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THE VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES WITH LIFELONG LEARNING OF LECTURERS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This paper aims to analyze the main value of academic libraries to lecturers' life learning, which iprovides the stores of knowledge, provides lecturers with information literacy and develop information literacy skills for their lifelong learning. Analyzing the necessity of lifelong learning to the lecturers is also one of main objectives. Furthermore, this paper presents the impact of information and communication technology on the academic library to achieve its main value.

INTRODUCTION

In academic environment, each lecturer has to equip themselves with information skills which enable them to meet the demands of the university and to fulfil their duties. One of huge information resources is academic library. Libraries are defined as "stores of knowledge" (Line, 1991, p. 89) has play very important role in meeting the requirements in a new social context. Academic libraries are instutions are mainly in universities and colleges where information users are provided with information literacy skills to be able to access to information resources for their specific subjects or research papers. These skills are transferred to life experiences and help social integration as well.This paper focuses on some following main points. Firstly, lifelong learning is a necessary factor to the development of lecturers' teaching and research capacity. Secondly, the main value of the academic library in today's society is to support lecturers' lifelong learning. In addition, the role of the academic library as the store of knowledge is also shortly discussed. Thirdly, the impact of information and communication technologies on academic libraries provides not only wider access to resources but also

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change the ways of using academic libraries by lecturers through lifelong learning.Lifelong learning may be broadly defined as learning that is pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life (ie post-compulsory education). This definition is based on Delors' (1996) four 'pillars' of education for the future.

Learning to know:mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge.

Learning to do:equipping people for the types of work needed now ad in the future including innovation and adaption of learning to future work environments.

***Learning to live together, and with others*:** peaceful resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion.

Learning to be: education contributing to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation spirituality.

According to *TheOxford Reference Online*, the concept of lifelong learning "applies to people both in and out of work: they are encouraged to update existing skills, where

appropriate, or to retrain and acquire new skills and knowledge. It also emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure his or her skills are up to date and to seek opportunities for self-development from a variety of sources". A definition discussed in the global conference on lifelong learning organised by the World Bank in Germany is that "lifelong learning encompasses learning over the entire life cycle (from early childhood to retirement), and all learning systems (formal, non-formal, and informal)"(Fretwell and Hopper, 2003, p. 12).

A necessary factor to development of lecturers' lifelong learning

Today, society has been changing in all aspects day by day, including politics, economics, education and culture, especially with the application of new information and communication technologies. The viewpoint that a person's education ends somewhere between the ages of 16 and 21 has become a out-dated one (Morgan and Atkinson, 2000). These authors insist that lifelong learning has become "a key theme in a global context". To catch up with the huge pace of change in society and to control the increasing availability of information, people's lifelong learning is essential, lecturers in which. It is obvious that lecturers' life turns a new stage with new roles, new responsibilties as well as new capacities. This stage means that they start to become capable men in teaching and research. These require them give their afforts to have deep understanding about their missions. They ought to adjust to the new environment and to contribute to the development of society. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* ("Commencement, 1989, p. 546), in American universities, "commencement", which means "time of beginning", is equivalent to "the action of taking the degree of Master or Doctor".

Each member of society has a typical function for managing their life and contributing to the development of society. The development of society depends heavily on the development of each individual living in it. Individuals living in society make massive changes in technological, economical, commercial, cultural and many other aspects in our society. Vice versa, people need to be able to adapt to those social changes, and need to continue study (Brophy, 1998). Beside the cultivated knowledge to become a lecturer, they also need social information when they start a new role in universities. To analyze the model of social information need, Moore (2002) said that people need social information to play roles as members of society. Bibliographic instructions, which are provided by academic libraries, are not enough for lecturers to fill the information gaps. They have to apply the information skills and furthermore have to improve and adjust those skills so that it meets the requirements of their new information needs. To do this, people have to continue to study and take advantage of any opportunities at all times, in many contexts to learn new things and to get new information. They can learn when they are working, staying at home or doing recreational activities. In addition, as for their careers, people need to continue studying because the requirements for professional skills are higher in this information technology era. Ruth Kagia (2002) reported that in the 21st century, to adapt to the

continuous change opportunities and labour market demands, workers need to be lifelong learners.Last but not least, critical thinking, one of the most necessary skills of lifelong learning is not only necessary for lecturers to support their teaching and research but also for their life. According to Weiler (2005, p. 47), "Critical thinking is a process that is widely acknowledged in the literature to be crucial to the learning process, to cognitive development and to effective information seeking". This author gave many good reasons why critical thinking is important. Firstly, it is impossible to evaluate and use the information in any form effectively without the use of this skill. When accessing the huge sources of information people must have reasonable determinations for what is suitable to use. Secondly, critical thinking skills are required in discussions both to strongly hold their point of view and to share their prior knowledge or new one they got independently. In university, discussions are restricted to the topics related to the courses being studied. However, in academic environment, they are about all aspects of the education, which may include politics, economics, career, and so on. Critical thinking also affects decision making whether the decision is small or large.

