Librarians' Core-Competencies and ICT Skills as Correlate of Resource Sharing in Federal University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study's goal is to look into librarians' core competencies and information and communication technologies (ICT) skills as indicators of resource sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. Descriptive survey an expost - facto designs were used. Respondents were federal university librarians. Two hundred and sixty (260) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, but only two hundred and thirty-eight (238) were collected. Three study questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that librarians possess core competencies needed for library services. The study shows that librarians have advanced ICT skills, allowing them to share library resources and services. These university libraries are well-prepared to foster collaborative acquisition and sharing of information resources. It also shows that librarians are responding positively to technology changes, despite the fact that resource sharing appear to be outpacing them. It was proposed that librarians have a positive approach to ICT adoption and that university administrators make efforts to invest in ICT infrastructures.

Key Words: Librarians, Core Competencies, ICT Skills, Resource Sharing and University Libraries.

Introduction

University librarians are expected to have a wide range of competences that will allow them to effectively use technology in libraries, assist clients, and promote resource sharing activities in libraries. These key qualities are critical for every librarian to provide excellent services and promote resource sharing in their communities. University librarians are expected to learn about various library technologies through suitable training and to display personal and professional competences in order to provide information services in libraries (Manzo, 2020). Cherinet (2018) believes that because "skills are essential for the success of individuals and libraries," institutions should include emerging skills in curriculum to fulfill the needs of 21st century librarians and the expectations of potential employers. Librarians in university libraries must refresh and upgrade their basic knowledge and abilities in information and communication technology in order to perform better in the electronic world. A librarian is a professional who manages and provides services to a university library. Several studies have identified the importance of ICT skills for librarians. Hallam and Ellard (2015, p. 119) highlighted that "digital literacy represents fundamental Foundation skills needed by library staff." ICT abilities are defined as the capacity to use one's knowledge of ICT to find, develop, and present information,

whether it is text, image, number, or all of these combined tasks (Quadri, 2017).

Information has emerged as the primary driving force behind national progress. As a result, Nigerian librarians must have basic competency abilities and the capacity to use ICT resources to provide services. In addition, university librarians should be familiar with digitization, administration, and metadata generation, digital information preservation and conservation, as well as general ICT abilities. The result is that the age-long expectation of the demise of books as contractual access to information in the era of information explosion and "paperless society" has dogged service delivery in academic libraries, challenges professionalism, but has yet to eclipse libraries' vital role in what has been described as the information age over the last two decades (Lawal, 2012). As a result, libraries and librarians in particular are being challenged to look inward, adjust, and update their basic competencies, skills, technologies, services, and outreach methods, which should be built around collaboration to meet the diverse needs of their users in the midst of the current economic meltdown.

Literature Review

Core competency refers to the combination of a librarian's skill, knowledge, and ability that is necessary for library service delivery, personal performance, and librarianship development. The core competences of librarianship reflect fundamental knowledge learned through LIS education, work onboarding, and continued professional development early in a library career (American Library Association, 2022). Tump and Tapan (2021) define core competency as a set of attitudes, abilities, and beliefs that allow practitioners to operate effectively and positively for their businesses. The core skills can also be used to analyze performance, create job descriptions, and establish criteria and rules for employing new professionals in an organization (Manu, Shashikumara, Viral, Panna, and Prasanna, 2018). While the Oxford English Dictionary Online Version (2021) defines skill as the capacity to do something well, competency refers to the ability to perform something successfully or efficiently. Librarians' core competencies are the ICT skills, knowledge, and attitudes that they must possess in order to actively participate in resource sharing today and in the future. It is a well-known fact that university library development now requires librarians to have certain ICT abilities in order to meet users' expanding information needs and keep professionally ahead of the curve. Acquiring digital skills is a precondition for meeting the demands of today's knowledge-based economy (Maneschiji, Botha & Biljon, 2013). According to Doyle (2020), digital skills refer to one's ability to communicate with others using various technologies and to use technology to create services that meet societal needs. It is critical that all university library workers, particularly librarians, be web technology proficient and embraces these new skills when assisting users in an ICT context. Training, retraining, and retooling librarians would go a long way towards addressing these issues. According to Aina, Ogundipe, and Taiwo (2010, p.116) training librarians would provide them with the following knowledge:

- Understanding the criteria for establishing e-library resources and selecting appropriate database services, such as e-books or journals.
- Effectively manage a virtual library for optimal service delivery.
- Understanding current database relationships and integration.
- Integrating librarianship and information technology to improve workplace skills.
- Knowledge of leading databases and providers.
- Maximizing usage of databases such as EBSCO, AGORA, and JOSTOR.
- Creating databases to digitize projects, thesis, and staff publications for internet access.
- Developed library webpages, among other activities.
- Utilizing proper database tools for CAS and SDI processes.
- Developed and implemented a web-based catalog, among other tasks.

