsic value of heritage materials and the collective responsibility of these institutions to work together for their preservation. We offered relevant strategic points for these institutions to pool resources, share expertise,

and coordinate efforts for more effective preservation practices. The emphasis on collaboration not only serves as a meaningful guide for professionals in Nigeria but also stands as a model for other regions facing similar challenges in preserving their cultural heritage.

**Popoola and Zaid (2008)** examined the psychological factors influencing the career commitment of records management personnel in Nigerian Federal universities. The paper explored the connection between self-efficacy, work motivation, locus of control, and the commitment of individuals in the records management profession. Through our findings, we were able to deduce how we could guide them in the design of targeted interventions to foster a more supportive work environment. The paper emphasised the importance of considering psychological factors such as self-efficacy and motivation in talent retention and career development initiatives.

**The need to improve library infrastructure and promote reading habits of students was examined by Zaid (2003).** The identified existing gaps and potential areas where enhancement is needed in terms of library infrastructure and development were contributions reported in the publication.

Madam Vice Chancellor, the impact of my research activities and contributions to the global scholarly community is succinctly documented and indexed in Scopus @ <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=36672158800>), Google Scholar @ <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=pEs5QtgAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao> and ORCID @ <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8415-9988>.

In addition to my research activities, I have served on several committees within the University of Lagos. Experiences gained has helped me to understand the importance of committee system in the operations of University administration.

Outside of the University, I served as the Chairperson, Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Lagos State Chapter from 2013-2016, and Secretary, Lagos Studies Association from 2017 to 2023. The Lagos Studies Association is an interdisciplinary and international association of

academic and non-academic practitioners. The annual conferences organised by the association have attracted scholars from all over the world thereby enhancing the visibility of students and staff of the University of Lagos.

#### **6.1.1 Research Grants**

I have been fortunate to have received some research funding, including the Fulbright Research Grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, United States Department of State in 2016; the British Academy Research Grant for publishing and mentoring workshop for young scholars in Nigeria in 2019 - 2020, and another British Academy Research Grant on a project titled "The City as Archive: Writing and Methods Workshop" in 2020-2021. Madam Vice Chancellor, my research team is one of the beneficiaries of the 2024 TeTFund National Research Fund (NRF) to conduct a research titled "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: Creating Access to Library Resources for Students Living with Low Vision in Nigeria". One of the potential impacts of the project is to develop a mobile based context-aware multi-modal assistive application prototype that would create a new market for assistive solutions for students with vision impairment in Nigerian universities.

#### **6.1.2 Curriculum Development**

Under the leadership of the 12<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor, Professor Oluwatoyin Ogundipe, I facilitated and contributed immensely to the development of the curriculum for the establishment of the Library and Information Science undergraduate programme in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences. With approval from the National Universities Commission (NUC), the programme started in the 2023/2024 academic session with student enrolment of one hundred and thirteen (113). Seventy-eight (78) were admitted with UTME as 100-level students, while thirty-five (35) were admitted through Direct Entry as 200-level students. I teach some courses at both 100 and 200 levels as an adjunct (*pro bono publico*). Madam Vice Chancellor, I am delighted that the Library and Information Science programme is one of the beneficiaries of an annual One Million Naira cash prize to the best-graduating student instituted by Sahara Group.

## **6.2 Professional Practice**

Madam Vice Chancellor, in terms of professional practice, I have been providing library services to students and staff of this great university for over two decades, thereby contributing my quota to human and institutional capacity development through effective services, mentoring and community service. I have worked and had the privilege to head the Cataloguing Section and other Departments at various times. Some of the achievements and impacts while heading section and other Departments are discussed briefly as follows:

Head, Cataloguing Section    September 2008 - July 2010

### **Impact**

Under my leadership, the Cataloguing Section recorded the following achievements:

- ❖ Created significant milestones in cataloguing workflow that enhanced easy retrieval of bibliographic records.
- ❖ Populated the cataloguing module after conversion of bibliographic records from TINLIB to Graphical Library Automation System (GLAS).
- ❖ Cataloguing procedures became more digitally driven following the increased number of bibliographic records on Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

Head, Research and Bibliographic Department July 2010 - December 2011

### **Impact**

- ❖ Started the Library Archives for the preservation of university records housed in the Research and Bibliographic Department (Gandhi Library).
- ❖ Re-arranged the Gandhi Library to accommodate more learning spaces for users and staff.
- ❖ Updated the index to enhance search retrieval of Ph.D. theses housed in Gandhi Library
- ❖ Introduced more flexible services to support library users.

Head, Reader's Services Department January 2012 - March 13, 2019

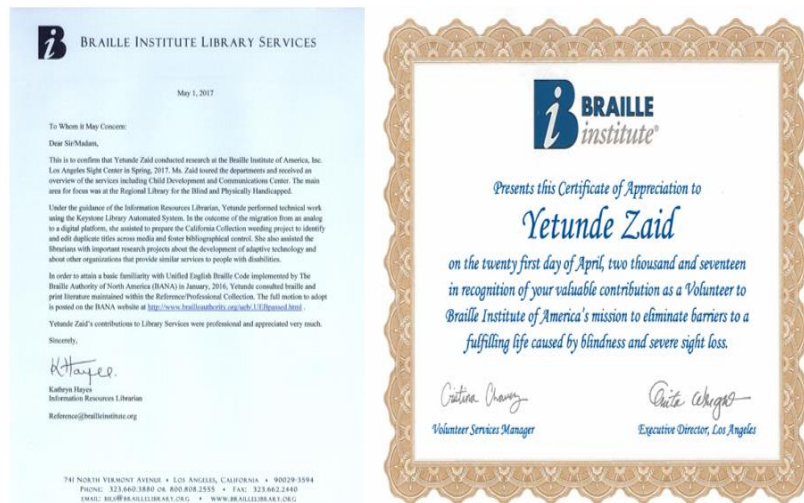
**Impact**

- ❖ Demonstrated a unique value in the department by creating awareness that helps the University Library function as a connector in programmes accreditation exercise.
- ❖ Nurtured an environment of service evaluation.
- ❖ Promoted professional excellence in service delivery.
- ❖ Promoted inclusive library services by providing professional assistance to meet the information and academic needs of students with visual impairment.
- ❖ Led the team that developed the functionality of the Institutional Repository digital platform following the mandate to create web visibility for academic products of the University of Lagos.
- ❖ Migrated some academic products to Open Educational Resources (OER) platform
- ❖ Introduced the compilation of library resources and other information as separate documents to accompany self-study requirements for accreditation

**6.2.1 Activities Connected to Inclusive Library Services**

Madam Vice Chancellor, I am privileged to be the first female librarian Fulbright Scholar in Nigeria. The nine months African Research Fulbright Scholar program to conduct research on inclusive education policy as a platform for library services for visually impaired students in Nigerian Universities was spent at the University of California, Los Angeles. In order to have practical knowledge of inclusive library services, I applied as a volunteer at the Braille Institute, Los Angeles, to gain insight into how libraries in the United States of America were providing services to persons with vision impairment. Through my engagement at the Braille Institute, I learnt how to use assistive technologies to convert learning resources to accessible formats in Braille or Audio and convert text to speech for persons with vision impairment. Figure 8 shows the letter of recognition and certificate of appreciation of my service at the Braille Institute.