The main value of academic libraries to lecturers' lifelong learning

Provide lecturers with information literacy

There are many definitions about information literacy. According to Ojedokun and Lumande (2005), information literacy means "library literacy" or "bibliographic instruction" to some people and "computer literacy" or "critical thinking" to others. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (2006), information literacy is "the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information". "Information literacy skills include the location, evaluation, management and use of information from a range of sources not only for problem solving but also for decision making and research" (Raseroka, 1999).University libraries play the role of facilitating the development of information skills which enable lecturers to develop abilities and skills to use information resources effectively and efficiently. Information resources in academic libraries include a wide variety of resources such as books, journal articles, theses, and so on. Throughout library tours or orientations, lecturers are provided with bibliographic instructions which enable them to identify, locate, evaluate and manage information in order to meet the requirements of information need. Library liaison staff play an important role in bringing success to this function of university libraries. The quality of the research papers depends on how effectively and efficiently lecturers use their information skills.

The store of knowledge or the store of society's property

Line (1991, p. 89 and p. 83) defined libraries as "stores of knowledge" and insisted that "most knowledge of the past would have disappeared" without libraries. In his view, "knowledge" in this context means "whatever increases understanding". This definition is generally applied to all types of libraries of which the academic library is a part. The function as a "store of knowledge" is discussed as a process of selection, recording, provision and preservation of material

(Line, 1991). However, among the processes, preservation has the greatest contribution to recorded knowledge (Line, 1991). This role of academic libraries is more important when the value of their stocks is not limited to their community but serves worldwide clients. The scholars' research is the foundation for the achievements and inventions a society. Preservation of materials does not mean to retain them but also to ensure that they are in good condition to be used in the future. This way, the value of academic libraries is to serve the future generation as well. One more function of academic libraries considered by Line (1991) is "to prevent the unnecessary knowledge", that is the repeated knowledge. For instance, lecturers chose new information which are suitable for their students.

Develop information literacy for lecturers' lifelong learning

Even though the university library provides lecturers with information literary, what they want to achieve is to support lecturers to develop those skills for their lifelong learning. This ideal of lifelong learning is elaborated later in this essay, but is very necessary for lecturers in a university. Universities are "the major source of human resource development, and therefore have a responsibility to develop their graduates for lifelong learning" (Ojedokun and Lumande, 2005, p.117). This role of academic libraries, mainly university, is considered as the main value to society because it contributes to the development of society in general, of university in particular.

The impact of information and communication technology on the academic libraries to lecturers' lifelong learning

The explosion of information and communication technologies affects academic libraries on many aspects. There are many applications of information and communication technologies on academic libraries. This essay considers the role of the internet in academic, mainly university, libraries. How does the internet impact on academic libraries to support lecturers' lifelong learning?

The internet is the greatest application of information technologies on academic libraries. In Okiy's view (2005), "the internet offers possibilities and capabilities in communication and dissemination of information in various forms (voice, graphic, data, etc.)". This means that information resources are available for information users to access in all formats both book and non-book. The variety of formats enables users to choose the most appropriate one. This helps to upgrade the quality of research papers which are the foundation of achievements and inventions of people living in society. Furthermore, in his research paper, Moore (2000) stated that, "the internet enables libraries at different locations to form networks". An academic library is part of the network. In the relationship with other libraries, academic institutions can share OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogues), online databases, electronic journals and e-books and implement interlibrary loan. Through this network, academic libraries can fulfil their role of provision of materials. Thanks to the internet, people can learn on an on-going or lifelong basis. The internet enables people to learn from any location, whether mountainous or rural areas.

Geographical obstacles are no longer serious problems with the application of the internet. Libraries can provide training course material and other documents required electronically to lecturers scattered over wide areas because they can access the internet from their homes (Moore, 2000). Similarly, the wide spread of internet ensures successful lecturers access to the information resources. In addition, academic libraries can provide online information literacy courses for lecturers on and off campus.

That provides lecturers with the information literacy required. The digital reference service is another application of the internet on academic library's work. There are several ways in which digital reference services can be delivered, including email, chat and web-forms. Email is an effective communication medium between the lecturers and librarians because it simple, fast, and universally accessible. By e-mail, liaisons are able not only to inform lecturers about new resources and services but also provides consultations for lecturers 'needs and problems in a timely way (Glynn and Wu, 2003). As for chat, there are many ways to run this kind of service. The advantage of this service is that lecturers and librarians can exchange information instantly. By the end of the negotiation between them, librarians can find out lecturers' information needs and provide appropriate information resources. The last one, web-forms, is carried out in the way that lecturers fill out the forms on the libraries' website to send their questions to subject librarians. Their questions can be answered by email, fax or telephone.

Conclusion

In this information and technology era, the internet is considered a competitor to academic libraries. Information users choose to use internet resources because of the speed of access to these sources is higher than that of access to the library. However, we still can be optimistic about the future of the academic library (Morgan and Atkinson, 2000). Lecturers can access a large quantity of information resources but without libraries, they properly cannot ensure the quality of that information. The academic library not only supports teaching, learning and research but also adds value to society. Beside its value as a "store of knowledge", which also means the intellectual property of society, the academic library contributes to the development of society in the way it supports lecturers to adjust them to lifelong learning required for the development of education environmnent. The academic library, lecturers and society have a mutual relationship which means that they interact with each other in their development.On the way to achieve its main value, the academic library has taken great advantages of many modern information communication technologies. In this essay, the focus has been on the applications of the internet on the academic library because of its effectiveness across the world.

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