Raju's (2014) study identified the skill requirements for the digital academic library scenario as disciplinary knowledge, generic (transferable) skills, and personal competencies such as

perpetual learning, the ability to work independently, flexibility, fostering change, and an increased demand for technological skills. This study looked into the ICT abilities of LIS professionals, the use and issues associated with ICT application, and the role of ICT in serving the user community. Batool and Ameen (2010) examined the types and levels of technology abilities possessed by university librarians in the following categories: computer hardware expertise includes awareness of the physical parts, their installation, troubleshooting and replacing, word processing. They also examine proficiency in formatting and applying different styles to documents, internet expertise meaning one has knowledge of how to log on, enter Web addresses, use different search engines, and apply basic internet terminology and emailing functions.

These typically include a relational database, software to operate on that database, and two graphical user interfaces (one for customers and one for employees).The data show that, while all of these skills are regarded vital by employers, respondents only chose competency in computer hardware and word processing. This review demonstrated the significance of ICT skills in delivering successful and efficient resource sharing services. As a result, in order to execute digital and electronic library services, university librarians must possess ICT skills.

LIS professionals must learn and adapt to a quickly changing environment, as well as acquire competencies and abilities, in order to become a valuable asset to the library. In another study, Ramana in Ochai (2012:p.124) observed that library and informational professionals must, by necessity, develop expert technological competencies required to make the best use of the opportunities that ICT provides in order to meet and service the changing complex information needs of the user community. As librarians and information experts, we must enlighten and educate ourselves on developing concepts, technologies, and methods that will improve library information service delivery to our many users (Aina, Ogundipe, & Taiwo, 2010).

These studies confirmed that librarians cannot benefit from or contribute to the large amount of information provided by ICTs unless they relocate to the electronic world. The issue of talent acquisition is critical to the survival of university libraries in the South-South and Nigeria in general. As a result, Spencer in Eyitayo(2012: p.150) stated that "no matter how much experience you have, how many degrees you have, or how well known you are, there is always something new to learn." Don't rely on your prior experiences; if you don't work to develop your skills, you won't be where you are. The rising generation of university librarians must comprehend Spencer's assertion.

As a result, librarians must master the entire computer abilities required to generate, save, analyze, retrieve, disseminate, and, most importantly, exchange multimedia digital metadata information such as text, images, and sounds. According to Ekoja (2011:56), ''we can only contribute successfully to universal access of information if we possess understanding of the technology that can collect and launch our local contents into the information superhighway''. Global needs put pressure on Nigerian librarians to collaborate with their foreign counterparts all over the world in order to comprehend and capitalize on what other librarians have to offer via ICTs. Librarians must have an international perspective when it comes to sharing precious resources, understanding that ICTs may be utilized to communicate with counterparts and systems all over the world for the sole purpose of better serving their clients. According to Ejedafiru and Urhiewhu (2013), university libraries and librarians in general have discovered that the information highway is extensive and that the internet may supply a broader body of knowledge than a physical library or textbook.