**Figure 8:** Picture of Letter of recognition of my volunteering activities at the Braille Institute of America in Los Angeles and Certificate of Appreciation.

Under the guidance and supervision of Kathryn Hayes, the Information Resources Librarian at Braille Institute, Los Angeles, United States of America, I performed technical work using the Keystone Library Automated System to migrate bibliographic records from an analogue to a digital platform. I also participated in the California collection weeding project to identify and edit duplicate titles across media and foster bibliographic control. Madam Vice Chancellor, I am glad to announce that I felt very proud of myself for the opportunity to have the University of Lagos Library on the front burner as a volunteer that rocks! Figure 9 captures the moment.



**Figure 9:** Picture with Kathryn Hayes, Information Resources Librarian, Braille Institute, and Recognition as Volunteer at the Braille Institute, Los Angeles, USA.

I completed the Fulbright programme in May 2017 with the understanding that great service is the inspiration to excel. I returned to Nigeria to implement strategies for inclusion of students with vision impairment into the mainstream library experience. In order not to assume the specific academic and information needs of this category of students and the assistive tools they required to effectively use library resources, services and facilities, I had a strategy meeting with the executive members of the National Association of Visually Impaired Students of Nigeria (NANVIS), UNILAG Chapter in July 2017 as seen in Figure 10 - 12. We shared experiences on how to provide library services that will be beneficial to all because “What is good for the goose is good for the gander”



**Figure 10:** Meeting with the Executives of the National Association of Nigerian Visually Impaired Students, UNILAG Branch at the Visually Impaired Resource Centre (VIRC) UNILAG Library.



**Figure 11:** Picture with Emmanuel, a visually impaired graduate of Mass Communication after the strategic meeting



**Figure 12:** *Picture with Opeyemi, a visually impaired graduate Postgraduate student at VIRC after the strategic meeting*

From my viewpoint, the literary expression of ‘what is good for the goose is good for the gander’ connotes the fact that the library should be more proactive and deliberate about making its facilities, collections and services equitable, accessible and inclusive for people living with any form of disability. Today, I am happy that my knowledge and experience in converting learning materials into alternative formats for students with vision impairment have helped in meeting their academic needs. Specifically, the University of Lagos Library is providing the following inclusive services:

- ❖ Scanning of print course materials for conversion to braille or audio
- ❖ Conversion of born digital materials to braille or audio
- ❖ Transcription and conversion of resources to an accessible format
- ❖ Editing of materials in accessible formats
- ❖ Providing research assistance (In-person, email and zoom)
- ❖ Reader Assistance (reading citations, abstracts, and other materials)
- ❖ Information literacy programme
- ❖ Extended loan periods
- ❖ Provision of document delivery service



- ❖ Eliminating unnecessary complexity (such as keeping directional information simple and straightforward).



**Figure 12:** *Some students with vision impairment using library facilities at the VIRC, UNILAG Library*

The provision of inclusive services at the university library has been instrumental in no small measure to the academic journey of this category of students in two major ways. First, it has contributed to their overall academic performance as twenty-one of these students spread across faculties of law, arts, education, social sciences and management sciences graduated during the just concluded 54<sup>th</sup> convocation ceremonies. Nineteen out of the twenty-one completed their undergraduate studies and two had postgraduate degrees. Interestingly, nine out of the nineteen

graduates with bachelor degrees had second-class upper and one of them from the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management won a cash prize for the best-graduating student in Industrial Relations Theories and Comparative Systems (University of Lagos Convocation Proceedings, 2024).



**Figure 13:** *Picture with Emeka during his graduation at the 54th Convocation ceremony*



**Figure 14:** *Picture with Ebuka during his graduation at the 54th Convocation ceremony*



**Figure 15:** *Emeka, recipient of cash prize for the best graduating student in Comparative Industrial Relations*

Secondly, the provision of inclusive library services has greatly impacted the enrolment of students with vision impairment at the University of Lagos leading to a hundred per cent increase in the last six years as captured below:

2017/2018	-	31
2018/2019	-	45
2019/2020	-	47
2020/2021 & 2022/2023 (Merged)	-	55
2023/2024	-	66 to date

Working in partnership with the Students' Affairs Unit, and the Distance Learning Institute (DLI), University of Lagos, the library organises special orientation programme for students with vision impairment. The essence of the orientation is to identify their information needs and expectations and factor the outcome of the engagement to develop and improve library service delivery. It is worth stressing that candidates with vision impairment now take their Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination as those who are sighted at the Distance Learning Institute Center. Professor Peter Okebukola, Chairman, JAMB Equal Opportunity Group and Coordinator of the Lagos Centre, commended the Distance Learning Institute, University of Lagos while monitoring examination process of fifty-nine blind candidates at DLI in May 2022.

Although creating access to library facilities and services is important for students with vision impairment, we recognise that supporting their social wellbeing is also essential. Hence, the introduction of two social inclusion programmes. One of which is tagged "Library Lover's Day" which started in February 2022 as a way of welcoming our patrons back to the library after the impacts of the lockdown associated with COVID-19 and industrial action which kept our students off-campus for nine months. The aim of the programme was to get students to celebrate Valentine's Day and tell us what they love and/or hate about the library. The fun, style, vigour, positive feedback from students and staff and comments on social media platforms nudged me to keep the programme running with the 3rd edition happening today, 14th February, 2024.

What makes the programme inclusive is the involvement of students with vision impairment in games, speedy reading of braille materials, dancing



competitions, photo sessions etc. The Spoken Word session on the theme "My Love for the Library" was quite inspiring as sighted students and other audiences listened to incredible displays of talents and creativity exhibited by some students with vision impairment. Figure 16 is a reflection of their participation in the event.



**Figure 16:** Participation of some visually impaired students at the Library Lover's Day event.

The second social inclusion programme was the sport awareness competitions organised in March 2023. The initiative was birthed after reviewing the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nigerian University Games (NUGA)) hosted by the University of Lagos in March 2022 where about six thousand sighted athletes from seventy-five (75) universities from all over Nigeria participated in different sporting activities. While sighted students engaged in diverse sporting events during the games, their visually impaired counterparts seemed not to harness the advantages of the programmes. This may be due to lack of dissemination of information or lack of knowledge about architectural facilities or lack of modified assessment measures to be applied or the appropriate prescription of activities.

