

Librarian's Perception of Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) and Information Society as Vital Tool for National Development

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Abstract:

Purpose: The study was an attempt to examine librarian's perception, adoption and practice of EBLIP, by a look at what constitute Evidence Based Library and Information Practice {EBLIP} as a paradigm in the profession of library and information service, particularly its application in the march toward information society. The factors preventing successful implementation of the principles of EBLIP in library and information services and the potentials EBLIP can impact on information society for Nigeria National development.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated to guide it. A purposive sample technique was used to select a sample size of 186 Librarians across the county. Instruments for data collection included a well structured questionnaire and telephone interview. 185 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents with return rate of 87%. The study used percentages, bar, column, and pie charts for data analysis and presentation.

Findings: The study revealed that the respondents are relatively knowledgeable about EBLIP and information society. Respondents uphold that information society would impact positively on quest for National Development and that ICT facilities constitute an important component in the information society. The study conclude that adopting EBLIP principles among libraries and librarian in Nigeria is capable of placing Nigeria in the map of countries playing big roles in the use of global information services for National development.

Implication: Suggested recommendations would make the adoption of the EBLIP among librarian an easy task and provide means for re-training and re-skilling of librarian in line with the tenet of information society.

Originality/Value: It was recommended that EBLIP doctrine should be included in the Library and information science curriculum and re-skilling of professional librarian to equip them with new skill is also very crucial.

Keywords: EBLIP; ICT; Information; Information Society, Librarian

Background to the Study

The focus and attention of the global community has shifted from information provision to information as factor of production. Information resource management in the last three decades gained unprecedented recognition. This focus and attention given to information was the direct consequence of the tremendous research, development and advancement recorded in the area of Information and Communication Technologies. The event in this last three decades has put every profession on serious alert. Virtually, all facet of human life has been impacted upon by this development. Therefore, the application of ICT and its affiliated facilities

was never an accident, it was intended to bring about effectiveness and efficiency in the way and manners information services are delivered. The popular phrase "information society" enjoys sound receptions from many professions outside library and information science; it is being conceptualized differently by various schools of thought e.g. Information revolution, Information economy and Information superhighway.

Meanwhile, information society as a paradigm has taken a central stage in the field of library and information service, it is a phrase explaining

society where the act of creation, distribution, use and preservation of information is propelled by the integration and application of ICTs and its affiliated facilities. Paradigm is initiated by ICTs, powered by ICTs, run by ICTs and sustained by same ICTs to offer access to vast information resources across the globe.

The phrase Evidence Based Library and Information Practice started as Evidence-based practice in the field of medicine around 1990s and it later spread to many field of studies. The principles and the doctrine it advocated for was what makes it so successful that other professions outside medicine started to introduced it in their field. Within shortest time EBLIP model has become a machine for improving quality of service delivery. The evidence-based practice is a systematic way of making judgment by applying results from pragmatic and research studies from established source to improve performance in the workplace, which library and information services cannot afford not to apply.

Therefore, the way and manners with which library and information service are discharged in Nigeria need urgent reform on the application of innovation in all sectors of the library and information service. It was based on this that this study is advocating for the adoption of EBLIP as a model to bring in professionalism in the conduct and discharge of library and information service. The adoption of EBLIP model in our libraries is capable of making the library and information service the focal point in the information society and National development.

Statement of the Problem

In the last three decades there has been an increasing demand for information for various reasons. Also within this period there was unprecedented production of information occasioned by the advancement recorded in the Information and Communication Technologies. The library and information scientists got for themselves a huge task of integrating the new technologies in their services, so that; they can meet up the pressing needs of their clients. The new technologies do not only introduce a new product but it also introduced new concepts and services. Some of these innovations generated debates and controversies, while some did not. Among these concept are "Information Society" and "Evidence Based Library and Information Practice". In Nigeria, we have talked a lot about

information society, we seems to be living in the new information society. Therefore, this study is confronted with problem of establishing the perception of librarians about what constitute information society and EBLIP, and investigating the roles of information society and EBLIP in Nigeria quest for development.