The digital library would provide online access to an open ocean of academic material for higher education institutions in Nigeria and around the world (Ogunsola, 2004). Like storm waves, the ICT-driven environment has transformed the university library, propelling it to new heights in information acquisition, dissemination, management, sharing, and total service delivery. As a result, librarians must be conversant with and comfortable using the various databases available for resource sharing. Librarians must develop digital information management skills and be aware of the numerous concerns surrounding digital information, available networks, and resource sharing standards.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of various forms of information distribution, particularly through technology, has presented new opportunities and problems to federal university libraries and librarians in general. According to the literature, librarians at Nigerian federal university libraries do not use ICT efficiently, competently, or ideally for resource sharing. They do not demonstrate enough abilities or basic competencies in the use of ICT for service delivery. This might be traced back to the availability and accessibility of ICT infrastructures for librarians in federal university libraries. The librarians' previous experiences, values, habits, and requirements appear to influence their perception of using ICT to disseminate knowledge. Furthermore, university libraries appear to have insufficient print and electronic holdings, as well as weak resource sharing operations. It is difficult for any university library in the world, and particularly in Nigeria, to own everything it deems necessary for its patrons. In the twenty-first century, everyone understands that no federal library can be self-sufficient on its own. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address the many difficulties and guarantee that residents have access to the knowledge and educational resources required to drive social, economic, and cultural growth. By allowing state-of-the-art resource sharing to continue through librarians' core competencies and ICT skills, federal university libraries can provide equitable access to a wide range of information, support research and innovation, increase visibility, and maintain their reputation as educational leaders.

Thus, the goal of this research is to assess librarians' fundamental competencies and information communication technology skills as they relate to resource sharing in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What basic abilities do librarians require to provide resource sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria?
2. What ICT skills do librarians require to provide resource sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria?
3. How do librarians use ICT for resource sharing in South-South Nigerian university libraries?

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research is one the most appropriate technique for studying and analyzing library problems and challenges. It focuses on accurately characterizing the features, actions, or views of a population or phenomenon without using variables. According to Grinnll and Unrau (2016), descriptive research involves the systematic gathering and analysis of data to describe the characteristics and behaviors of study participants. The researcher chose this methodology because it is efficient and accurate, and it gives a solid foundation for decision making. The study's population consists of 104 librarians who work at federal university libraries in Nigeria's six southern states. The study adopted total enumeration which according to Baxter and Babbie (2004), the complete enumeration sample approach is suitable for small, manageable populations. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts in Departments of Measurement and Evaluation and Library and Information Science respectively. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, the criterion mean for decision making was 2.50.

Results

Research question 1

1. What basic abilities do librarians require to provide resource sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Response on the basic abilities needed by Librarians for Resource Sharing Services in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Deci
Ability to adapt to new tools, systems and situations as they arise.	32	54	12	6	3.08	0.81	Agı
Ability to present information clearly and in an interesting manner.	40	55	9	0	3.30	0.79	Agı
Effective public speaking	48	52	3	1	3.41	0.66	Agı
Ability to promote reading	32	58	14		3.17	0.76	Agı
Deep knowledge of book	41	56	5	2	3.31	0.66	Agı
Good overall understanding of POP culture and current events may not be required, but can help in facilitating patrons' demands.	28	48	26	2	2.98	0.87	Agı
Strong level of customers services skills	31	52	21	0	3.10	0.81	Agı
Excellent team player	30	53	13	8	3.01	0.82	Agı
Ability to help overcome issues by focusing on solutions instead of on the problems	35	69	0	0	3.24	0.65	Agı
Effective organizational skills that are enhanced through regular and additional efforts	30	62	7	5	3.13	0.77	Agı
Ability to maintain a solid overall understanding of different issue that confront communication skills	25	56	20	3	2.99	0.87	Agı
Ability to use technology to enhance the overall effectiveness of a library, including web-based methods of improving technological access to information	23	47	30	4	2.86	0.90	Agı
Good overall knowledge of archiving and filling information as well as maintaining database and reference information	25	50	27	5	2.97	0.87	Agı
Ability to professionally search databases, internet resources and catalogue to find needed information	29	49	20	6	2.97	0.86	Agı
Capable of evaluating resources and finding the best ones for addressing different questions or issues	23	53	19	6	2.74	0.92	Agı
Ability to communicate well with library staff as well as with all patrons and guest	31	49	18	6	3.01	0.83	Agı
N = 104 Criterion Mean = 2.50 Aggregate Mean = 3.08 SD = .83							

Mean Rating: 0.00 to 1.49 (Strongly Disagree), 1.50 to 2.49 (Disagree), 2.50 to 3.49 (Agree), and 3.50 and above (Strongly Agree).