To address this concern, I collaborated with the National Association of Nigerian Visually Impaired Students (UNILAG Chapter) to plan a two-day awareness programme on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2023. A vital part of the programme was a sporting competition where students with vision impairment from the University of Lagos hosted members of the Vocational Training Centre to a sport competition that featured both mental and physical games such as goalball, rhyme games and skipping competitions as reflected in Figure 17. The programme was held at the University of Lagos Sports Centre (Guardian Newspaper, 2023).



**Figure 17:** *Participation of some visually impaired students in sport events.*



**Figure 18:** *Presentation of a plaque by a group of visually impaired students.*

The inclusion of the two programmes has not only contributed to the academic goals of over 60 students with vision impairment at the University of Lagos but has also helped to create positive learning experiences as they are now very much aware and capable of addressing accessibility barriers on campus. As a result of my active role in the National Association of Nigerian Visually Impaired Students (NANVIS), UNILAG Chapter, students with vision impairment from other chapters in Nigerian universities have been consulting me for technical advice and requesting for learning resources.

### **6.2.2 Contributions to Library Development as University Librarian**

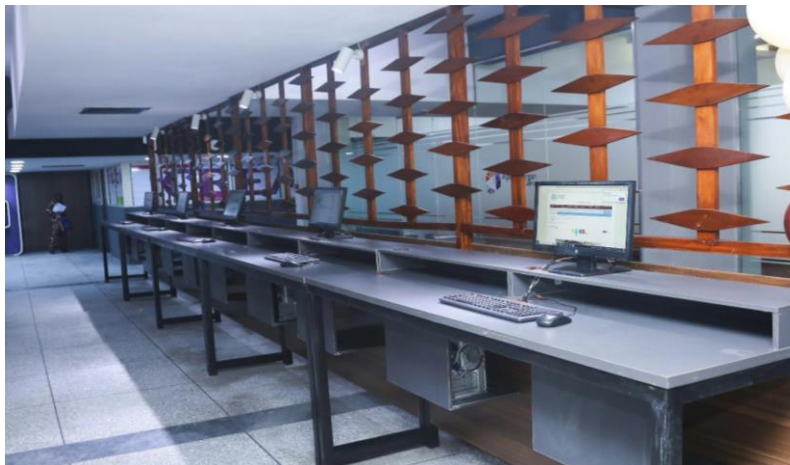
Madam Vice Chancellor, over the last four years as the University Librarian of this great institution, some milestones have been recorded in the library from the date of my appointment (March 14, 2019).

The need to have a more welcoming library environment for all, and creating innovative spaces to foster collaboration and creativity among students was part of my vision for the University of Lagos Library. Having the entrance and the first floor of the university library remodeled during my tenure as the University Librarian is a dream come true. The project, sponsored by Alpha Morgan Capital Managers Limited, has created a new experience for our students, including students with vision impairment. What makes the library more inclusive is the ease of access provided with the electronic doors that leads to an inviting coffee station and the Makerspace where students, regardless of ability or disability could connect, collaborate, co-create and unwind during study breaks. Figures 19 and 20 presents an outlook of the exterior and interior views of the library.





**Figure 19:** Photos of the old and new outlook of the University Library



**Figure 20a:** *Pictorial view of the interior of the first floor of the University library.*



**Figure 20b:** *Pictorial view of the interior of the first floor of the University library.*



**Figure 20c:** Pictorial view of the interior of the first floor of the University library.

Other milestones achievements include:

1. Development of Library Policy Document in line with global trends (<https://ir.unilag.edu.ng/items/0fb3310c-2846-490f-a327-d93ce20ec68a>)
2. Automation of the library processes for ease of access to the library bibliographic records. The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is accessible via (<http://librarydb.unilag.edu.ng/newgenlibctx/Home?Id=1>)
3. Provision of innovative and multi-faceted library services (<https://ir.unilag.edu.ng/collections/1adde84f-b501-4ff5-9664-99741c439819>)
4. Expanding the visibility of the University of Lagos with the continuous development of the Institutional Repository (<https://ir.unilag.edu.ng/home>)
5. Improved library website and ambience ([library@unilag.edu.ng](mailto:library@unilag.edu.ng))
6. Deployment of Artificial Intelligence to library services (<https://library.unilag.edu.ng/?p=2695>)



7. Establishment of a Makerspace to meet the evolving needs of students and staff
8. Excellent performance during accreditation of academic programmes
9. Staff development through continuous training
10. Introduction of customised binding of PhD thesis in line with global best practices

## **7.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Madam Vice Chancellor, from the foregoing discussion, it is appropriate at this point to reflect on the inevitable shift that must occur in library service delivery since some universities in Nigeria have started admitting students with vision impairment into various academic programmes.

The paradigm shift has become necessary and cannot be wished away despite the challenges university libraries are facing in introducing inclusive practices to mainstream library services. It was in recognition of the need for a shift that the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced several policies, such as National Policy on Special Needs Education in 2015, the National Policy on Inclusive Education in 2017, and the Discrimination Against People with Disabilities (Prohibition) Acts 2018 which were aimed at promoting inclusive practices for all.

Some of the policies rolled out for the achievement of a unified inclusive system in line with the new thinking on inclusive educational practices globally focuses on equal opportunities for all to receive a high-quality education in such a way that physical environment, administrative services, library facilities, and delivery of courses are easily accessible. Expectedly, the questions of how university libraries could translate these policies into implementation must be uncovered. Therefore, it is time for Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals to learn to prioritise and begin to strategise concerning the new paradigm shift on inclusive practices to accommodate various patrons regardless of ability or disability.

Madam Vice Chancellor, we must not ignore or attempt to gloss over some of the longstanding challenges limiting access to library resources and services for students with vision impairment. These challenges include

limited resources, poor information and telecommunication infrastructure, limited access to high-speed internet, low take-off of open access repositories and digital libraries, non-availability of assistive technology and specialised software packages, and lack of policy on disability support services in libraries.

A university that aims to imbibe inclusive culture must embrace the principles of universal design. Until students with vision impairment are made to feel inclusive through unrestricted access to campus facilities, including library resources and services just like their sighted fellow students, the expression “what is good for the goose is good for the gander” would not be fully realised.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Madam Vice Chancellor, against the backdrop of issues I have discussed in this lecture, permits me to present my recommendations which are in seven categories. In reality, the recommendations, are not limited to just students with vision impairment but other types of disabilities. Basically, these recommendations are not stand-alone but are interwoven as follows:

### **Get Familiar with their Learning Needs**

The first step towards promoting inclusive practices is for stakeholders to understand the learning challenges of students with disabilities before providing assistance. For instance, students with vision impairment will be unable to read print resources unless in alternative format. Universities must therefore invest in procuring assistive technologies for all category of students with disabilities.