Significant of the Study

The study is of high significant to National economic planners in the area of policy planning. Library administrators, librarians and library users stand to benefits from this study, because the target of any library administrator is not only to make information resources available to clientele but to ensure that such information satisfies the clientele and that their state of curiosity is addressed. Thus, the study identified a model that is capable of leading Nigerian libraries and librarians to the new information society, whereby the potentials and opportunities presented us by information society is fully tapped. The study also fills knowledge gap in the area of EBLIP and open another research ground.

Scope, Limitation and population of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to practicing librarians in Nigeria who were selected Nigerian librarian Nominal list (a list of practicing librarian in Nigeria) produced by National Library of Nigeria).The study used 2014 edition of the nominal list and it has a total population 1,070 librarians.

Research Objectives are to:

1. Find out the perception and status of information society among librarians in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the perception and level of EBLIP awareness among librarian in Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the role of information society and EBLIP as tools in National Development.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception and status of information society among librarians in Nigeria?
2. What is the perception and level of EBLIP awareness among librarian in Nigeria?

3. What is the role of information society and EBLIP as tools in National Development?

Research Design and Methodology

The study was conducted in line with descriptive research method, with questionnaires and interview as the instrument of data collection. Purposive sample technique was adopted to sample 185 librarians (respondents) across the 36 states of the Federation and the FCT Abuja.

Literature Review

This section is devoted to report the review of related literature and it is centered on the three core subject matter of this study, which are: Information: Information Society: Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP).

Information

According to Jim Riley (2012), information is data that has been processed in such a way as to be meaningful to the person who receives it. Information has generally being agreed upon to be a vital resource necessary for the survival of individual. In agreement with Jim (2012), the researchers maintained that information transcends to knowledge and knowledge is an important element in decision making in all facet of human life.

Meanwhile, online dictionary (Farlex), equally affirm that "information is knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance. Knowledge gained through study, communication and research". Margaret Rouse (2005), maintain that Information is stimuli that has meaning in some context for its receiver, when information is entered into and stored in a computer, it is generally referred to as data. After processing (such as formatting and printing), output data can again be perceived as information by information society.

Information Society

Policy makers for the G7 now G8, do recognize that the progress in information technologies and communication is changing the way we live: how we work and do business, how we educate our children, study and do research, train ourselves, and how we are entertained. The

information society is not only affecting the way people interact but it is also requiring the traditional organizational structures to be more flexible, more participatory and more decentralized

BBM Community Development Foundation look at information society as a society characterized by a high level of information intensity in the everyday life of most citizens, in most organization and workplaces; by the use of common or compatible technology for a wide range of personal, social, educational and business activities, and by the ability to transmit, receive and exchange digital data rapidly between places irrespective of distance.

Fritz (1973) view Information society as knowledge economy with five features such as education, research and development, the media of communication, information machines and information services (legal, engineering, accounting/auditing and medical services

According to Selhofe r(2001) ambiguities and controversies abound, however, about the empirical foundation of the information society. It remains unclear how best to measure its potential for social change. What are the criteria that allow us distinguish an information society from other types of society?

Information society in an ideal situation is a society where every citizen talks about WEB 2.0, LIB 2.0, BLOG, OPAC, OPEN ACCESS, HI-TECH information management system etc. Every citizen should have the ability to articulate his information need and be able to march his needs against sources available.

Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

The whole idea of evidence based practice was borrowed from the medical field into Library and Information service that was why, Sackett (1997), posited that "Evidence-based medicine is the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values." Evidence-based medicine is the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values."

The field of librarianship has gone through a lot of transformation; one of the transformations is the application of evidence based practice which is intended to strengthen the librarian to discharge their professional duties as effectively

as possible. According to Civallero (2007), Evidence Based Librarianship (EBL) seeks for and promotes the improvement of the librarian's practice through the use of the best available evidence". While, Booth and Brice.(2004) view Evidence Based Librarianship as "...an approach to information practice that promotes the collection, interpretation, and integration of valid, important and applicable user-reported, librarian-observed and research derived evidence."

In other to prove the applicability of Evidence Based Librarianship, Booth (2006), argue that "EBLIP involves asking answerable questions, finding, critically appraising and then utilizing research evidence from relevant disciplines in daily practice. It thus attempts to integrate user-reported, practitioner-observed and research-derived evidence as an explicit basis for decision-making".

