

A SURVEY OF LIBRARIANS' INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LITERACY LEVEL IN NIGERIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Afolabi Abel Kayode, PhD

University Library, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State

Ajibola Gbotoso (PhD)

University Library, Osun State University, Osogbo, Osun State

ABSTRACT: *This article investigated the Information Technology (IT) literacy level of librarians in four tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Out of the thirty administered, twenty-four were returned and found useful. The response rate, therefore, was 80%. The study found that, generally, the literacy level was still low even though there was greater awareness. Thus, 29% of the librarians had never undergone formal training on computer. 79% did not have personal computer and only one librarian (4%) could design a database and create a website. Finally many of the sections in the libraries are without computer. It was recommended therefore, that librarians must utilize optimally every opportunity to develop their IT proficiency.*

KEYWORDS: *Librarian, information, literacy, communication, technology.*

INTRODUCTION

It is no longer new that the world is experiencing information explosion. What is paramount now is how to harness, organize and disseminate information efficiently and effectively without jeopardizing its main course or purpose. It therefore becomes imperative that librarians, being the information custodians, must be proficient in the use of Information Technology towards proper management of information resources. Wright (2004) as quoted by Gbaje (2007) buttressed this by stating that librarians have significant responsibility for information literacy instruction specifically for the selection, use and evaluation of multiple information resources from the vast IT resources.

Already many academic libraries make use of IT, provide internet access and have launched their websites on the internet. Chifwepa (2003), in his work on the use of the internet and intranet, found that IT has a central place in a lot of institutional management in which the library cannot be an exemption. Also, Russell (2000) discovered that some libraries are advanced users of Information Communication Technology (ICT).

In view of this, Akinde (2005) declared that to achieve successful IT application in a library, the librarian must develop an integrated approach to providing information services through skill acquisition, staff training/retraining and consultant hiring. That is, librarians and information professionals are responsible for creating innovative information system for the collection,

organization, dissemination and preservation of information and new knowledge using technologies that are user friendly. Tenant (2003) stated that to be effective and deliver digital library collections and services, the web must be well used by librarians and they must constantly learn and retool.

However, visit to many academic libraries reveal that many librarian that even have computers on their tables are not computer literate. While some that can use it, have never attended computer school. Ojedokun (2003) put it that it was not every respondent (librarians inclusive) who claimed internet competence that had formal training on internet use. Also, a majority of those who claimed to have computer and internet competence have achieved that through self training. Moreover, Gbaje (2007) who worked on the production of online information services in Nigerian academic libraries found that lack of web technological skilled libraries and lack of basic information infrastructure have been identified as some of the factors militating against libraries providing online information services. Chfwepa (2003) attributed this problem to inadequate fund for training.

It is in light of this that this article intends to carry out a survey of libraries IT literacy level in some selected academic libraries in Ondo State and proffer sound solution to every identified problem.

Statement of the Problem

The study attempted an investigation into information technology literacy level of librarians in Nigerian academic libraries realizing the relevance of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to services and operations of academic libraries in this age of information technology revolution. Librarians can only make substantial impact in the performance of their professional duties if they embrace the use of computers and information technologies relevant to their respective academic libraries and that can be best utilized by their patrons, particularly students and staff in their academic and research endeavours. They can also adequately compete with their faculty counterparts provided they are well exposed to the challenges being posed by information technologies to operations and services in their academic environment.

More importantly, the librarians' research productivity and experience which is a very potent and determining variable for their progress and academic advancement is a development that is partly hung on their ability to navigate through the internet to access varied on line information resources to be conversant with emerging trends in their chosen career. It has, however, been observed that many literatures have addressed the issue of availability of computers and ICT in Nigerian academic libraries but a very few have been written on librarians' use of ICT and how it has impacted on their professionalism and service delivery in Nigerian academic libraries. This informed the basis for the conduct of this study.

Significance of the Study

The study, therefore, will help to explore the challenges being experienced in the integration of Information Communication Technology into library operations and services and how the library professionals have actually lived up to the challenges. Besides, the paper may likely serve as an

eye opener to many academic libraries in Nigeria to see the need to fully adopt and adapt Information Technology (IT) for their services operations to be more relevant in their academic environment. It will create an awareness of the role of ICT use skill in the growth of library and practicing professionals. The paper will serve as a blueprint for institutional management and respective national government for working out the modalities for building ICT infrastructures in academic libraries to address the challenges associated with research and access to digital information resources in Nigerian academic libraries and more so to assist the young and up-coming librarians to build their ICT skill.