### **Build a Supportive Library Environment**

Inclusive library services cannot thrive in isolation. It requires a supportive environment which is a culmination of infrastructure, tools, resources and practices, which forms a foundation within which inclusive library services can be delivered.

### **Inclusive Policies and Procedures**

Achieving inclusion in any higher education sector rests upon three central rudiments. These rudiments are inclusive policy, inclusive culture and inclusive practices. The time for universities and other higher institutions to

have inclusive institutional culture is NOW because it promotes the attainment of inclusion, equity, and diversity among academics. Madam Vice Chancellor, I like to emphasise that such culture must be documented and given credence so that it can metamorphose into what is called inclusive policy.

It is important that inclusive policies and procedures exist to guide the interaction between library staff and students with any form of disability. Library staff should understand the importance of such policies and make it easily accessible. Thus creating awareness of their rights and responsibilities under legislation and providing information on:

- ❖ What adjustments to services and facilities are already available to students with vision impairments;
- ❖ What can be done for them on an individual basis to meet their information needs, and
- ❖ The procedures to access library resources, services and facilities.

A procedure for complaint that may arise directly from student with disability should also be included. Students with disabilities must be involved in both the development and review of relevant policies, procedures, services and facilities. This should be captured through direct feedback, surveys or focus groups. It is advisable that institutional policies of ensuring equity, inclusion and diversity for people living with disability should be made public on institutional website.

### **Staff Development on Inclusive Practices**

Disability training on inclusive practices should be a key component of staff development to ensure that library staff have the knowledge and skill to work effectively with people living with a variety of disabilities, including those with vision impairment. This is important as attitudes have been identified as one of the biggest barriers responsible for the exclusion faced by people with vision impairment. Disability training will therefore serve as an avenue to reflect on and address personal attitudes towards disability. Disability training will also provide an opportunity to understand the experience of students with visual impairment and the implications of those experiences for people with different impairments on library services, discuss communication and information strategies, have a clear understanding of staff obligations, and review processes to ensure that

teaching, learning and research are inclusive for all people living with disabilities, including vision impairment.

It is also vital to have designated trained contacts at each library location (e.g. faculty, department etc.). Such trained contact should have a role in communicating issues to others within the library. The role of designated staff should be formally acknowledged through human resources processes (for example, job descriptions, work plans, and performance reviews should be included in the processes).

In addition, all library staff should be aware of relevant legislation, policies, procedures, and current practices on disability support services through orientation. Most importantly, orientation for new staff should include information on what the library and the university provide for students with vision impairments. With staff trained to meet students' requirements, the library will be more likely to provide a safe environment for students to discuss their requirements. Diversity among employees is an asset in any university setting, so hiring people with experience in special education could add value to library services.

### **Access to Facilities and Equipment**

Students with vision impairments must have equitable access to the library and its facilities. Ideally, every academic library should comply with or exceed the standards of the Universal design for access and mobility. This includes, for example, electronic doors, accessible toilet facilities and adequate signage, lighting, and good colour contrasts, etc. Where this is not possible or unreasonably difficult, an alternative means of participation must exist. When any upgrade or changes are to be made to the library, planning should incorporate improvements to facilities and access for people with disabilities, including those with vision impairments.

Assistive technologies (e.g., magnifiers, scanners, and screen readers) should be readily available to students who have difficulty accessing information in print. The assistive technology tools should be situated in the best possible location for students, which could be a resource centre within the library, although the technology might also be part of computer labs or placed in stand-alone locations. In the absence of a dedicated resource centre, computers provided in the library should be in an

accessible laboratory and be configured to meet the requirements of students who have difficulty accessing information in print. Ergonomics furniture (e.g., desks to work at while standing, kneelers, and adjustable chairs) should also be provided.

### **Build and Share On-demand Information Resources**

University libraries are all about providing information resources to support teaching, learning and research activities. Therefore, librarians must be in a position to share on-demand learning resources and follow the universal design principles to ensure that library collection, facilities and services are accessible to students, faculty and staff, regardless of ability or disability. To ensure that students with vision impairment can seamlessly use library resource, it is important to give attention to accessibility issues when designing a website, the Library Management Software or subscribing to web-based resources.

### **Inclusion of Library Services to Persons with Disabilities in Library and Information Science Curriculum**

Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates must have requisite professional competencies and industry exposure in the area of library services to persons with any form of disability (hearing impairment, vision impairment, intellectual disability, physical disability, mental health conditions, etc). Therefore, Library Schools must make provision for a compulsory course with the title: 'Library Services to Persons with Disabilities' in the 30 percent component of the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS).

## **9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The book of Isaiah, Chapter 25, Verse 1 (NKJV) which is one of my favorite scriptures says "O Lord, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." With a deep sense of gratitude, I want to thank the Almighty God for sparing my life, and for giving me the opportunity to attain this level in my professional career. I acknowledge His grace and love towards me from my cradle till today and for causing His Word in Proverbs chapter 4 verse 18 which says: "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day" to find expression in my life.

Please do not be offended if I do not mention your name in the course of the acknowledgement. It is not because you are not appreciated but because many people, who are too numerous to be listed here, have made a great impact in my life.

First, I want to thank Madam Vice Chancellor, Professor Folasade Tolulope Ogunsola, my big sister and leader in management. Thank you for giving me a leg up. You are one of the women Margaret Thatcher had in mind when she said: "If you want something, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman". Thank you for being such a great inspiration by helping to sharpen my gifts in university administration. I am grateful to you for the opportunity given to me to stand before this audience to render an account of my professional journey.

I am immensely grateful to all members of management - Professor Ayodele Atsenuwa, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development Services), Professor Lucian Obinna Chukwu, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Management Services), Professor Bola Oboh, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics and Research), Mrs. Olakunle Makinde, Acting Registrar, Mrs. Olufunmilola Adekunle, Bursar, Professor Wale Oke, Provost College of Medicine, Professor Matthew Ilori, Director, Academic Planning and Professor Olufemi Shuaibu, Director, Quality Assurance and Servicom. I thank you all for providing leadership in your respective roles. It has been a great privilege working with you. Your support and guidance to me in management are most valuable and well appreciated.

At this point, I want to specially thank Professor Oluwatoyin Temitayo Ogundipe, the former Vice Chancellor, for the role he played in my professional career. He is a mentor, a leader, a brother and a Pastor. It was under his tenure as Vice Chancellor that I was appointed a Reader Librarian (Associate Professor Cadre) and later the pioneer Professor Librarian. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to do this inaugural lecture. It was indeed a wonderful experience working with you and learning from you. Thank you, Sir!

My deep appreciation also goes to Professor Rahamon Bello, the 11th Vice Chancellor for his advice and encouragement during my application for the Fulbright programme. It was also during his tenure that the Library got the directive to provide open access to the University of Lagos research output by archiving in the Institutional Repository. Lessons learnt during the installation and content development of the repository added value to my professional practice.