The findings in Table 1 show that all of the key competences required by librarians for resource-sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria are scored higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, with mean scores ranging from 2.74 to 3.41. This means that most respondents "agree" on the relevance of each competency. Competencies with higher ratings, such as "Effective public speaking" (x = 3.41), "Deep knowledge of books" (x = 3.31), and "Ability to present information clearly" (x = 3.30), indicate their high worth.Even the lowest-rated competences, such as "capable of evaluating resources" (x = 2.74) and "ability to use technology to enhance library effectiveness" (x = 2.86), meet or exceed the criterion mean, indicating agreement on their relevance. Thus, the results reveal a consensus that all the listed competences are critical for librarians in this situation.

Research question 2

2. What ICT skills do librarians require to provide resource sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Response on the ICT Skills required by Librarians for Resource Sharing Services

Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Dec
I can use input devices like mouse/arrow key to share resources	33	56	10	5	3.13	0.77	Agı
I can turn on the computer monitor and printer on/off	30	61	10	3	3.13	0.70	Agı
I am sound in internet browsing	28	63	11	2	3.13	0.69	Agı
I can retrieve and restore documents	31	59	12	2	3.14	0.68	Agı
Can visit databases	20	58	22	4	2.90	0.81	Agı
Compose, send, reply and forward an e-mail	29	61	9	5	3.10	0.77	Agı
Save file to flash or to specific location on the OPAC	32	57	11	4	3.13	0.74	Agı
Backup files	14	49	32	9	2.65	0.91	Agı
Print documents	23	54	19	8	2.88	0.86	Agı
Navigate the OPAC/internet/LAN/WAN using functional keys	14	54	34	2	2.77	0.74	Agı
Navigate through database	19	61	24	0	2.95	0.67	Agı
Word processing skills	14	48	32	0	2.54	0.80	Agı
Graphic design	9	41	45	9	2.48	0.83	Dis
Web page development, scanning techniques	9	48	44	0	2.58	0.75	Agı
Software installation skills	8	46	54	0	2.67	0.71	Agı
Knowledge of hardware basics troubleshooting	8	49	47	0	2.63	0.70	Agı
Database creation and maintenance	9	43	48	4	2.55	0.79	Agı
Presentation software skills	13	49	38	0	2.64	0.77	Agı
Networking skills	15	54	30	5	2.76	0.79	Agı
Web 2.0 skills	17	50	37	0	2.81	0.73	Agı
N = 104	**Criterion Mean = 2.50**	**Aggregate Mean = 2.83**	**SD = .80**				

Mean Rating: 0.00 to 1.49 (Strongly Disagree), 1.50 to 2.49 (Disagree), 2.50 to 3.49 (Agree), and 3.50 and above (Strongly Agree).

Table 2 demonstrates that the majority of ICT skills required by librarians for resource-sharing services in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria, are ranked higher than the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating an overall "Agree" judgment on their importance. The competence with the highest mean scores, such as "Ability to retrieve and restore documents" (x = 3.14), "Sound in internet browsing" (x = 3.13), and "Using input devices like mouse/arrow key" (x = 3.13), demonstrate a solid consensus on the requisite skills.Meanwhile, talents like "Graphic design" (x = 2.48) are ranked "Disagree," falling below the criterion mean, indicating they are less essential. Despite significant fluctuation, the aggregate mean of 2.83 indicates that the majority of the talents are seen as vital, with only one item rated below the level of agreement. Overall, the data reveals that the majority of the ICT skills stated are important for efficient resource-sharing services among librarians..

