

## ACQUISITION OF ONLINE COMPETENCIES OF LIBRARIANS THROUGH THE CONTINUOUS STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR IMPROVED JOB PERFORMANCE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF CONCEPTS AND CHALLENGES

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to review the acquisition of online competencies of Librarians through the Continuous Staff Development Programs for Job Performance in Academic Libraries in Nigeria. Academic libraries have provided, served and executed their obligations of collection development, user education, reference services, and current awareness services traditionally to their users by employing tangible resources to deliver information services. Due to the huge increase of knowledge, the emergence of modern technology and the changes in trends in libraries services, libraries are needed to accomplish more, and the competencies library professionals require continue to change. Libraries throughout the world are grappling with the present issues of technological development, globalization, and digitalization of information. Librarians must be familiar with the following competencies in an online environment: e-reserves bibliographic instruction software, management systems, apple and Microsoft systems, instructional design products, a wide range of classroom software applications, serials management software and library integrated systems

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The paper adopted conceptual approach. It defines the concept of Continuous Staff Development Programs, types of Continuous Staff Development Programs, acquisition of online competencies skills, The use of ICT in the acquisition of online competencies, competencies needed by librarians, challenges of Continuous Staff Development Programs on job performance, conclusion and recommendations.

**Implication:** The paper contends that although the library profession has proliferation of program there still there exists low improvement in the acquisition of online competencies for job performance. Almost all experts now believe that continual learning is necessary for library/information personnel to provide effective service. It is also essential since it will allow librarians to reap the full advantages of these programs and apply their newly gained skills on the job. Librarians must grasp the online competencies in order to execute their duties successfully and efficiently.

**Originality/ Value:** It is therefore imperative that the university librarians function effectively in their services in order to fulfill the demands of the clientele. CPD is a lifetime learning process that allows one to broaden one's profession and competency helps to satisfy the current and future of patrons needs which offers better service outcomes and priorities. It ensures that a person has necessary levels of knowledge and competencies that helps in increasing professional area of practice.

**Keywords:** CSDP, Competencies, job performance, academic libraries, and online competencies

**Paper Type:** Conceptual Research

### Introduction

Academic libraries have historically offered, set out, and performed their commitments to their users in terms of collection development, user education, reference services, and current awareness services by utilizing physical

resources to supply information services. Libraries and librarians must be aware of and appreciate the various facets of their services that have evolved as a result of the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT). People currently use the internet

as their primary basis of information, with books acting as a last resort due to time and financial constraints. Librarians in this day and age must provide e-services utilizing digital technologies; however the majority of libraries in Nigeria continue to employ traditional techniques in the collecting, processing, storage, and transmission of information to the populace. (Gbaje and Ukachi, 2011)

### **Continuous Staff Development Programs**

According to Holley (2013), development programs for staff are programs that strive to increase the knowledge of staff, qualification, and efficiency so as to build more capabilities in their job performance. In Ghanaian university libraries, staff development and training programs such as orientation programs, on-the-job training, the opportunity to participate in conferences/ seminars/workshops/ for organization for advancement exercises, research and publications, networks and membership in library associations, study leaves, job rotation assignments, and so on have all been implemented. In addition, staff training and development in an organization is concerned with the acquisition and development of information, techniques, and abilities, as well as the experience that enables a staff member to make the most effective contribution to the combined efforts of the group of which he is a member. (Al-Suqri, 2010)

### **Competencies**

Employee competency determines the quality and effectiveness of library and information services. Because of the constant flux in social needs, new technology, and professional expertise growth, more information professionals and librarians must constantly expand on their knowledge and improve on their talents. Although the individual has the primary responsibility for professional development, employers, library/information science education programs, organizations, and professional associations concerned with the growth of libraries will all play a part in the profession's continuing education. (Ziche, 2014).

Rapid change may and can be expected, and librarians must stay up with these

developments by regularly upgrading and refining current and new core skills. Libraries today devote a lot of space to public computer services, and librarians go through continual development programs to be well-equipped to deal with questions about current research and where to find and borrow books. (Emiri, 2015)

Ohnstone (2019) reports that the American Library Association provides continuing education for librarians in the United States ([www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)). (Harvot, 2014) .Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is concerned with ensuring that each individual has the opportunity to keep current with emerging advances as well as to continuously learn and enhance his or her abilities in their professional experience. (Robati and Yusuf, 2015).The recognition of the value of CPD in professional development has gradually strengthened librarians' set abilities, which has also acknowledged how important it is to the profession's survival.