I acknowledge the love and assistance of Prof. Ayodele Ogunye, a great mentor and coach. Thank you for always supporting the University of Lagos and I thank you sincerely for attending my inaugural lecture. May God continue to preserve you for us sir.

I am grateful to this great institution called the University of Lagos, the University First Choice and the Nation's Pride, for its principle of inclusiveness. I probably would not have been here today to deliver this inaugural lecture if I had not entered this campus in 1993 as a Youth Corper. While many Youth Corper come to this university for their national primary assignment, I came as a Youth Corper to become the University Librarian of this great institution. The University of Lagos provided the opportunity and enabling environment to live up to this point in my career. I am proud to be in this community.

Sincere appreciation to Professor Oluwole Familoni (Former DVC, Academics and Research) Professor Ben Oghojafor (Former DVC, Management Services), Professor Grace Otinwa, (Former Director, Quality Assurance), Professor Mopelola Olusakin, (Former Director, Academic Planning), Mr. Oladejo Azeez Esq., (Former Registrar), Mr. Olalekan Lawal

(Former Bursar) for all their encouragement and advice over the years. I deeply appreciate the opportunity of working with them at various times.

Immense thanks to my Senior Social Prefect and brother Professor Afolabi Lesi, former Provost, College of Medicine, for the cooperation, guidance and support you provided while you were in management and for your ready-to-assist attitude whenever I needed your assistance. Thank you, Sir!

There are some people in this university who touched my life at one time or the other in the course of our interaction. They include Professor Babajide Alo, Professor Duro Oni, Professor Akeem Akinwale, Professor Oludiran Akinleye, Professor Owolabi Kuye, Professor Khalid Adekoya, Professor Uche Udeani, Professor Funmilayo Bammeke, Dr Lateef Odekunle and Dr (Mrs.) Taiwo Folasade Ipaye, Professor Mike Adebomowo, Professor Timothy Nubi, Prof. Alabi Soneye, Dr Victor Odumuyiwa, Prof. Hakeem Amuda, Prof Muyiwa Falaye, and Prof. Musa Obalola and Mrs. Olubukola Olatise.

Permit me to extend a sense of deep appreciation to all my teachers from primary school to my days at the University of Ibadan, the premier university. They have in one way or another helped shape my life through the provision of knowledge, guidance and support along my educational journey. I may not be able to give accurate details of my teachers in primary and secondary schools because I grew up being a very reserved person. However, my heart blesses and thanks them all. May the Lord reward you and bless your children wherever they are. I say a big thank you to all my lecturers at the Ogun State University, now Olabisi Onabanjo University. I thank Prof Adesola Olateju, who supervised my undergraduate project. Your guidance has helped in shaping who I have become today.

In my days as a postgraduate student at the University of Ibadan where I had my Master's and Doctoral degrees, I met these amazing lecturers in the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies (LARIS): Prof. Iyabo Mabawonku, Prof. Morayo Atinmo, Prof. Abiola Abioye, Prof. Sunday Popoola, Dr Airen Adetimirin and Prof. Kenneth Nwalo. Deserving special mention are Prof. Iyabo Mabawonku and Prof. Morayo Atinmo who have both retired from active service. Prof. Atinmo taught me knowledge



organisation while Prof. Mabawonku was not just my lecturer but my mother and mentor. I want to use this opportunity to thank Prof. Mabawonku for her contributions to my personal and professional growth. Thank you for your motherly support, advice and show of love. You played a rare role in my life, doing it wholeheartedly, without holding back. Your guidance, mentoring, kindness, and understanding have helped me grow as a wife, mother and Library and Information Science (LIS) professional in ways that are beyond my imagination. Professor Mabawonku, I love you with all my heart. I also specially appreciate the fatherly role and mentorship of Prof. Lenrie Aina, the immediate past National Librarian.

I am short of finding an appropriate vocabulary to express the magnitude of my appreciation to my PhD supervisor, Prof. Sunday Popoola, popularly called SOP at the University of Ibadan. It was a tough endeavour, having to combine home, work and family but my supervisor was there to give the push. In my sojourn as a PhD student, there were days I had to close late from work just to cover up for the day/time taken off to go to school, and there were times I had to burn midnight candles just to meet deadlines and attend to my supervisor's concerns and comments. I do not take for granted your words of encouragement, your resilience and your dedication to ensuring that I finish my PhD in record time. Indeed, hard work truly pays! Thank you so much, Sir! I do not take the opportunity to have learnt from you for granted. Some of my lecturers from the Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan are here physically, while others joined online. Thank you so very much.

I also want to appreciate all my classmates and friends in LARIS. They are Dr. Adebamnbode Oduwale, Prof. Nike Onifade, Dr. Helen Emasealu, Dr. Tundun Oyewunmi, Prof. Niran Adetoro and Prof. Ibegwam. I am glad that all of us are trailblazers in our chosen career paths and the labour of our lecturers was not in vain.

I must mention this beautiful soul, a boss turned mother, Dr. (Mrs.) Halima Egberongbe. What would I have done without you? The Yetunde Zaid you see today was nurtured by this wonderful, quiet, intelligent and seasoned librarian. She saw the future and decided to patiently walk me through my career path. Thank you for those evenings you spent with me coaching and mentoring me as a young librarian in those days. Thank you Dr.

Egberongbe for being so instrumental to my success story. I pray that the Lord will lengthen your days with sound health.

Special thanks to colleagues and the entire staff of the University of Lagos Library. I thank Dr. Adekanye, Dr. Odunlade, Mrs. Olatise, Dr. Adewuyi, Dr. Adedokun, Dr. Onaade, and Dr. Ogunleye. I must not forget to thank Mr. Babatunde, Mr. Ukaigwe, Mr. Paschal Ojeangboye, Mrs. Martins, Mrs. Toyin Aremu, and all our administrative staff especially those working in the office of the University Librarian: Mr. Agbetile, Mrs. Benedict, Miss Nkechi Osamene, Mr. Jolaosho, Mr. Efunkoya and Mr. Giwa. The entire library staff, I thank you all. Time will not permit me to mention all the names.

I want to sincerely thank those who assisted us in starting the Library and Information Science Programme- Prof. Akinfeleye, Prof. Tejumaiye, Prof. Ogwezzy, Prof. Funmilayo Bammeke, Prof. Odukoya, current Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and every other person who supported us in birthing the new programme. I appreciate my colleagues in the newly established Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduate programme, Department of Mass Communication: Dr. Olatokunbo Okiki, Dr. Olanike Alabi, Dr. Stella Nduka and Miss Bibire Badmus. You all have been very supportive in achieving my dreams for the LIS School. To the pioneer students of the Library and Information Science programme, you are acknowledged.