In line with other scholars, Eldredge (2002) on his own analysis view Evidence-Based Librarianship as an approach that seeks to improve library practice by utilizing the best available research evidence in conjunction with a pragmatic perspective developed from working experiences in librarianship.

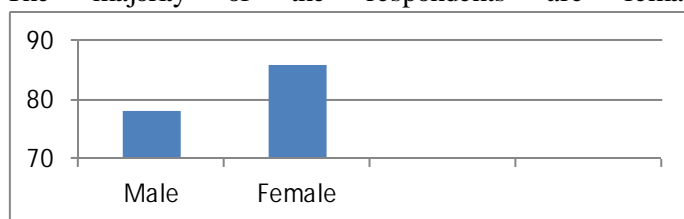
Sackett (1997) in his contribution articulate five stages of evidence based practice and they are as follows:

1. Identification of a problem or question;
2. Finding, as efficiently as possible, the best evidence to answer the question;
3. Appraising the evidence for validity and usefulness;

Findings and Discussion

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

The majority of the respondents are females, {Female: 86 and Male 78}.



4. Applying the results to a specific population and
5. Evaluating the outcome of the intervention.

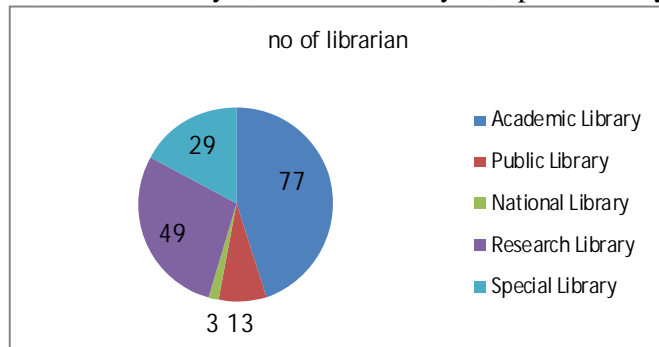
Although stages one and two of this process are those most obviously associated with information practice, it is immediately apparent that judging information quality (stage three), judging relevance (stage four) and evaluating the outcome of information provision (stage five) are all integral to good information management.

Looking at all the empirical studies above it is justified that EBLIP is an opportunity for the librarian to show case that librarianship is not a static profession rather it is a profession that can adjust to the dynamic nature of human existence, it's practices is based on best evidence available.

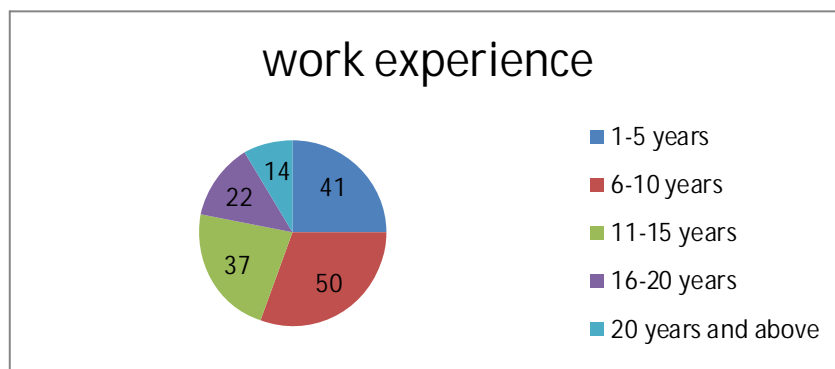
Data Presentation and Analysis

Data was collected through questionnaire administered on the respondents by the researcher. The questionnaires were distributed through emails and physical contract where possible. According to Kothari (2004) raw data should be necessarily condensed into manageable groups and tables for further analysis. The researchers therefore classified and present the research findings according to the questionnaire and research questions. A total of 185 respondents were sampled from the research population of 1,070. While, only 164 (87%) respondents responded and 21 respondents never respond.