Research question 3

3. How do librarians use ICT for resource sharing in South-South Nigerian university libraries?

Table 3: Mean responses on how librarians use ICT for resource sharing services

Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decisio
ICT use by librarians to share library resources	33	56	10	5	3.13	0.77	Agree
Use of ICT by librarians enhances library services	30	61	10	3	3.13	0.70	Agree
Library is the planning stage of internet connectivity	28	63	11	2	3.13	0.69	Agree
Library partially connected to the internet to share resources	31	59	12	2	3.14	0.68	Agree
Library fully connected to the internet to share resources	9	41	45	9	2.48	0.83	Disagre
Use of ICT facilities to communicate with other academic libraries	29	61	9	5	3.10	0.77	Agree
Do you use internet for library services	32	57	11	4	3.13	0.74	Agree
Do you have experience in library networking	14	49	32	9	2.65	0.91	Agree
Do you have access to adequate databases	23	54	19	8	2.88	0.86	Agree
ICT facilities like emails and SMS enhance effective resource sharing among academic libraries	14	54	34	2	2.77	0.74	Agree
I electronically share library resources with other academic libraries	19	61	24	0	2.95	0.67	Agree
Do you have a functional database for storing electronic information materials	14	48	32	0	2.54	0.80	Agree
ICT facilities are friendly	20	58	22	4	2.90	0.81	Agree
CD-ROM database use to share resources	9	48	44	0	2.58	0.75	Agree
Sufficient electronic information resources for library network	8	46	54	0	2.67	0.71	Agree
N = 104 Criterion Mean = 2.50 Aggregate Mean = 2.83 SD = .80							

Mean Rating: 0.00 to 1.49 (Strongly Disagree), 1.50 to 2.49 (Disagree), 2.50 to 3.49 (Agree), and 3.50 and above (Strongly Agree).

The findings in Table 3 show that the aggregate mean of 2.83 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that librarians in federal university libraries use ICT for resource sharing services extensively. This implies that respondents "Agree" with practically all of the assertions, while the item about their library being fully connected to the internet to exchange materials scored below the permissible cut-off threshold of 2.83, suggesting that respondents disagreed with the statement.

Discussion of Findings

The survey found that fundamental competencies required by librarians in Federal university libraries are not deficient. The results demonstrated that librarians are extremely skilled in providing general services. The findings of this survey are positive, as they indicate that librarians at federal universities believe they are knowledgeable enough to address the information needs of 21st century scholars at their institutions. According to Esmailzadeh, Bahram, & Soleymani (2020), medical librarians at Isfahan University of Medical Sciences demonstrated general competencies that allow them to give research services and advise to university researchers. Kingsly et al. support the finding by stating that librarians in Austria and New Zealand were generally competent in institutional repository management, publishing services, research practice, copyright services, open access policies and scholarly communication landscape, data management services, and evaluation and impact metrics.

The survey found that the ICT abilities required by librarians in federal institutions to share library resources are highly valued, with only one item ranked below the threshold of agreement. This study is congruent with Akparobore's (2020) findings, which showed that librarians have the skills to fully implement fourth industrial revolution technologies (ICT) in their academic libraries. This demonstrates that librarian competences and attitudes play an important role in resource sharing services. Ajzen (2019) supported this study by noticing that academic librarians in federal university libraries had a positive attitude toward resource sharing activities.

It is true that librarians in the study locations reported to have adequate ICT abilities for resource sharing, but there is an urgent need for them to be familiar with search engines and directories other than Google and Yahoo. According to Omokwu (2011), having ICT literacy is no longer enough for librarians; they must also have technical knowledge such as database management system programming, networking, web mastering, troubleshooting, and so on. Above all, the widespread adoption of the internet and the world wide web has opened opportunities for a wide range of electronic resources, which are rapidly becoming the dominant medium of academic communication and which no single library can obtain alone (Bozimo, 2011).

ICT use by librarians in federal university libraries for resource sharing services is critical; levels of availability and accessibility have a favorable impact on library service delivery. The findings appear to corroborate with Bozimo's (2011) observation that Nigerian university librarians have become increasingly supportive of cooperative acquisition and sharing of information resources. Hence libraries have become increasingly supportive of cooperative acquisition and sharing of information resources. Librarians in this study are responding to technological trends on the day-to-day operations of all library services. This means that librarians possess the essential abilities or expertise to operate a computer according to the current employment requirement or situation.

Conclusion

The federal university libraries in this region are adapting to the new environment, with ICT playing an important role in sharing library materials. It has been noticed that using ICT, federal university libraries in the South-South can efficiently share materials, assist research, and improve the learning experience. It is highlighted that librarians possess the fundamental competences required to perform effectively in the tumultuous ICT environment. Because of the current job demand, librarians in these university libraries are expected to have the basic ICT skills required to operate computers and other related facilities.

Recommendations

- The study's findings led to the following recommendations:
- Sponsor librarians to further training to enable them manage complex and new technological driven library services.
- Implement and sponsor resource sharing initiatives that align with global best practices. Sponsor librarians to wider range of electronic resources which are becoming the dominant ways of sharing library resources and services

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