I specially acknowledge the financial support of various funders who invested in my ideas to make my career dreams a success. I want to say a big thank you to the British Academy, United States Government for the Fulbright award, and to every member of the Fulbright Association, UNILAG chapter, I appreciate you all. To Mr Ade Buraimoh, Group Managing Director, Alpha Morgan Capital Limited your contribution towards transforming the University of Lagos Library to a future ready library is well appreciated. I cannot but mention the support of Mr Lanre Adesuyi, Managing Director, Havilah Merchants. Thank you, sir, for the valuable contributions to the University of Lagos Library, especially the Library Lover's Day celebration. You are indeed an inspiration to the library profession.

I want to specially thank my father in the Lord, Pastor Oluremi Morgan, the Assistant Pastor in-charge of Region 20, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Apapa Family, my Parish Pastor, Pastor Ademola Olugboyega, the Senior Pastor, of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Chief Shepherd's Court, the Assistant Pastors: Pastor David Ajigbewu and Pastor Kunle Ogundipe, the ministers and church members, for their prayers and support all through the year and for making out time to grace this occasion. I thank Pastor and Pastor Mrs Obiagwu, Pastor and Pastor Mrs Odusote, Pastor and Pastor Mrs Tomosori, Pastor and Pastor Mrs Ishola, Pastor and Pastor Mrs Johnson Olawuni, Pastor Gbenga Adeoti and Pastor Enoch Olamilekan. I acknowledge the prayers, support and guidance of Pastor Fred, Okuagba, Regional Head Usher, RCCG Region 20, Apapa family and all the members of the Ushering Department of my local Parish, RCCG, Chief Shepherd's Court, a Department that has helped in shaping my spiritual growth, organisational and people skills.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to this inaugural lecture. My appreciation goes to Dr. (Mrs.) Olanike Alabi, Chairperson of the inaugural committee, and other members – Dr. Christopher Okiki, Dr. (Mrs.) Stella Nduka, Mrs. Olubukla Olatise, Dr (Mrs) Ngozi Ukachi, Dr. Olatunde Barber, Mr. Samuel Agbetile, Mrs. Maureen Ezike, Miss Bibire Badmus, Mrs. Chinwe Samuel, Mrs. Yinka Koiki-Owoyele, Mrs. Lateefat Adekola, Mrs. Adeola Oduntan, Mrs. Blessing Okpah, Mr Andrew Aiyedogbon, Mr. Pascal Ojeagbonye, Mr Adeleke Adekola, Mr. Ejike Obodoma, Mr. Felix Areo, Miss Ngozi Ukpai-Okoro, Mr. Seun Adeyemi, Mr. Godfrey Ikhuoria, and Miss Nkechi Osemene. Your selfless service, commitment and sacrifice to make today a reality is well appreciated.

To my amazing team of students with vision impairment, I want to appreciate you for your resilience, tenacity, hardwork and confidence. Thank you for believing in yourselves by taking the bold step to apply to the University of Lagos, "the University of First Choice and the Nation's Pride". I wish you all the best along each step of your journey in the University of Lagos. Go after your dreams!.

Finally, Brad Henry said and I quote: "Families are the compass that guides us. They are the inspiration to reach great heights, and our comfort when we occasionally falter." – Without mincing words, I want to specially thank

my parents: Mr and Mrs Agunbiade James of blessed memory. I am most appreciative of their love and care for the short time they spent with me and my siblings. May your soul continue to rest in the bosom of the Lord. My sincere appreciation to my uncles and aunties who did not allow my siblings and I lack parental love, guidance and financial help while growing up - Mummy Abosede Adelusi, Daddy Bamidele Olumilua, , Mummy Yinka Olumilua, Mummy Modupe Komolafe. Thank you all for what you have done for me over the years.

My journey to where I am today may not have been possible without the love, care and stability from my siblings and their spouses, cousins and members of my extended family-Abiola and Adebawale Ojo, Sola Agunbiade, Olamilekan and Temitope Agunbiade, Abosede and Segun Oni, Oluwatoyin and Quadri Oridedi, Kehinde and Adebayo Komolafe, Taiwo Olumilua, Olaotan Olumilua, Oluwapelumi Agbaje, Sayo Agbaje, Mrs. Kate Akintola-Bello, Mrs. Wunmi Hugo, and Mrs. Lola Durodola. I am grateful to you all.

To all my in-laws, Mrs. Sinat Amodu, Mrs. Kemi Bello, Mr. Femi Zaid, Mr. Lukman Amodu and Mrs. Grace Adeoye, Mr Segun Owonibi, and Mr and Mrs. Ameobi; you are all amazing and I am so honoured to have you. I want to appreciate my friends - Mrs. Folake Odunlami, Mrs. Funlola Kuforiji, Mrs. Olubunmi Sijuwade, Mrs. Morinsola Afolabi, Mrs. Temitope Adeosun, Mrs. Abimbola Tiamiyu, Dr. Temitayo Olaleye and Miss Oluwakemi Adenayo.

To the gift of God in my life, my own 'ododo eye' (the apple of my eyes): Moyinoluwa Iyiobi, my daughter and Oluwatamilore Ayomide, my son. They are both Alumni of this great institution and ex-students of the University of Lagos Women Society (ULWS) and the International School (ISL). Both of you are my sunshine and the eyes through which I see the world. Thank you for being so understanding right from childhood. You are my greatest achievement! May your light continue to shine brighter and brighter. I want to appreciate the gift of Boluwatife Kuponiyi in my life and family, you are an amazing daughter and I love you dearly.

I want to specially thank Olajide Zaid Esq, my boyfriend, husband, sugar daddy, a great friend, soulmate, and gist partner. Your journey to the

University of Ibadan in 1993 to obtain an application form for me to pursue a postgraduate degree in Library and Information Science is not in vain as you can see the fruit of that action today. I sincerely appreciate your love, humility, kindness and gentleness. You gave me unparalleled academic freedom, financial and home support just to see me blossom as a fulfilled wife, mother and professional librarian. Thank you for giving me the wings to fly and tolerating my excesses. I love you.

If I had been standing on the stage with no one here to listen physically and virtually, this lecture would be of no value. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for attending this lecture (in-person and online), and I duly appreciate your rapt attention. May God bless you all and see you safely to your various destinations in Jesus Name, Amen.

Madam Vice Chancellor, this is my Inaugural Lecture.