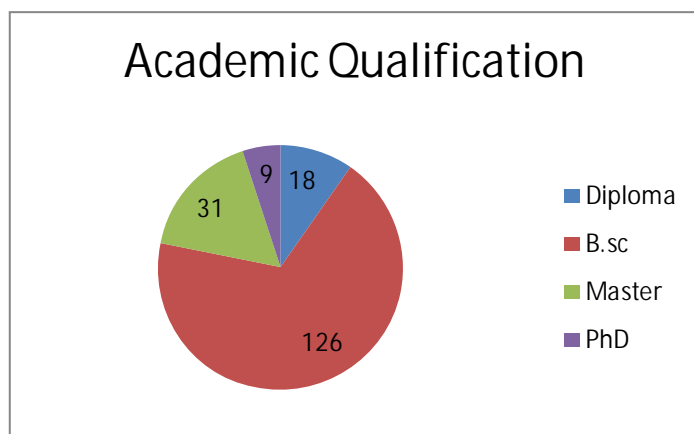
Majority of the respondents work in academic library, thus: academic library: 77, public library: 13, National library:3, Research library:46, Special library:29



The respondents years of experience are: 1-5 years: 41 respondents, 6-10 years:50 respondents, 11-15years:37 respondents, 16-20years: 22 respondents, 20-above 14 respondents



The respondents Academic qualifications are: Diploma 18 respondents, First Degree 126 respondents, Master 31 respondents and Ph. D 9 respondents.



Section B: Information Society

1) Do you understand the concept of information society?

97. % which is majority of the respondents (160 respondents) affirmed their understanding of the concept of information society. Majority of respondents representing 63.4% (104 respondents) said they cannot say whether

society, while, 1.8 % (3 respondents) and 1% (1 respondents) said no and indifferent respectively.

2) Do you agree that Nigeria is already in information society?

Nigeria society is already an information society, while, 12.1% (20 respondents) and 24.3 % (40

respondents) said no and indifferent respectively.

3) Do you think information society can make impact on Nigeria National development?

There is overwhelming responses from the majority of respondents 75.6 % (124 respondents) that information society will impact greatly on our National life and National Development, while, 10.9% (18 respondents) and 13.4% (22 respondents) respectively affirmed no and indifferent to question.

4) Do you agree that information has become an important asset and factors of production?

The majority of respondents 65.8% (108 respondents) affirmed that information is gaining more importance, while, 20.7% (34 respondents) and 13.4% (22 respondents) affirmed no and indifferent respectively.

5) Do you agree that the followings shape the new society called "information society"?

PC, Internet, Web, Email, Facebook, Twitter, BBM, WhatsApp, YOUTUBE

Majority of the respondents 96.9 % (159 respondents) strongly agreed that all social media, networking and PC mentioned here are necessary component required in the new

information society, while, only 4 of the respondents indicated no and 1 respondent was indifferent.

6) Can you conclude that Nigeria has joined the global information society?

