

Developing Staff Competency for Effective Acquisition and Maintenance of Electronic Resources in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria

By

Ndor, Monday Barivure (CLN)¹ & Kasim, Abdullahi CLN

Librarian I, Acquisition Librarian, Rivers State University¹, Usmanu Danfodiyo University²,

E-Mail: embyndor@gmail.com¹, kasimabdullahi1977@gmail.com.

Abstract

Purpose: The paper aimed to find out how the development of staff competency can enhance the acquisition and maintenance of a resource in academic libraries in South-South Nigeria

Design/Methodology/Approach: Descriptive design was used for the study. The entire Academic Library staff, and IT personnel in three sampled Federal Universities South-South, Nigeria formed the population of the study. A total of 614 questionnaire copies were distributed with a retrieval success of 578 copies. Data were analyzed using Mean, percentages and frequencies.

Findings: Findings from tables showed that the greatest competency required is information organization, followed by competencies in level in fundamental networking, web programming, digital information and reference services, research design, electronic publishing, Supervisory and Ability in electronic resource handling. The findings further revealed that the core competencies of electronic librarians of the future anchored on both Information Management Competencies (IMC) and organization administration competencies. Moreover, library staff currently need to be equipped with knowledge and skills for operating virtual library, especially, competencies in the latest search engines and fluent internet searching. Many library staff were found to lack the professional skills needed to source and get the right information using e resource platform.

Originality/Value: The paper captures that professional staff are required to constantly update and acquire current maintenance culture of e-resources to meet today's rapidly changing digital environment Employment.

t of competent staff in libraries will solve the problems of management of e-resources, as a results of lack of management and technical skills, the library professionals currently faced by academic libraries in south-south

Keywords: Competency, acquisition, maintenance, electronic and resources

Paper type: Empirical research

INTRODUCTION

Developing staff competency that will handles e-resource acquisition and maintenance require strategic planning, including an information audit of needs of the customers and management, which will require consultation with customers, both current and potential, because without a foundation work a sound base for the service will not be established. Plantry and Griffiths (2002), state that the objective is to establish that the acquisition managers co-ordinate the access to a wide range of resources by organization particularly in terms of licensing and the use of the electronic services, agreeing who uses the resources. The effectiveness of current human resources management practice in the Library and Information Science field in the ICT environment requires proper planning. The ICT environment working methodology and the tools and techniques used in the library are changing very rapidly, it is

difficult and challenging for the employer to get the employees who is having ability to satisfy the present and future requirement of the complex information needs of users. Mishra (2009), states that the present scenario of essential qualifications / experience, ICT based technical capability required in the library and the syllabuses of LIS education are not matching up to the mark. Many of the issues with the quality of Nigerian LIS professionals can be traced to the problem of LIS education in the country. These include lack of facilities and access to sufficiently advanced technology, shortage of library textbooks and problems with curriculum that fails to address key professional requirements with poor qualified and inexperienced teaching staff. It is essential therefore that LIS professional are well trained and possess requisite qualification and knowledge in this respect of information technology. LIS education should present syllabus in ICT giving

technical skills required to handle information technology based tools and routines used for library services like computer operation, knowledge of software telecommunication media, creation of online databases, content management, information retrieval techniques through internet etc.

To maintain quality of library services in the rapidly changing information environment, effective training and development programmes for staff become vital. Kenerson (1997) stated that University libraries and librarians are experiencing a profound change as a result of automation of its holdings as well as its networking capabilities to the world of information resources. Technology being the primary driving force behind the rapid rate of transformation has forced library managers to reexamine how they can maintain and improve staff morale and productivity. These compelling reasons require University libraries to place a higher priority on the continual growth and development of their staff. Zhang (2003), defined training for library staff as a short term, systematic process such as on the job training, learning from co-workers; taking continuous education courses, seminars, and workshop locally sponsored by library systems or professional organization through which library staff learn specific skills and special knowledge.

Objective of the study

It is observed that there are inadequacies in application of electronic resources databases, etc in University libraries because technical staff to maintain, inadequate fund to renew expired license, and incompetent staff to handle electronic resources so there is need to apply the managerial variables to enhance acquisition and maintenance for efficient e-resources services delivery to encourage education and research among scholars in application of managerial variables like competency, training and educational qualification of staff involved.

Research Question

The study was guided by one central research question thus:

What is the level of staff competency involved in the acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in the libraries?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital library is nothing but advanced application of ICT based tools and techniques in the library so the library professionals have to be familiar with skills to handle IT and its application in

the library environment in the relevant context like collection development, vendor relation, budgeting online resources, online browsing/searching knowledge etc. Maesaroh and Genoni (2009), affirm that a means of addressing the current gap in the curriculum is to find a mechanism for enhanced consultation between LIS educators and employers and also library Associations has some scope for influencing curriculum through course accreditation processes. They Maesaroh, and Genoni (2009), therefore conclude that the status of the profession cannot be improve until the quality of graduates, librarians and library services improve, and these improvements cannot be achieved without proper funding to LIS education.

