



TRAINING AS A DETERMINANT OF ACQUISITION OF ICT LITERACY SKILLS BY LIBRARIANS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN IMO STATE.

ORISAKWE Kingsley¹; ALALA, Amarachi Glory² & IGWE Kingsley³

Library Division, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Imo State¹; Clifford University, Owerri, Abia State, Nigeria.²; Library Division, Federal Polytechnic Nekede Owerri, Imo State³
orisakwek540@gmail.com¹; alalag@clifforduni.edu.ng, gloamy19@gmail.com²;
kingnduby74@gmail.com³

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Abstract

Purpose: The researchers examined training as a determinant of acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The study was guided by two objectives: to determine the extent at which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State; and to ascertain the factors that militate against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Research/Methodology/Approach: The study adopted survey research design. The population and sample of the study were eighty-one (81) librarians in the six tertiary institutions studied, in Imo State. The instrument that was used for data collection was a four-point rating scale based on the research questions. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test difference between observed and expected mean scores at set probability value of 0.05.

Findings: The major findings of the study are that: The training methods used by librarians for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills was at low; and the mean response score on the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in the tertiary institutions in Imo State was not significant and among the factors that militate against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills of the librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State are: insufficient infrastructure and ICT equipment; lack of proper support from the school authorities, poor internet connectivity/network, inadequate power supply; and lack of funds.

Implication: These results implicate the need for library management of tertiary institutions to regularly organize ICT training programmes towards improving the ICT literacy skills of librarians using various training methods and also encourage the librarians to make personal efforts to acquire ICT skills

Originality/Value: The study has drawn attention on the need for training if librarians will acquire the necessary ICT literacy skills.

Keywords: Training, ICT, Literacy, Skills, Acquisition, Librarians, Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

The achieving the mission and vision of academic institutions is the precursor behind the establishment of academic libraries. Librarians are at the threshold of information handling of their parent institutions but today, digital age has brought new tools and technologies for information handling and management, and for academic libraries to serve their communities effectively in the current digital environment. Information is now

being acquired both through paper as well as electronic formats, and libraries are able to convert some of their old collections to machine-readable format. Nevertheless, the goal and objectives of the academic libraries cannot be achieved in this digital age without the librarians possessing requisite knowledge in information and communication technology (ICT). Therefore, librarians are expected to be equipped with adequate ICT literacy skills.

Literacy entails the ability to read and write, and effective application of the activities that concern literacy. Such applications could be on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), hence the terminology 'information and communication technology (ICT) literacy'. Bainbridge (2019) sees literacy skills as all the skills needed for reading and writing. Literacy in information and communication technology (ICT) is very essential to manage the huge collection of library; therefore, librarians are obligated to possess these skills in order to navigate digital information. Effective applications of technological facilities to library services require training and re-training of librarians, which bring about information and communication technology (ICT) literacy skills. The required skills to use information and communication technology (ICT) in the library services are the daily activities of a functioning library in order to enhance job performance and keep abreast with trends in library profession.

The bedrock of information and communication technology (ICT) literacy of librarians is placed on training. Igbokwe and Eke (2011) assert that for any meaningful development to occur in any nation, it needs individuals who have gone through special training to solve national problems as they emerge. Akanwa (2016) identified notable staff training techniques that are relevant and effective in academic libraries as: mentoring programmes, participative management, job rotation, continuing education/in-service training, conferences/ workshops and seminars, study visits/ library tours and electronic/e-training. According to Anderson and Ainley (2010), one of the basic conditions for using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is to have access to the technology and the internet. Therefore, librarians need training in ICT literacy. With adequate training in ICT literacy, librarians can better serve their patrons.

Training in ICT literacy is a critical aspect of life as one will keep learning. Librarians need training in ICT literacy to up-skill themselves. Abubakar (2012) points out that training in ICT literacy should be in line with the recommendations of African Union on ICT skills acquisition. In line with this, Anowor (2010) observes that the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria formulated ICT policies and objectives which include among others: facilitating the teaching and learning process; promotion of problem-solving techniques; enhancing critical thinking and innovative skills; promoting life-long education; enhancing universal access to education, instructional options and opportunities.

In spite of the relevance of information and communication technology (ICT) literacy skills to library services and the necessity of acquisition of these skills among librarians, there are some factors that militate against librarians from acquiring these skills. Ifejiolor and Nwankwo (2015), and Adebayo, Ahmed and Adeniran (2018) identified some of these problems to include: Lack of adequate ICT facilities in the libraries; lack of basic knowledge in ICT; poor motivational incentives by school authorities; limited financial resources; poor internet connectivity; erratic power supply; high cost of acquiring as well as poor maintenance of ICT equipment; lack of ICT policies; and so on.