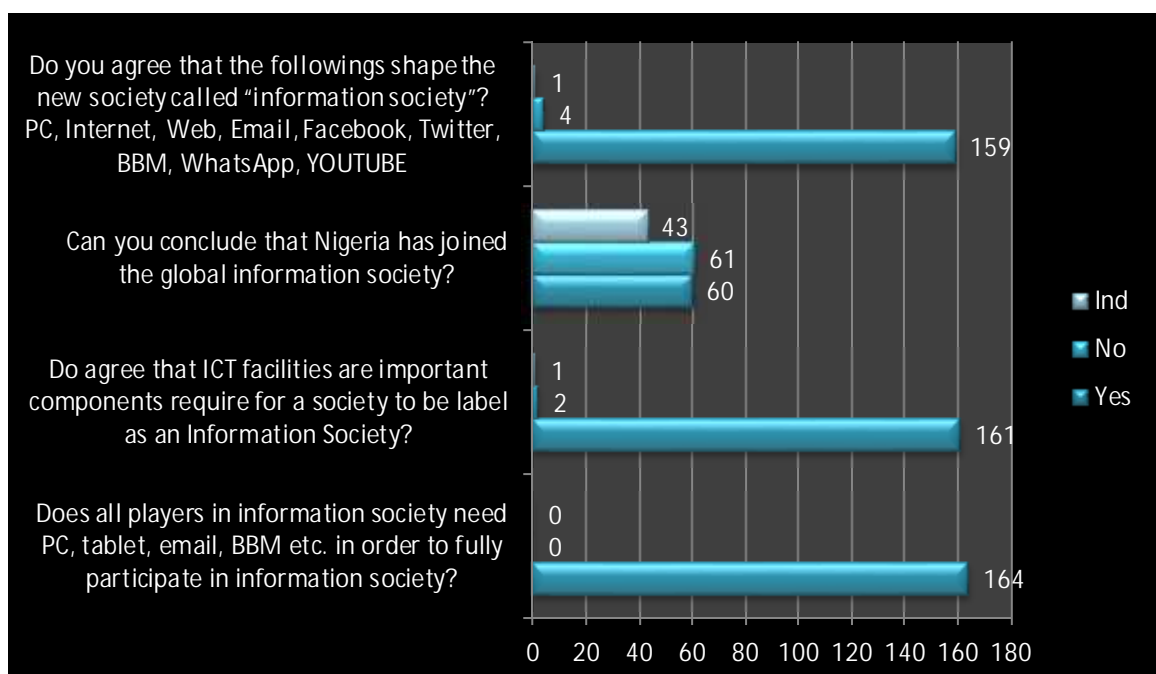
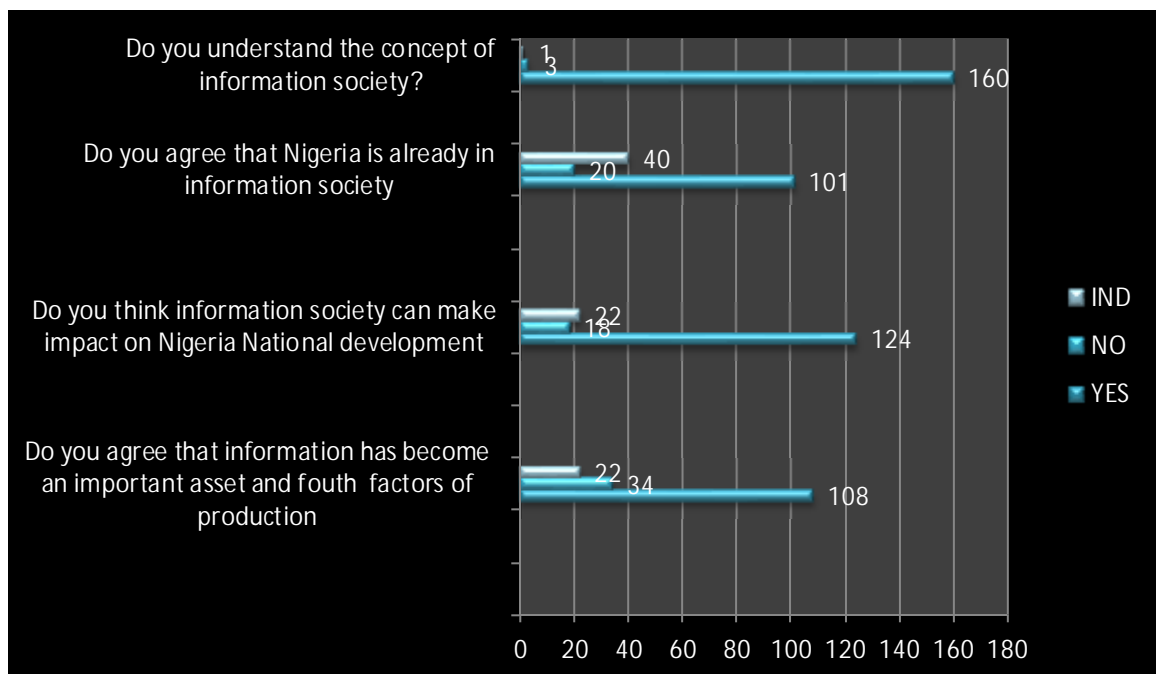
Slight majority of the respondents, 37.1% (61 respondents) are of the opinion that Nigeria is yet to become a global information player, while, 36.5% (60 respondents) believed that Nigeria has joined the global information society and 26.2% (43 respondents) were indifferent.

7) Do agree that ICT facilities are important components require for a society to be label as an Information Society?