The immediate challenge for the library profession then is to undertake reform from within, as a means of impressing upon government the capacity of the profession to self-regulate and demonstrate its capacity to add value to higher education outcomes. A starting point is the development and implementation of curriculum that more closely align graduate outcomes with the expectations of employees.

Competences as defined by Padmajam (2002), are occupation related knowledge and skill that make one technically proficient at the task that comprise one's job and are needed for success in a particular work setting. These competences change over time as one's job changes, they also change over time as technology and other factors impact one's work. Getting the right staff is a major issue in e-resources acquisition because information professionals take on a wider variety of roles requiring a broader range of skills than ever before. E-library project in South –South Nigeria have problems recruiting and retaining staff with the right skill across the sector because the library schools do not offer relevant course at the moment. Padmajam (2002), states that the core competencies of electronic librarians of the future anchored at both Information Management Competencies (IMC) and organization administration competencies as being need.

Competences are combination of skills, knowledge and behaviours important for organizational uses, personal performance and career development. Personal competencies are individual traits, attitudes and behaviour needed for success in almost any venue. These competencies change as one get older and acquire more experience within organizational settings dealing with a variety of people in different situations. It becomes very imperative to emphasize continuous or lifelong learning in the acquisition and development of competencies. This does not relieve

the professional education programs from being concerned with competencies; it does require the professional to look at an array of options for developing and maintaining competencies. The role of MLIS programs is to prepare people for entry into the library profession, and the competencies needed to progress beyond that point need to be achieved through practice and developmental activities, including advanced study, continuing education workshops, attending conferences and seminars.

Eyitayo (2008) who pointed out that lots of information are available on the internet, but skills are required by researchers to be able to gather this information on the web. Many library staff are found to lack the professional skills needed to enable them source and get the right information using e resource platform

The librarian must be dynamic and innovative enough to meet up with the challenges in the information world and be ready to find solutions to the problems associated. This is possible by the training given to them on the procurement, maintenance and use of electronic media facilities. Professional staff with vast experience in the profession of ICTs must be allowed to come and share their experience with co-workers and ICT librarians. That ICT librarian be exposed to the necessary knowledge as to be able to stand the challenge of ICT services.

In this section, some empirical studies on the development of staff competency for effective acquisition and maintenance of e-resources considered relevant to this study are reviewed. Such studies include the one done by Egberongbe (2011), conducted survey using questionnaire, design 20 questions and 120 choices around seven subjects. 200 questions distributed randomly and data collected and analyzed using a simple percentage and presented in tabular form in university environment in Nigeria, where major development is the use of electronic resources have taken place. The study use lecturers, research scholars and students of university of Lagos as the local population of the study where the researcher was also based at the time of study revealed that training taken in the use of electronic resources in university of Lagos reveals that 38.4% of lecturers and 86% of scholars did not get training in the use of electronic resources. The study showed that majority of scholars did not receive training in the use electronic resources so the level of IT skills among lecturers, scholars and also library staff were variably low. Training as one of the variables that if improved upon can enhance effective acquisition and maintenance of e- resources.

Okoye (2012), conducted a research on management of electronic resources by cataloguers in Nigeria federal university libraries. The study was a descriptive survey designed to obtain data from Cataloguing Librarians using questionnaire to generate data. The analyzed data using mean rating which described electronic resources management. Under the strategies for enhancing management of e-resources in item 29 had the second highest mean score of 3.69 stating that library schools should provide pragmatic training for student's librarians to enable them handle e-resources. Library schools should be redesigning their curriculum so that graduates of Library and Information Science obtained educational qualifications from library schools that would be fully relevant to handle e-resources and effective usage.

Ojo and Akande (2005), in a survey of 350 respondents examined students' access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources at the University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Nigeria using questionnaire of 350 respondents. The study after analyzing the data using mean rating revealed that the level of usage of the electronic information resources is not high. A major problem however identified is lack of information retrieval skills for exploiting electronic resources, thus making the level of usage of resources by medical students very low. User's education and training on retrieval skills to access e-resources for optimum usage.

Summary of the Literature Review

In recent years, there have been a number of changes in the higher education sector in Nigeria and in particular academic institutions. The emergence of electronic information resources has tremendously transformed information acquisition handling and management in Nigeria academic environments. These dramatic changes include the way information is provided to the university communities (Ani and Ahiauzu 2008). A number of electronic resources initiative have been put in place in Nigeria to assist in the development, training and use of electronic resources in a number of academic institutions

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is descriptive survey. A survey which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The descriptive survey is the most appropriate design for the study as the researcher investigated staff competency development for effective acquisition

and maintenance of electronic resources and gathered information of a situation as it existed at the time of investigation. This study is therefore designed to gather information from a population of librarians, Information Technology (IT) personnel, System Analysts on staff competency development for effective acquisition and maintenance for enhancing the acquisition of e-resources in Nigerian university libraries.

