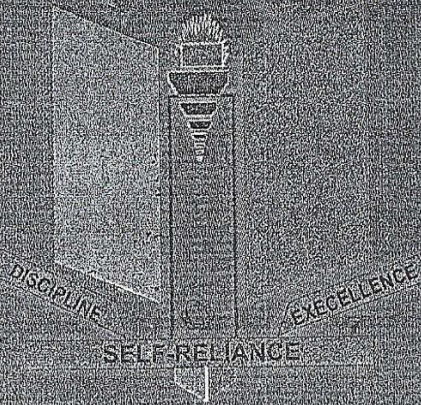


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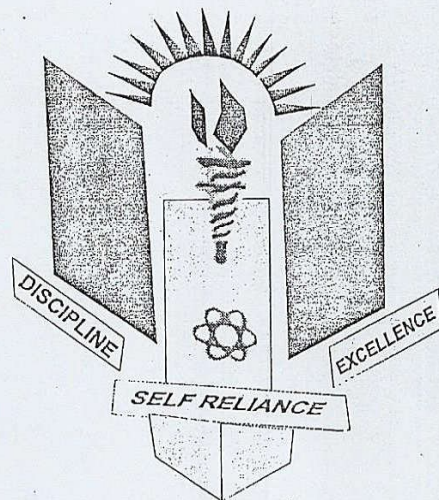
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NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA.

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AIMS AND SCOPE

The Unizik Journal of Research in Library and Information Science is the refereed journal of the Department of Library and Information Science, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. It publishes original research articles on all aspects of Library, Information Science and Archival studies. The editorial policy is primarily to report and communicate current research findings by scholars in the Information profession. Emphasis is on empirical research. Review articles of high quality and solicited reports from information industries will also be considered for publication.

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EDITORIAL

In continuation of our effort towards the development of the profession, the Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka has come up with the latest issue of this Journal. This Vol. 3, Number 2 December 2012 issue contains seven articles on topical issues in Library and Information Science. Using a Standard Information Literacy Test and an Academic Analytic Index, Madu and Akinhboro assess the level of information literacy competencies and academic productivity of Academic Staff in the North Central geographical Zone of Nigeria. Okore and Obidike portray the citation behavior of LIS professional authors as they examine use of electronic resources in Scholarly publications. Nwabueze and Iwekpeazu draw attention to reading culture as they investigate development of reading culture in children. Emwanta and Ofili examined the role of IT in the management of knowledge in John Harris Library, University of Benin.

Nwosu and Aghauche discuss the challenges of e-learning in Nigeria Universities, while Anyaoku champion the cause for fee-based library services in the face of increasing need for more fund to provide ICT based services.

Editor-In-Chief.

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THE LEVELS OF INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCIES
AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTIVITY POSSESSED BY ACADEMIC
STAFF IN NORTH CENTRAL GEOPOLITICAL ZONE OF
NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study assessed the level of information literacy competencies and academic productivity possessed by academic staff in North Central Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised 2810 academic staff in the 12 universities in the zone. A total of 421 academic staff (15%) of the population constituted the sample for this study. Two instruments were used to collect data for the study. The instruments include a Standard information literacy Test and an Academic Analytics Index, the data collected were analysed with the use of descriptive statistics (frequency count, mean score, and percentage. The result revealed that the largest percentage (56.5%) of the academic staff in the universities under study possessed very low information literacy competencies. On the academic productivity, there is low level of academic productivity among the academic staff in the universities as indicated by (64.3%) of the respondents. Finally, the study recommended that the academic staff should take advantage of the new enabling environment to improve their information

literacy competency level, which will consequently impact positively on their productivity level.

KEY WORDS: Information, literacy, academic, productivity, staff, Nigeria

Introduction

Information literacy is a new concept in the information profession. Once called user education or library skills, now the term information literacy or information skills are more normal, according to Debbi and Holloway (2005). Information literacy as we know it today has its origin. First use of the term information literacy is credited to Paul Zurkowski in 1974 who as president of the Information Industry Association (IIA) suggested that people trained in the application of information resources to their works can be called information literate. This means, according to him, is that they have learned the techniques, skills for utilizing the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in moulding information solutions to their problems.

Information literacy according to Armstrong (2005) a member of information literacy group of Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), is defined as the acquired skills to know when and why one needs information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner. This concept by CILIP will form the benchmark for information literacy in this study. The concept affords the researcher the ability to search appropriate resources effectively and identify relevant information. These competencies/skills above have been further explained in details by CILIP (2005) who outlined eight constructs of information literacy. According to them understanding a need for information involves recognizing that information is needed, understanding why it is needed, what kind of and how much information is required as well as any associated constraints.