Agreeing with Ugwuanyi (2011), there is indeed a digital divide between developed countries and developing countries including Nigeria. The digitally rich (developed) countries have librarians with high ICT literacy skills due to availability of adequate ICT-based resources and tools unlike the developing countries that still have a yawning gap of digital infrastructures which invariably has a negative effect on the ICT literacy rate among librarians in most tertiary institutions; hence, a digital divide. The researchers are therefore motivated to bridge this yawning gap. It is

against this background that this research on training as a predictor of acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions In Imo State was being carried out.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined training as a determinant of acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions In Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent at which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State;
2. ascertain the factors that militate against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Hypotheses

The researchers formulated and tested the following null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Ho₁: The mean response score on the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 17.50.

Literature Review

The extent of involvement of academic libraries in the actualization of institutional objectives calls for active and competent library staff who will effectively render library services to users. Accordingly, when the right personnel are recruited, the library management puts the staff through with the operations of the library via a staff orientation programme and this encourages them for more training to enhance their development. As seen, development is the only thing needed to fill this gap and human resources development improves current performance and provides suitable and qualified personnel to meet present and future needs (Akanwa cited in Bede-Samuel, 2022). Several studies have been

carried on training of library staff and its place in the acquisition of ICT literacy skills. Some of them are reviewed below.

Mbagwu and Udo-Anyanwu (2022) investigated staff development training and job satisfaction of academic librarians of tertiary institutions in Imo State. The findings clearly indicated that different staff training programmes enable academic librarians to perform better. Ukpebor (2011) carried out a survey study on the use of Internet and related issues among the lecturers and students of engineering faculties in Edo State University, Edo State, Nigeria. The results of the findings on the aspect of the method of skill acquisition revealed that the most popular method of acquiring the necessary skills was through self-instruction.

Ugwuanyi (2011) conducted a study on the influence of ICT literacy skills on its application for library services among academic librarians in South-East, Nigeria. The study was guided by six research questions posed by the researcher. A descriptive survey design was adopted in carrying out the study. The population of study was 93 librarians drawn from 4 Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, and the data generated were analyzed by the use of percentages and mean scores. The result of the findings showed formal and informal education, assistance from colleagues, self-study, training at work place, attending IT program, and workshops/seminars were the methods of ICT literacy skills acquisition. The findings also revealed that financial constraints and poor ICT infrastructures are the most serious hindrances to the acquisition of ICT literacy skills.

Ngorngor (2012) conducted a study on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy skills level of staff of National Library of Nigeria. The findings also showed that the methods of acquiring ICT literacy by the staff were through formal education,

assistance of colleagues, workshops, conferences, attending IT programs and seminars. Problems militating against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by the staff of NLN were identified to be inadequate funds, inadequate government involvement in staff training, poor attitudes of National Library of Nigerian staff towards ICTs, inadequate ICT resources, inadequate ICT literacy skills level of management staff, and inadequate ICT instructor.

Agbo (2014) conducted a research on factors affecting the acquisition of internet literacy skills of academic staff members of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The findings proved that lack of support from the government and the institution for the training of staff, unstable power supply, poor internet connectivity, and systems breakdown were the major problems affecting the internet literacy skills acquisition among the academic staff. Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi, and Laaro (2018) carried out empirical study on the assessment of ICT competencies of library staff in selected Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that tight working schedule, lack of motivation, lack of experience, inadequate training, and inappropriate library and information science curriculum were the constraints to ICT skills acquisition. Identified challenges militating against effective utilization of ICT tools in the library for dynamic information service delivery include: lack of adequate information

infrastructure, absent of provision for staff training and development, limited and tighter budget for the library, lack of technological know-how, fear of technology on the part of library staff as well as epileptic power supply. Sequential to the above identified challenges and constraints,

Research Method

The study adopted inferential survey research design. The population of study consisted of eighty-one (81) librarians from the six tertiary institutions in Imo State studied comprising two Universities, two Polytechnics, and two Colleges. These include: Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO); Imo State University (IMSU), Owerri; Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri (FPNO); Imo State Polytechnic (Imo Poly), Umuagwo; Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, (AIFCE), Owerri; and Federal College of Land Resources Technology (FECOLART), Oforola. These six tertiary institutions were all selected because they are Governments-owned tertiary institutions and so, were all chosen to represent all the tertiary institutions in Imo State. The researchers personally administered copies of the instrument to the respondents in their respective institutions. Data collected were collated and scored using the nominal options of each cluster of the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations while the hypothesis was tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analyses and Presentation

Table 1: Item-by-Item Means and Standard Deviation of the Extent of Training Methods Used by Librarians for the Acquisition of ICT Literacy Skills.