The respondents, 98.1% (161 respondents) vehemently agreed that ICT facilities are required to build information society, while, 1.2% (2 respondents) do not agreed and 0.6% (1 respondent) was indifferent.

8) Does all players in information society need PC, tablet, email, BBM etc. in order to fully participate in information society?

It was agreed among the respondents 100% that everybody in the new information society need PC, tablet, email, BBM etc to maximized benefits of information society.



Section C: Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

1) Are you aware of the EBLIP concept?

In their response, majority of the respondents, 67% (110 respondents) indicated that they have awareness of EBLIP, while, 19.5 % (32 respondents) and 13.4% (22 respondents)

The majority of the respondents, 69.5% (114 respondents) attested that EBLIP advocate for the application of interdisciplinary approach to problem solving is well known to them, while, 19.5 % (32 respondents) and 10.09 (18 respondents)

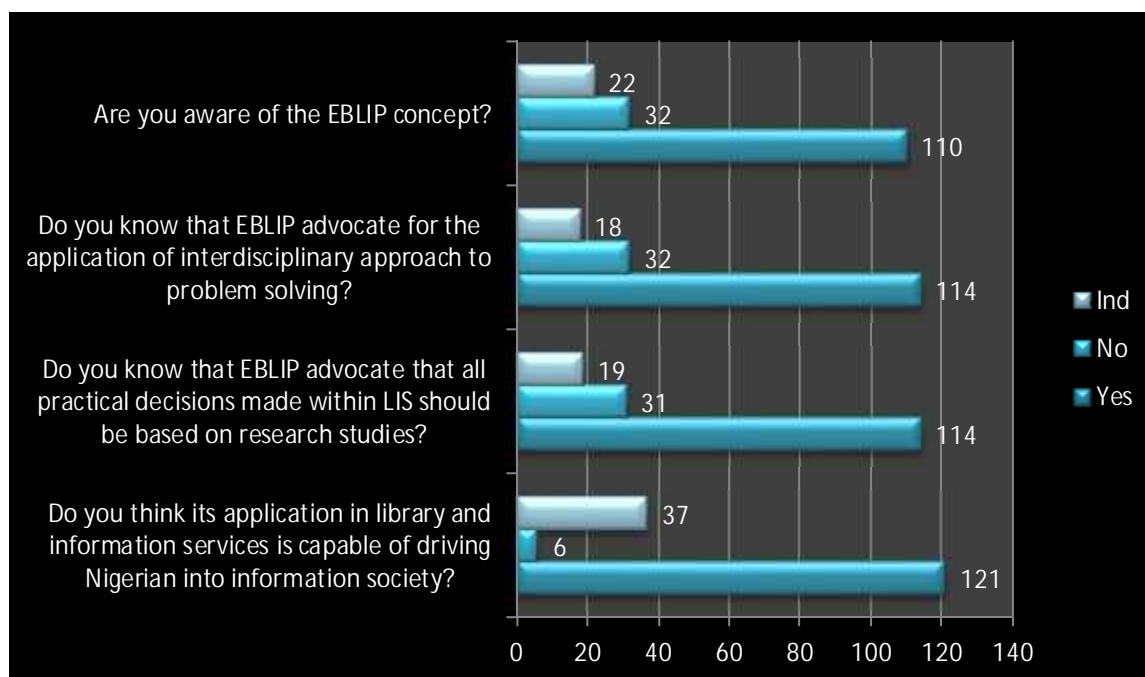
2) Do you know that EBLIP advocate for the application of interdisciplinary approach to problem solving?

3) Do you know that EBLIP advocate that all practical decisions made within LIS should be based on research studies?

The majority of the respondents, 69% (114 respondents) attested that they are aware of EBLIP advocate for all practical decisions made within LIS should be based on research studies, while, 18.9% (31 respondents) and 11.5% (6 respondents) attested no and indifferent to the question respectively.

4) Do you think its application in library and information services is capable of driving Nigerian into information society?

The majority of the respondents, 73.7% (121 respondents) believe that the application of EBLIP in library and information is capable of taking Nigeria into information society, while, 3.6% (6 respondents) do not believe so and 22.5% think indifferently.