The second competency/skill which is an understanding of the available resources, requires the individual to be able to identify what resource (paper, electronic/digital, human) are available for exploitation, where they are available, how to access them, the merit of individual resource type and when it is appropriate to use them.

Closely following the above skill is an understanding of how to find information. This competence involves an ability to search appropriate resources (paper, electronic/digital, human etc) effectively and identify relevant information. Strategies need to be tailored to the resource being used, so as to get the best results from that resource, users need to respond to search results possibly because there are too few or too many and know when to stop searching. An information-literate person would also understand that, in addition to purposive search, information can be acquired by browsing, scanning and monitoring information sources.

The fourth competence/skill is an understanding of the need to evaluate results. It requires the ability to evaluate information for its authenticity, accuracy, currency, value and bias. Also the skill involves the ability to evaluate the means by which the results were obtained in order to ensure that individual approach does not produce misleading and incomplete results. This is not just whether the resource appears to answer the question, but whether it is intrinsically trustworthy.

Another literacy skill is an understanding of how to work with and exploit results. The skill requires the individual to be able to analyze the information to provide accurate, presentable research result or to develop new knowledge and understanding. This involves the ability to understanding, compare and apply the information found.

The sixth competence involves an understanding of the ethic and responsibility of use of information. Here the individual is expected to know why information should be used in a responsible, culturally sensitive and

ethical manner. Respecting confidentiality and also giving credit to other people's work. Understanding the nature and use of bias in order to produce appropriate and unbiased report. This could include issues of intellectual property, plagiarism, unfair practice, fair use etc.

Another skill is an understanding of how to communicate or share your finding. This skill requires the ability to communicate/share information in a manner or format that is appropriate to the information, the intended audience and situation.

Finally, is the understanding of how to manage your findings. This competence involves the knowledge of how to store and manage the information you have acquire using the most effective method available. Reflecting critically on the process and achievements as well as the source found in order to learn from the experience of finding and using information.

The need for information literacy has increased tremendously. According to Wilson (2001), this is not unconnected with the exponential growth in information resulting from digital information and the new focus of learning in a life-long context. According to him the need to find, evaluate and make effective use of information has always been with us, however, with increased understanding of the learning process and Internet access to unedited works, the academic in Nigerian universities are faced with diverse and abundant information choices in the academic works.

For information literacy to be properly assessed, James Madison university (Wisesl@jmu.edu) has classified the measure into four levels, of very high, high, low and very low. This was used successfully to assess ACRI information literacy standard for higher education.

According to Ochai and Nwafor (1990) academics the world over place emphasis on research and publication because of their strong belief that research enhances teaching and the learning process as well as contribute to the body of knowledge. This according to them is the essence of university

education. The academic productivity is therefore measured by the index or competencies of academic productivity which are outlined by Academic Analytics to include;

How many books written

How many journal articles written

How many grants won

How many time publication have been cited

How many awards won/<http://www.acadmicanalytics.com>)

This outlined academic productivity index was used in this research as a base for academic productivity.

Library and information professionals have long recognized the need to help users develop good information skills and this has become all the more crucial now that these users are turning increasingly to the Internet to support their information seeking. Poulter, Debra and Menemy (2005).

For Etim (2007) information literacy has to do with the ability to recognize when information is needed and how to locate, evaluate effectively use and communicate information in its various formats

While developing a new curriculum for students Irving and Crowford (2006) argued that there was the need to demonstrate a link between information literacy and cohesion and progression for information literacy to be considered as part of the new curriculum. In their opinion:

We need to clarify the confusion about study skills, library skills, information skills, information handling skills, information literacy p38.

According to Riedling (2004) to understand information literacy more thoroughly, you, as the school library media specialist, should become familiar with key terms that relate to information literacy:

Collaboration: To work jointly with others, especially in an intellectual endeavor.

The American Library Association (ALA) (1989) gave the following

description to an information literate person.

To be information literate a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use efficiently the information needed... Ultimately information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how information is organized, how to find information, how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. P.21

Doyle (1992) defined information literacy as "the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources". Holloway, Doyle and Linday (1997) added to the above definition by saying that "Information literacy is best thought of as a verb, a way of doing information. Then they translate the notion of a verb into the area of telecommunications. By stating that Information literacy in telecommunications is achieved when learners know when to use on-line resources, how to access information competently, how to evaluate information for accuracy and significance and how to use this information to communicate effectively. Learners who are able to do this have life long skills to meet the challenges of the information age.