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Std	Remark
1	Through On-the-job training	2.96	0.80	HE
2	By attending internal seminars and workshops.	1.84	0.93	LE
3	By attending conferences on ICT outside the instituti environment (Attending ICT programs).	1.86	0.91	LE
4	Through personal sponsorship on computer trai program.	2.89	0.78	HE
5	By the use of self-study programs.	2.94	0.80	HE

6	By observation and learning from ICT literate colleagu	3.09	0.80	HE
7	Through web-based tutorials.	1.71	0.77	LE
Overall Mean		17.29	5.79	

The data presented in Table 1 shows that the observed mean score on the extent training methods are used by librarians for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills is 17.29. The standard deviation of the individual scores is 5.79. This observed mean is less than the expected mean of 17.50. On the other hand, the item-by-item means shows that the training methods used by the

librarian are as those indicated in items 1, 4, 5, and 6, with mean responses approximately 3.

Hypothesis One: The mean response score on the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions is not significantly greater than the expected mean 17.50.

Table 2: Calculated t-test Statistics for Testing the Difference between the Observed and the Expected Means

t_{cal}	df	α	$valuet_{crit}$	Decision
-0.324	79	0.05	1.664	H ₀₂ is accepted

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-statistic of -0.324 is less than the tabulated or table value t-statistics of 1.664. The null hypothesis is therefore, accepted. Hence, the mean response score on the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by

librarians in tertiary institutions is not significantly greater than the expected mean 17.50. This shows that the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills is significantly below expectation.

Table 3: Item-by-Item Means and Standard Deviation on the Factors that Militate Against the Acquisition of ICT Literacy Skills among Librarians

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	Std	Remark
1	Insufficient infrastructure and ICT equipment.	2.91	0.87	A
2	Lack of enthusiasm for ICT training by librarians.	1.69	0.70	D
3	Lack of support from the school authorities.	2.68	0.91	A
4	Poor internet connectivity/network.	2.85	0.78	A
5	Inadequate power supply.	2.68	0.82	A
6	Government's delay to implement national policies on ICT	2.30	0.79	D
7	Lack of funds.	3.11	0.76	A
8	Tight work schedule.	1.51	0.66	D

To answer research question two, item-by-item mean and standard deviation have been employed with responses of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table 3 shows that through item-by-item mean analysis the factors militating against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills among the librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State are as listed in items 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. The respondents agreed that item statements in the above listed items are factors militating against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills among

librarians. These items have mean response scores that are approximately 3, indicating that the librarians agreed (Ag) with the item statements. However, librarians disagreed with the statements in items 2, 3, 4 and 5 as factors militating against the acquisition of ICT skills among the librarians. These items have mean scores that are approximately 2 indicating disagreement with the item statements.

Discussion of Findings

The Extent to which Training Methods are used for the Acquisition of ICT Literacy Skills among Librarians in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State:

The findings of the study revealed that the mean response on the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State is less than the expected mean. The statistical test carried out revealed that the extent to which training methods are used for the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State is not significant. This shows that the librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State are not using most of the ICT training methods for the acquisition of ICT skills. This finding is in line with the findings of Ukpebor (2011), and Ugwuanyi (2011) who found that librarians make use of only very few ICT training methods. The findings are also in agreement with the findings of Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi, and Laaro (2018) who found that library schools, computer training centers, workshops and seminars, personal training, watching demonstrations on You Tube, guidance from friends and relatives were major sources from which librarians acquire ICT skills.

Factors that Militate against the Acquisition of ICT Literacy Skills among Librarians in Tertiary Institutions:

The finding of the study revealed that there are many factors such as insufficient infrastructure and ICT equipment, lack of support from the school authorities, poor internet connectivity/network, inadequate power supply; and lack of funds are militating against the acquisition of ICT literacy skills by librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State. This finding aligned with that of Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi, and Laaro (2018) who noted that tight work schedule, lack of motivation, lack of experience, inadequate training, and inappropriate library and information science curriculum were the constraints to ICT skills acquisition. Also, Ifejiolor and Nwankwo (2015), and Adebayo, Ahmed and Adeniran (2018) identified some of

these problems to include: Lack of adequate ICT facilities in the libraries; lack of basic knowledge in ICT; poor motivational incentives by school authorities; limited financial resources; poor internet connectivity; erratic power supply; high cost of acquiring as well as poor maintenance of ICT equipment; lack of ICT policies; and so on

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The library management should regularly organize ICT training programmes towards improving the ICT literacy skills of librarians using various training methods
2. The library management should also encourage the librarians to make personal efforts to acquire ICT skills.
3. The government should support tertiary institutions financially to equip academic libraries with adequate ICT facilities and its components.

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