### **Types of Continuous Staff Development Programs**

Corcoran and McGuiness (2014) emphasized the need of regular and targeted skill development. According to Ajeemsha and Madhusudhan (2012), librarians must be well-versed in ICT developments and their implications for the profession of Library and Information Science (LIS). Farooquet (Ezema & Ugwuanyi, 2014; Farooquet et al., 2016)

For librarians, there are two types of continuing professional development programs: internal and external. When a library is a branch of a larger institution (for example, a hospital, city, government, or university), staff development divisions, or human resources, will ensure in-house training programs for patron service training, IT and software training, or general understanding of the activities and institutional and roles.

Conference is one of the most stable and reputable CPD platforms. In the scholarly publishing and academic library industries, there are multiple professional conferences offering a variety of unique learning opportunities. Conferences are advantageous on several levels. They allow you to identify

upcoming trends in your field or industry; exchange appropriate practices or seek to ensure how one will deal with current trends and discover new goods and solutions; contribute to the field through presentations; meet vendors and suppliers, communicate with aspiring practitioners; and network with library and information workers from various organizations and sectors. Internal training programs include job shadowing, coaching, mentorship, reading clubs, and scholarships. (Appleton, 2017)

External library groups include regional branches and local consortia of one's professional organization, such as the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) or the American Library Association (ALA). While many organizations organize events throughout the year (excluding conferences), they provide excellent chances to participate in specific library and information-related activities. The competence programs include external training programs such as workshops, seminars, webinars, and online training. (Morris, 2017)

Webinars are live online meetings that take place over the Internet in real time. A webinar usually involves a presentation, as well as an interactive discussion and question-and-answer session. On their PCs, participants may often watch the presenter and presentation slides while simultaneously listening to the audio feed.

Because participants do not need to travel to join the session, webinars are a low-cost approach to reach a large audience. Depending on the software used, webinars can be recorded for later use. The National Speakers Association's eight essential skills for webinars are Environmental Trends and Impact, Professionalism, Content Development, Product Development, Platform Mechanics, Performance Mastery, Business Development, and Strategic and Operational Business Management.

### **Acquisition of Online Competencies**

Academic librarians must be familiar with the following competencies in an online environment, according to Federal Librarian

Competencies (2008): e-reserves bibliographic instruction software, management systems, apple and Microsoft systems, instructional design products, a wide range of classroom software applications, serials management software library integrated systems. Academic librarians may be required to utilize search engines and intellectual property/copyright management systems, as well as a range of online research tools such as foreign sources, government e-resources, and scholarly databases, depending on their profession.

To perform their tasks successfully and efficiently, librarians must understand e-resources and the ERL e-resource life cycle. The ERL e-resource life cycle should include the following components: EZ proxy, Open URL/z39.50, central authentication services (Shibboleth), file transfer protocols (FTP), Electronic data interchange (EDI), internet protocols (IP), Open Archives Initiative – Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH), conceptual and practical knowledge of database design, theoretical and practical database design knowledge (e.g. HTML, XML, wiki). (Sutton, 2011)

Librarians must also be familiar with practical and conceptual preservation tools, as well as practical and conceptual software information such as discovery services, link resolver software, administrative functions of proprietary databases, meta search software, and electronic resources management software (ERMS), Data collecting software, bibliographic utilities, and assistance with digital scholarly activities are all available. The primary function of ERLs is to give and maintain access to electronic resources. (Cassella&Morando,2010)

The ERL should be familiar with both practical and theoretical aspects of using mobile devices and computing gear to access information electronically, as well as their operating systems. They should also have practical and conceptual understanding of wired and wireless networking technologies, as well as protocols, standards, and settings such as file transfer protocols (FTP) and Internet protocols (IP), Open URL/z39.50, EZ proxy, electronic data interchange (EDI), central authentication services (Shibboleth), open Archives Initiative –

Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH), practical and conceptual knowledge of database design, and Markup languages are required (such as HTML, XML, wiki). (Libgib, 2019)

To execute their job properly and efficiently, librarians must have a variety of digital skills. Among the skills are online competencies abilities and technology, which are great tools for finding example job titles, duties, and capabilities (including technology knowledge). Understanding of LC categorization, electronic resource licensing and administration, institutional repository system, MARC formats, OCLC connection, RDA tools, and data visualization tools is required for collection, cataloging, and dissemination. Librarians must be knowledgeable with internet cataloguing. This is a technologically based strategy whose platform provides new options for information distribution and electronic data interchange. (Liu & Briggs, 2015)

Reference and research librarians must have the following abilities: Library apps and integrated library systems knowledge, including familiarity with LibGuides and Camtasia or equivalent Screen Casting tools, as well as a grasp of free information sources. Web design, web maintenance, internet searching, software troubleshooting, chat/IM, and hardware troubleshooting are all crucial reference technology competences and abilities. (Ivana & Daniela, 2012).