Objectives

1. To determine the librarians IT literacy level.
2. To find out the sufficiency of computer in the academic libraries department.
3. To give suggestions for better improvement

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study's design was descriptive research design in which the librarians IT literacy level was investigated.

Population and Sampling: The population of this study consists of all the librarians in the four public tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Random sampling method was used to distribute questionnaires in the libraries.

Research Instrument: A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The four sections of the questionnaire collected data on respondents' (1) demographic attribute (2) IT literacy level (3) computer resources sufficiency (4) suggestions for improvement.

Response Rate: Out of the thirty questionnaires distributed, twenty-four were returned and found useful. Therefore the response rate was 80%.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 24 librarians investigated, 16 (67%) were males 8 (33%) were females. Their average age is 45 years while 50% of them had master in library studies.

Information Technology Literacy Level

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the librarians had an ordinary certificate on computer application, 13% had a diploma while 29% had never undergone any formal education on computer use. This is well illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: Computer Education of Librarians in Academic libraries

Certificate	No of Librarians	%
Ordinary Certificate	14	58
Diploma	3	13
Degree	0	0
No training	7	29

This is in consonance with the finding of Ojedokun (2003) who found that, it was not all librarians who claimed internet competence that had formal training on internet use. It was interesting to note that 83% of the respondents that went through formal training did so between 2000 and 2007. That was a reflection of the campaign for globalization during the period.

Also, 79% of the librarians did not have personal computers. This showed that they do not attach importance to the fact that computer is a major tool in the hand of information professionals. It was equally found that the most used / familiar software is Microsoft Word (100%) followed by Excel (21%) and Power Point (17%). Table 2 below explains this further.

Table 2: Librarians' Use of Computer Applications in Academic Libraries

Software	No of Librarians	%
Microsoft	24	100
Excel	5	21
Power point	4	17
SPSS	1	4
Microsoft Access	1	4

Most of those who did not know about Excel and Power Point did not have personal computer and never had a computer certificate. Moreover, 67% claimed that they browsed often, while 33% did it rarely. Yahoo was the most familiar search engine (75%) followed by Google (58%), Ask Jeeves (21%) MSN (17%) and Alta Vista (13%). This is well illustrated in table 3 below.

Table 3: Librarians' use of search Engines in Academic Libraries

Search Engine	No of Librarians	%
Yahoo	18	75
Google	14	58
Ask Jeeves	5	21
MSN	4	17
Alta Vista	3	13

It was alarming to find that only one librarian (4%) could design a database. Also he was the only one that could create a website. This was a huge setback as far as information professionalism is concerned. Gbaje (2007) found that this militates against library services. Lastly 96% stated that they could open e-mail address and make use of it efficiently. This showed that librarians are in tune with the global familiarization concept, which is in vogue already just as all of them prefer the use of computer to manual means in the day-to-day running of official schedule.

Computer Availability

It was found that computers are not sufficient in all sections in the academic libraries. This is well illustrated further in the table below

Table 4: Computer Availability in Selected Academic Libraries

Sections	No. of Computer			
	FUTA	AAUA	RGP	ACE
Admin.	3	2	2	3
Cataloguing	1	3	1	-
Acquisition	1	-	-	-
Circulation	1	-	-	-
Serials	1	-	-	-
Reference	1	-	-	-

FUTA = Federal University of Technology, Akure

AAUA = Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko

RGP = Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo

ACE = Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo

By this, librarians' morale can be dampened and also, those who have computer education without access to computer in the office can easily forget what they have learnt. Their findings were contrary to the view of Tennant (2003) who declared that computer users must constantly make use of it to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Suggestions for Improvement

The librarians were given the option of providing suggestion on how IT literacy level can be improved. 855 suggested that all librarians must use the system regularly and periodically undergo relevant workshop and conferences. Also, 60% believed it is high time they had personal computers. Others (45%) suggested that they share knowledge with their colleagues who are more knowledgeable about IT.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it could be concluded that librarians are still behind as far as utilization of IT resources is concerned. Also, the institutions are not helping the matter by making sure that computers are present in all sections of the library. Already, the developed nations are canvassing on the need for every kid to have a laptop, so librarians should see it as an indispensable tool so that they can rub shoulder with their colleagues in developed nations. Besides, the government should put more effort on the much talked about computer for all civil servants, so that librarians can easily benefit from it. Lastly librarians must utilize optimally venue to develop their IT proficiency.

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