## 10.0 REFERENCES

- Abioye, A., Zaid, Y. A. & Egberongbe, H. S. (2014). Documenting and disseminating agricultural indigenous knowledge for sustainable food security: The efforts of agricultural research libraries in Nigeria. *Libri*, 64(1), 75 – 84.
- Acheampong, N. O., & Dogbe, D. (2020). Access to Library Facilities and Resources by Students with Visual Impairment at University of Education, Winneba. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-16.
- Alcaraz-Rodríguez V, Medina-Rebollo D, Muñoz-Llerena A & Fernández-Gavira J (2021). Influence of Physical Activity and Sport on the Inclusion of People with Visual Impairment: A Systematic Review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Dec 31; 19(1):443. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19010443. PMID: 35010704; PMCID: PMC8744778.
- Aliyu, M. M. (2019). Rights of Persons Living with Disabilities under the Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018. *IJOCLLEP*, 1, 112.
- Babalola, Y. T. and Haliso, Y. (2011). Library and information services to the visually impaired: the role of academic libraries. *Canadian Social Science*, 7(1): 140-147.
- Barger, T. S (2016). ADA Compliance across campus: Providing accommodations to level the playing field for students with disabilities. University Business, 2016. Retrieved on November 15, 2023 from: <http://tinyurl.com/joo2pf2>
- Bhardwaj & Kumar (2017) "A comprehensive digital environment for visually impaired students: user's perspectives", *Library Hi Tech*, Vol. 35 (4), pp. 542-557.
- Bodaghi, N. B., & Zainab, A. N. (2013). My carrel, my second home: Inclusion and the sense of belonging among visually impaired students in an academic library. *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science*, 18(3), 39.
- Bontekoe, F. E., & Wallot, M. (2019). World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). In *Research Handbook on the European Union and International Organisations* (pp. 275-292). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Burgstahler, S & Russo-Gleicher, R. J (2015). Applying Universal Design to Address the Needs of Postsecondary Students on the Autism Spectrum. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 28(2), 199-212.

- Burgstahler, S (2020). Creating inclusive learning opportunities in higher education: A universal design toolkit/Harvard Press, p. 47-48
- Cory, R. C. (2011). Disability services offices for students with disabilities: A campus resource. *New directions for higher education*, 154(154), 27-36.
- Chaputula, A. H & Mapulanga, P.M (2016). Provision of library services to people with disabilities in Malawi. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, 82 (2), 1-10
- Eleweke, C. J., Agboola, I. O., & Guteng, S. I. (2015). Reviewing the Pioneering Roles of Gallaudet University Alumni in Advancing Deaf Education and Services in Developing Countries: Insights and Challenges from Nigeria. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 160(2), 75–83.
- Eskay, M., & Chima, J. N. (2013). Library and information service delivery for the blind and physically challenged in University of Nigeria Nsukka Library. *European academic research*, 1(5), 625-635.
- Gupta, J. & Vegelin, C. (2016). Sustainable development goals and inclusive development. *International Environmental Agreements*, 16, 433-448.
- Harris, C., & Oppenheim, C. (2003). The provision of library services for visually impaired students in UK further education libraries in response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). *Journal of librarianship and information science*, 35(4), 243-257.
- Hebert, M. & Savaiano, M.E (2021) A survey of the writing instructional practices of Nebraska teachers of students with visual impairments, *Exceptionality*, 29:4, 294-309.
- Higher Education Compliance Alliance (2017). Disabilities and accommodations. Retrieved on December 12, 2023, from: <http://www.higheredcompliance.org/resources/disabilities-accommodations.html>
- Ijadunola, M., Akinyemi, P., Olowookere, O., Olotu, O., Goodman, O., Ogundiran, A., & Ijadunola, K. (2022). Addressing Inclusiveness in Tertiary Co-education: Attitude of Undergraduate and Academic Staff Towards Students with Disabilities in a South-West Nigerian University. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 69(1), 47-60.

- Jaeger, P. T. (2018). Designing for Diversity and Designing for Disability: New Opportunities for Libraries to Expand Their Support and Advocacy for People with Disabilities. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion*, 2(1/2), 52–66.
- Lenn, K. (2019). Library services to disabled students: Outreach and education. In *Reference services for the unserved* (pp. 13-25). Routledge.
- Lourens, H., & Swartz, L. (2016). Experiences of visually impaired students in higher education: Bodily perspectives on inclusive education. *Disability & society*, 31(2), 240-251.
- Lourens, H & Swartz, L (2016). It's better if someone can see me for who I am: Stories of (in) visibility for students with visual impairment within South African universities. *Disability and Society*, 31(2), 210-222.
- Majinge, R. M. (2014). Library services provision for people with visual impairment and in wheelchairs in academic libraries in Tanzania. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal (PhD thesis).
- Majinge, R., & Stilwell, C. (2014). ICT used in information delivery to people with visual impairments and in wheelchairs in Tanzanian university libraries. *African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science*, 24(2), 151-159.
- Mutula, S., & Majinge, R. M. (2016). Information Behaviour of Students Living with Visual Impairments in University Libraries: A review of related literature. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42(5), 522-528.
- National Universities Commission. (2023). Nigerian universities. National Universities Commission. <https://www.nuc.edu.ng/>
- Odumuyiwa, V, **Zaid, Y. A.** & Barber, O. (2020). *Enhancing knowledge organisation through implicit collaboration in crowdsourcing process*. In International Society for Knowledge Organisation (ISKO), Marianne Lykke, Tanja Svarre, Mette Skov, Daniel Martinez-Avila (ed.) *Knowledge Organisation at the Interface*, 2020, pp. 507 -511.
- Ogwezzy, M. C. (2019). The Promotion and Protection of Rights of Persons with Disability in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Applicable Theories, Statute and Treaty Laws. *Sri Lanka J. Int'l L.*, 27, 171.



- Olanlokun, S. O. & **Zaid Y. A.** (2007). Library exhibitions as public relations strategy: Case Study of the University of Lagos Library. *Gateway Library Journal*, 9(2), 1- 9.
- Oliver, M. (1990). The politics of disablement: A sociological approach. New York: St. Martin's Press
- Oliver, M. (1996). Understanding disability from theory to practice. London: Macmillan Press.
- Phukubje, J., & Ngoepe, M. (2017). Convenience and accessibility of library services to students with disabilities at the University of Limpopo in South Africa. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 49(2), 180-190.
- Popoola, S.O. & **Zaid, Y.A.** (2007). Faculty awareness and use of library information products and services in Nigerian universities. *Library Progress*, 27(2), 127 – 137. Available at: <http://majlis.fsktm.um.edu.my/detail.asp?AID=637>.
- Popoola, S.O. & **Zaid, Y.A.** (2008). Information dissemination by health workers on family planning programme in Oyo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 5(1&2), 286 -294.
- Popoola, S. O. & **Zaid, Y. A.** (2015). Effective Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, Information Acquisition and Utilisation of Managers in Packaging Companies in Nigeria. *Information and Knowledge Management*, 5(1), 140-149.
- Schles, R. A. (2021). Population Data for Students with Visual Impairments in the United States. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 115(3), 177-189.
- Scott, R. (2009). Undergraduate educational experiences: The academic success of college students with blindness and visual impairments. North Carolina State University. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2009.3395269.
- Shava, K. (2008). How and in what ways can western models of disability inform and promote the empowerment of disabled people and their participation in mainstream Zimbabwean society? (MA dissertation. Leeds: of Leeds).
- The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (2021). Magnitude and projection - Global estimates of vision loss. Retrieved on January 4, 2024 from: <https://www.iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/magnitude-and-projections/global/>