Ability to produce online learning materials, broad understanding of Apple products, current/emerging trends in technology, and information literacy education in addition to critical thinking, communication, teamwork, creativity, cross-cultural and digital literacy are among the abilities and skills necessary in twenty-first-century librarianship training and outreach. (2020, Jasween)

Archivists and preservation librarians must learn how to use the increasingly complicated technologies for preserving, scanning, and providing online access to a greater range of print materials. Librarians must have knowledge and skills in understanding the specialized equipment used in archiving and preservation. These skills include competitive intelligence tracking, taxonomy building, records

preservation and management, digital asset management, and content curation and management systems. Understanding of management systems, automated archival collections, and knowledge of XML schemas, SML editors, Encoded Archival Description (EAD), and USMARC.

Online and social media skills: Librarians need 21st-century web and social media abilities to perform effectively and productively in their work environments. Experience in designing, modifying, administering, and organizing the operations of collaborative SharePoint sites, as well as documentation and training understanding of the design and maintenance of web-based management tools such as LibGuides, expertise in Drupal and other PHP-based content management systems based content management systems, rudimentary HTML coding experience, the capacity to handle evolving code Technologies, business and companies, K-12 School Libraries, Special Libraries The Snapshot report includes extensive coverage of news and media organizations, museums, and heritage societies. (Sutton, 2011)

### **Evaluation of Continuous Staff Development Programs for Job Performance**

Dawo and Okwatch (2012) revealed that staff development practices alone did not add significantly to job performance in a research to assess the influence of the development of staff practices on work performance in many selected Kenyan institutions. According to the authors, employee growth should be supported by methods of other human resource management and development such as salary raise, promotion, reward, and some other ways of motivating staff for improved job performance through staff interest.

Kimberlee (2018), cited in Adejo (2020), discovered in his study " Factors mitigating the use of information resources and services in Nigeria" that staff development and training programs help employees create confidence in the company because they see themselves as part of the firm's successes in the growth processes. Staff development training also supports in development through engagement and reinforcement of institutional aims. Effective training may increase a staff member's

confidence in their abilities. Staff training and development will be able to assist in addressing a variety of personnel difficulties that are inhibiting the institution's performance. These include, among other things, enhancing work quality and morale, aiding in the development of new information, abilities, and understanding of work, and applying suitable new tools.

However, several authors in the reviewed literature, such as Cobblah and Van (2016) and Mackenzie and Smith (2014), have shown that successful staff training and program creation has resulted in an increase in production owing to job performance.

### **Challenges Faced by Librarians in the Acquisition of the Online Competencies**

Professional development is essential for academic librarians in order to keep current knowledge and abilities in the face of changing circumstances. The challenges of capacity-building in developing economies are enormous in terms of overall economic performance and prospects. In an economically destitute country, librarians' contributions in capacity development efforts include staff exchanges, training and retraining, links with comparable and related professions, and so on.

Eze (2012) contends that continuous professional development programs are not without challenges. Anunobi (2013) posits that inadequate financing is a major impediment to the implementation of staff capacity building strategies. To Oguniola (2011) libraries can serve as tools for capacity building in developing countries. International collaboration and exchange programs will improve networking among library workers and serve as a learning tool, as one of the most effective means of CPD for staff training (Leong and Nguyen, 2011). Academic library workers face severe constraints, such as insufficient budget allocation for training, poor infrastructure, and the cost of CPD participation.

### **Conclusion**

Library practitioners may be resistant to growth as well as reticent to pursue ongoing professional development, while library/information organizations in over sixty countries have a code of ethics that urges its

members to be accountable for their continual learning, managers of staff development should collect responses from their employees not only for specific learning events, but also for internal and external activities, at least quarterly, to assess the influence of the overall program on job performance and practice.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the literature review:

- Provision of capacity building for librarians is important and should be promoted,
- Staff exchanges programs should be encouraged in libraries
- There should be adequate training and retraining of librarians due to the changes in technology and the vast growth of knowledge
- Adequate funding should be provided to enable librarians frequently attend training programs
- Librarians should be encouraged by sponsoring them in continuous development programs

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