

# Academic Libraries as Epicentres for Knowledge Mapping and Management in Institutions of Higher Learning

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## Abstract

*This paper aimed at investigating the role of academic Libraries in knowledge mapping and management in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs). IHLs generate a wide range of information and act as centers of complex knowledge contexts. However, this knowledge may not be fully exploited due to lack of its capture and making it accessible by scholars. This may imply that academic libraries may not be at the center of knowledge management and yet are an extension of complex knowledge contexts in IHLs. Since a lot of knowledge is generated internally, it can be harnessed, stored and disseminated with the guidance of librarians. The objectives of this paper were: to assess knowledge mapping and management in IHLs; to determine the role of library in knowledge mapping and management in HEIs; to identify challenges faced in knowledge mapping and management and to make recommendations for improvement. The authors applied desktop research approach combined with practical experience as information professionals to interrogate the place of academic libraries in IHLs in relation to knowledge management. The study concludes that academic libraries have a role to play in providing leadership in knowledge mapping and management in HEIs. The findings of this study may be useful to IHLs as well as other educational institutions, both public and private that are keen on the implementation of knowledge management programmes.*

**Keywords:** Institutions of Higher learning (HEI's), Information, Knowledge Mapping, Academic Libraries, Knowledge Management, Quality Management in Libraries.

## Introduction

Knowledge is one of the most important strategic resources of organizations (Hurt & Ketchen, 2006). IHLs are centers of frequent knowledge creation and dissemination. A great deal of knowledge is generated with the intention of having it disseminated to inform decision making, support research and solve problems. Howell and Annansingh, (2013) & Ramachandran *et al.* (2013) indicate that IHLs are knowledge-intensive organizations. Rowley (2000) cited them as knowledge-creating institutions that are in knowledge business. Dhamdhare (2015) added that IHLs are referred to as Knowledge Houses where knowledge flows from lecturer to students; discussions in various committees, research groups among others. In this environment of knowledge creation and dissemination, libraries can play the role of coordinating knowledge via Knowledge Management (KM) of which knowledge mapping is a prerequisite. This is an approach that has not been adequately addressed especially in IHLs. The current study seeks to explore the role of libraries as epicentres of knowledge mapping and management in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs).

## Methodology

The authors adopted a desktop research approach where they reviewed related literature from journal and conference articles. They also applied their experience as information professionals to interrogate the place of academic libraries in IHLs as relates to knowledge management and mapping.

## Literature Review

### *Information, Knowledge and Knowledge Management*

Information and knowledge are often confused and are used interchangeably. However, data is the basic form of information