The population of this study comprises 113 Academic Librarians, 285 Para professional librarians, 19 IT System Analyst six federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria namely: University of Port Harcourt with 3131 respondents, University of Uyo with 2526 respondents, University of Calabar with 3592 respondents, University of Benin 4200, Federal University of Petroleum Effurun 42 and Federal University Otueke with 31 respondents.

The sample size is 614 comprising 69 Professionals and 85 Para-professional Librarians, 10 IT personnel / System analyst and 450 Post graduate students registered 2014/ 2015 session in the three federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling techniques was used to select these three university libraries. The proportionate stratified random sample technique was used to select the sample size of the population.

The research instrument used for the study namely: Questionnaire and observation checklists. The questionnaire was used to elicit information from both Academic and Para-professional librarians as well as IT/System analyst and users on the maintenance of e-resources in Nigeria university libraries.

Copies of the instruments for data collection were administered directly by the researchers and a research assistant from each library under study. The researchers inspected and verified the availability of the facilities. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the items; a criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted. Consequently, any means that ranked from 2.50 and above were regarded as positive while below 2.50 were regarded as negative.

RESEACH QUESTION: What is the level of staff competency involved in the acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in the libraries?

Key: Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Moderate Level (ML), Not at All (NA)

Data for providing answers to the research question is outlined on Table below

Table: Mean ratings of respondents on competency level of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in library

S/N	Staff Competency Level	Name of University						Overall		Rating	Degree of Respondent
		UNICAL		UNIUYO		UNIPOINT		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Information organization competency	3.45	.89	3.73	.86	3.81	.84	3.66	.71	1 ST	VHL
2	Competency in web programming	3.35	.78	3.70	.91	3.90	.88	3.65	.98	2 ND	VHL
3	Competency level in fundamental networking	3.51	.67	3.72	.84	3.71	.85	3.65	.80	3 RD	VHL
4	Digital information and reference services competency	3.40	.76	3.69	.86	3.79	.92	3.62	.95	4 TH	VHL
5	Research design competency	3.34	.67	3.72	.94	3.79	.75	3.61	.87	5 TH	VHL
6	Electronic publishing competency	3.42	.89	3.63	.87	3.67	.96	3.57	.82	6 th	VHL
7	Supervisory competency	3.48	.75	3.53	.72	3.69	.80	3.57	.75	7 th	VHL
8	Ability in electronic	3.52	.74	3.46	.73	3.67	.66	3.55	.91	8 TH	VHL

	resource handling										
9	Ability in Web base searching	3.53	.99	3.45	.71	3.31	.78	3.43	.77	9 TH	VHL
10	Ability in Data-base searching	3.00	.88	3.16	.86	3.14	.82	3.10	.76	10 TH	VHL
11	Ability in electronic information retrieval	3.12	.88	3.17	.84	2.67	.87	2.99	.98	11 TH	HL
12	Ability in online searching skills	2.88	.78	2.92	.82	2.88	.83	2.90	.77	12 TH	HL
	Grand Mean	3.33	.33	3.49	.51	3.50	.47	3.44	.46		

Table above presents the mean ratings of responses on competency level of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources. The table indicates that the staff have very high level competency in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in the library with the regards to items 1-8 (Competency level in fundamental networking),

Among the three institution sampled in the study, the analysis showed that respondents from UNICAL ranked ability in Web base searching (mean= 3.51); UNIUYO ranked Information organization competency (mean = 3.73), while UNIPORT ranked Competency in web programming (Mean= 3.90) as competency level of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in library.

Furthermore the table indication from the overall mean showed that Information organization competency (mean = 3.66) is ranked highest, while Competency level in fundamental networking (Mean = 2.82) is ranked lowest as competency level of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in library

Discussion of results

The following are the major findings that emanated from the data analyzed:

Majority of e-resources were highly employed, except databases resources like Metadata. University of Uyo had the least grand mean, indicating the institution is least in acquisition of e-resources

It was observed from the table that staff competency involved in the acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in university libraries, the greatest application involves Information organization competency of resources. Also, the table indicated that university of Port-Harcourt represented the institution with the highest application of the lists of methods Training of Librarians and users influences

acquisition and maintenance of e resources in the Library. Information organization competency is vital in competency of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in libraries. Among the three institutions used in the study, the analysis showed that ability in Web base searching, information organization competency and competency in web programming (Mean= 3.90) as competency level of staff in acquisition and maintenance of electronic resources in library. Training and retaining of librarians in skills by library management is an important Strategy for enhancing acquisition and maintenance of e-resources.