- UNESCO (2009). Policy guidelines on inclusion in education. Retrieved 20 July, 2023, from [http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/dokumente/upload/72074\\_177849e.pdf](http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/dokumente/upload/72074_177849e.pdf)
- UNESCO (2008). Inclusive education: the way of the future. Conclusions and recommendations of the 48th session of the international conference on education (ICE) Geneva 25-28 November, 2008. Retrieved from: [www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/brazil\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/brazil_NR08.pdf).
- UNESCO (1994). The world conference on special needs education: Access and quality. Final report. Salamanca, Spain: Ministry of Education and Science, Madrid; UNESCO.
- UNICEF (2013). The state of the world's children: Children with disability. Retrieved from: [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SWCR2013\\_ENG\\_Lo\\_res\\_24\\_Apr\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/SWCR2013_ENG_Lo_res_24_Apr_2013.pdf).
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. Glossary <http://www.unescap.org>.
- Wanderi, M. P., Mwisukha, A., & Bukhala, P. W. (2009). Enhancing the full potential of persons with disabilities through sports in the 21st century. *Disability studies quarterly*, 29(4).
- World Intellectual Property Organisation: WIPO-Administered Treaties (2023) Retrieved December 22, 2023 from: [https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/treaties/ShowResults?search\\_what=C&treaty\\_id=843](https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/treaties/ShowResults?search_what=C&treaty_id=843)
- Zaid, Y. A.** (2003). Library development in selected private secondary schools in Lagos State. *Lagos Journal of Library and Information Science*, 1(2), 36 – 49.
- Zaid, Y. A.** (2004). Automating library records using GLAS software: University of Lagos experience. *Nigerian Libraries*, 38 (1), 56 - 66.
- Zaid, Y. A.** (2008a). The use of the internet for cataloguing and classification of library materials. *The Information Technologist*, 5(2), 30 - 35.
- Zaid, Y.A** (2008b). The study of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) by University Libraries in Nigeria. *Borno Library, Archival and Information Science Journal*, 7(1), 1 – 14.
- Zaid, Y.A & Abioye, A.** (2010). Museum, Libraries and Archives: Collaborating for the preservation of heritage materials in Nigeria.

- African Research & Documentation, 114, 59-71. <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/67265826/museums-libraries>
- Zaid, Y.A** and Popoola, S.O. (2010). *Information accessibility and utilisation as correlates of quality of life of rural women in Nigeria. Samaru Journal of Information Studies*, 10 (1&2), 31 – 49.
- Zaid, Y.A** (2011). Awareness and utilization of computer-based library services by final year students in the University of Lagos, *Library and Information Practitioner*, 4(1&2). 287 – 303.
- Zaid, Y.A & Oyelude, A.A** (2012). *Creativity and innovations in Nigerian academic libraries: Implications for library development in Nigerian Library Association at 50: Promoting library and information science profession for national development and transformation/Edited by L.O Aina and Iyabo Mabawonku. -Ibadan: University Press Plc.* 40–51.
- Zaid, Y.A & Okiki, O. C** (2014). Building collaboration for an institutional repository in Africa: Transcending barriers, creating opportunities. *Journal of Interlibrary loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve*, 24(3-4), 103-111.
- Zaid, Y. A.** Abioye, A & Olatise, O. M (2013). Training in cultural heritage preservation: The experiences of heritage institutions in Nigeria. *Nigerian Libraries*, 46 (1), 28- 36.
- Zaid, Y. A.,** Egberongbe, H. S. & Adekanye, A.E (2014). *Needs and sources of information in the treatment and management of breast cancer in Lagos State, Nigeria. Information Development.* Available at: <http://idv.sagepub.com/content/32/2/175.short>
- Zaid, Y.A & Olatise, O.M** (2016). Past imperfect, present continuous and future perfect: paradigm shift in information service provision in Nigerian universities libraries. *Middle Belt Journal of Library and Information Science*, 14, 65-82.
- Zaid, Y.A.** (2017a). Information Provision for Students with Visual Impairments in Nigerian Universities Charting a Course from Project to Service Delivery. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 10(1), 10p. Available at [jaistonline.org/10voll/JAIST](http://jaistonline.org/10voll/JAIST).
- Zaid, Y.A.** (2017b). The Exclusion of Persons with Visual Impairment in Nigerian Academic Libraries' Websites. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-12.
- Zaid, Y.A** (2017c). High Blood Pressure Awareness among Residents in Lagos State, Nigeria: Role of Librarians in the Dissemination of

- Health Information. *Library Review*, 66(5), 235. Available at: [www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/LR-06-2016-0056](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/LR-06-2016-0056)
- Zaid, Y.A.** (2018). Inclusive Education Policy as Platform of Library Services for Students with Visual Impairment in Nigerian Universities: Lessons from the United States of America. *Nigerian Libraries*, 51 (1), 52 -73.
- Zaid, Y.A.** (2019) Involvement of Academic Librarians in Open Educational Resources Initiatives in Nigerian Universities. In *Research on Contemporary Issues in Media Resources and Information and Communication Technology Use. A festschrift in honour of Prof. Iyabo Motolagbe Mabawonku* edited by Olatokun W.M, Aremu, A.O & Adetimirin A. *Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*. 284 -302.
- Zaid, Y. A & Egberongbe, H. S** (2020). An Assessment of the Role of Libraries in Poverty Alleviation among the Youth in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Middle Belt Journal of Library and Information Science*, 18, 24 – 47.
- Zaid, Y. A, & Alabi, A. O.** (2021). Sustaining open educational resources (OER) initiatives in Nigerian universities. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 36(2), 181-197. doi: 10.1080/02680513.2020.1713738.
- Zaid, Y.A, Olatise, O.M. & Alabi, A.O.** (2023). Bridging the Gap in Open Knowledge Movement: Plight of the Excluded in Higher Education in Nigeria in *IFLA/ARL section inclusiveness through openness accessible via: <https://www.ifla.org/news/ifla-arl-sections-inclusiveness-through-openness-conference-proceedings-now-available/>*.
- Zhang, X., Tlili, A., Nascimbeni, F., Burgos, D., Huang, R., Chang, T. W. & Khribi, M. K.** (2020). Accessibility within open educational resources and practices for disabled learners: A systematic literature review. *Smart Learning Environments*, 7, 1-19.