5) Do you agree that EBLIP offers positive approach to Library and Information Services?

The respondents, 73.7% (121 respondents) agreed that EBLIP stand to offer positive input in library and information service. While, 3.6% (6 respondents) do not believe so and 22.5% think indifferently.

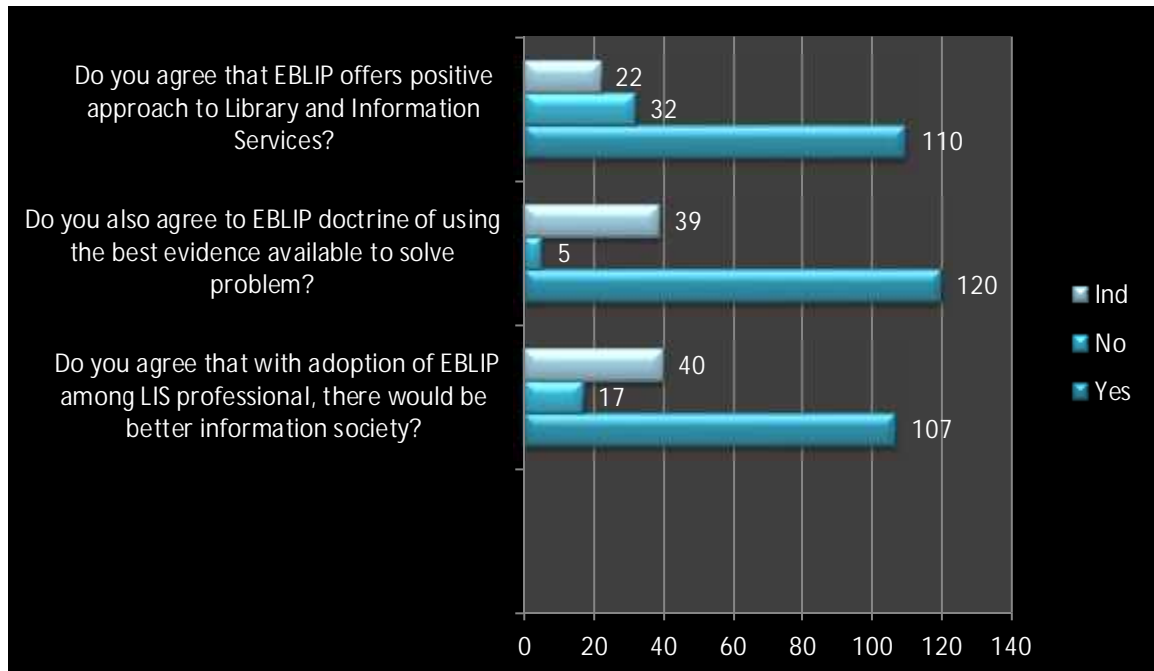
6) Do you also agree to EBLIP doctrine of using the best evidence available to solve problem?

The respondents, 73.17% (120 respondents) equally agreed that EBLIP doctrine of using best

evidence available to solve problem is in perfect order, while, 3% (5 respondents) think otherwise and 23.7% (39 respondents) think indifferently.

7) Do you agree that with adoption of EBLIP among LIS professional, there would be better information society?

The majority of the respondents, 65.2% (107 respondents) agreed with adoption of EBLIP among LIS professional as it would lead to a better deal for LIS professionals, while, 10.3% (17 respondents) disagreed and 24.3% (40 respondents) think indifferently.



Conclusion

Today library and information service has drastically changed from the traditional library system. The librarians working and powering this library and information services ought to have change in their approach and out-put, they must adapt, embrace and learn not only the new tools but a new practices, new value orientation toward service and new output. Total application of EBLIP doctrine and its principles is capable of re-skilling, re-orienting and re-positioning library and information service profession to take the driving seat role in the new information society for National development.

Recommendation

Library and information science curriculum need to be review to incorporate EBLIP doctrine and principles and be thought at all library schools.

Re-skilling and re-training of professional librarian to equip them with basic knowledge of applying and using all the new tools and skills needs urgent attention.

More research on EBLIP for librarian and the friends of librarians to embark on research endeavors to increase the body of literature available in EBLIP needs an urgent.

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