Findings

Research question was to find out the Competency level of staff involved in the acquisition and maintenance of e-resources in the libraries, finding from tables showed that the greatest competency required is Information organization , following by competencies in level in fundamental networking, web programming, Digital information and reference services, Research design, Electronic publishing, Supervisory and Ability in electronic resource handling

The findings is in agreement with Padmajam (2002), states that the core competencies of electronic librarians of the future anchored at both Information Management Competencies (IMC) and organization administration competencies as being need. Massis (2003) who in his finding stated that library staff currently need to be equipped with knowledge and skills for operating virtual library therefore requires such competencies in the latest search engines and fluent internet searching. The finding also agreed with Eytayo (2008) who pointed out that lots of information are available on the internet, but skills are required by researchers to be able to gather this information on the web. Many library staff are found to lack the professional skills needed to able to source and get the right information using e resource platform.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of his study, the discussion that followed and various implications highlighted, the following recommendations have been made.

1. The professional staff are required to constantly update and acquire current maintenance culture of e-resources to meet today's rapidly changing digital environment
2. Employment of competent staff in libraries will solve the problems of management of e-resources, as a results of lack of management and technical skills, the library professionals currently faced by academic libraries in south-south
3. Libraries and Information Science Schools' curricula should be structured to reflect acquisition of knowledge and skills demanded by acquisition librarian. Library Schools should be equipped with the state-of-the-art facilities in all fields of librarianship, especially facilities for e-resources. Consequently, skills acquired from these institutions could be gainfully employed by school graduates to meet the challenges of market demands.
- 4 Increase in library vote should be dedicated to provision and maintenance of e-resources in the libraries. Most of the libraries have inadequate fund for acquiring

REFERENCES

- Ani, O. E., and Ahiauzu, B. (2008). Towards effective development of electronic information resources in Nigeria University libraries, *Library Management* 29 (67), 504 – 514.
- Egberongbe, H. S. (2011). The use and impact of electronic resources at the University of Lagos. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1 – 24.
- Eyitayo, O.T. (2008). Internet Facilities and the Status of Africa's connectivity
In Aina, L.O., Mutula, S.M., & Tihamiyu, M.A. (Eds.), *Information and knowledge management in the digital age: Concepts, technologies and African perspectives*. Ibadan: *Third World information Service: 2-41*.
- Kenerson, M. E. (1997). The Effect of Automation on Hiring practices and staff allocation in

e-resources and so the users do not get their needy information at the right time. Libraries are at a disadvantage when acting alone in this environment and there is need for cooperative purchasing through library consortia.

- 5 The library management must ensure that they organize interactive sessions for the staff at least on quarterly basis. Through such interactions, the less experienced staff can learn from the experienced staff. This will serve as a training model.

CONCLUSION

The findings among other things revealed that there are good level of competency among staff in relation to e resources, also managerial variable like planning, training and retraining of staff were necessary for efficiency in management of e-resources. Funding is the main factor that negatively affect management of e- resources in academic libraries and provisions of alternative power supply will likely improve the efficient use of e-resources in academic libraries. Finally, it can be concluded that these problems can be overcome through proper harness of competency variables in acquisition and maintenance of e-resources in the federal universities in South-South Nigeria..

four year and two-year institutions in Tennessee Dissertation, Tennessee State University 114p.

- Massis, B. E. (2003). *The Practical Library Manager*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Information Press
- Maesaroh, I. and Genoni, P. (2009) Educational Qualification and Personnel Attributes of Indonesian Academic Library Staff: a survey of library managers *Library Management* 29 (7), 246-278.
- Measaroh I. and Genoni, P. (2009). Educational and Contributing Professional Development Practice in Indonesian Academic Librarians: *A survey Library Management*. 30 (8/9), 524-538.
- Mishra, V. K. (2009). Comparative study of Essential Qualification/Experience for Library Staff, skill required in ICT Environment and Syllabus of LIS Education in Digital Era: A case study *ICAL Change Management*. 350 – 355.

- Ojo, R. A. and Akande, S. O. (2005). Students access, usage and awareness of electronic information resources at the University College Hospital University of Ibadan, Lagos *Journal of Library and information science* 3 (1), 16 – 24.
- Okoye, M. O. and Ugwuanyi, C. F. (2012). Management of Electronic Resources by Cataloguers in Nigeria Federal University Libraries. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.
- Padmajan, C. K. (2002). Essentials of automated acquisition New Delhi: Ess Ess Publication.
Url: <http://www.essessbooks.com>
- Pantry S. and Griffiths P. (2002). Creating a successful e-information service. London Facet publishing.
- Zhang, Sha Li (2003) Effectiveness of support training and development in selected academic libraries in Kansas and Oklahoma. Amigos Fellowship Final Report Project.