All the efforts in the establishment of Institutions of higher learning were aimed primarily to develop high level manpower to take care of the needs of the country. This is also to ensure productivity in both industries and academic. This is in line with this study which looks at the academic productivity of our academics.

The need for academic productivity as a pre-requisite for academic excellence in our universities is not in doubt. Ochai and Nwafor (1990) as cited in Madu (2005), the issue of academic productivity is taken for granted. According to them the academics the world over, place emphasis on research and publication because of their strong belief that research enhances teaching

and the learning process as well as contributing to the body of knowledge. They concluded that academic productivity as expressed in research not only determines the prestige of the universities concerned but also the academics in enhancing their positions. Authorship therefore helps the academic staff in not only enhancing their positions but also in that of the prestige of the institutions they represent. This is in the with the position of this studies which seeks to correlate information literacy with academic productivity.

On the decline of academic productivity, Omolewa (2005), lamented the danger this poses to the nation, the system and the individual. According to him our professors are now “being accused of being local professors who are hardly known outside their institutions and are not recognized for the quality of their knowledge or contribution to creative thought or scholarship”. This is no doubt an ugly trend that needs to be reversed.

Looking at academic productivity from another angle, Banet-Weiser (2009) critically examined the issue of gender and came up with issues that according to her could cause disparity in academic productivity level between the male and female academics. According to Banet-weiser (2009) gender inequity in academia, involves what might be termed “extra-curricular pressure”. She went further to explain that;

Female faculty are often over loaded
With student advising duties and
Frequently juggle pressure of family
And mother hood in university setting.
www.usc.edu/academe/acesn/res.

Statement of the Problem

Most universities the world over are founded on the concept of service to man, primarily to meet the development needs of the society. This is done through a systematic approach to research as knowledge acquired is subjected

to constant questioning and evaluation, and used in the acquiring of further knowledge. To achieve the above academics must be information literates. Research therefore is sine-qua-non, hence this study aims at investigating the influence of information literacy on academic productivity among the academic staff in the Universities, in the North central Geopolitical zone of Nigerian.

Studies by Mabawonku (2005) and Aina (2005) have shown that the contribution of Nigerian academics to the international scholarly community is low. Mabawonku(2005), using the National Universities Commission (NUC) criteria for standard to assess academic productivity in Nigeria, argued that many of the publications from the academics would not meet the NUC standard. A study by Aina (2005) has also revealed that Nigerian publications make very little impact on the international scholarly scene. This according to him could be tied to the lack of visibility which decreases input.

The problem of low productivity especially in international journals as is now rampant in some universities has adversely affected the promotion of Nigerian academics; for instance, at the University of Ibadan about 50% of the academic staff could not be promoted in the last two annual promotion exercises. This low level of academic productivity has also affected Nigerian Universities in the rankings by web popularity (www.4icu.org). For instance, in the ranking of first 100 top universities and colleges in Africa, only two Nigerian Universities, Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Ibadan, out of about one hundred universities in the country, came distant 47 and 58 respectively.

The implication of all this is that the universities may not be able to meet its primary objective which is the developmental need of the society. With low quality research output, the application of research outcome for development suffers greatly.

In view of this therefore, what is the level of information literacy and

academic productivity possessed by academic staff in North central geographical zone of Nigeria, this is the central focus of attention of this study.

Objective of the study

Basically, this study addressed two main objectives

- a. Assess the level of information literacy competencies possessed by the academic staff of the universities under study.
- b. Determine the level of productivity by academic staff in the universities under study.

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study.

- a. What is the level of the information literacy competencies possessed by the academic staff of the universities
- b. What is the level of academic productivity by academic staff in Nigeria universities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a survey research design, since a large number of people is involved in the study. Marshall (1997) and Fraenkle and Wallen (1993) have recommended the survey method when information is to be gathered from a large number of people. The population of this study comprise 2810 academic staff in the 12 universities in North central geopolitical zone made up of three private, five state and four Federal universities. A total of 421 academic staff from 6 universities were involved as sample for this study. The sample was composed through a muti-stage sampling technique using proportionate stratified random sampling.

TABLE 1
LIST OF UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONES OF NIGERIA.

S/N	NAME	STATUS
1.	Al-Hikmah University Ilorin	Private
2.	Benue State University, Makurdi	State
3.	Bingham University, New Karu, Nassarawa	Private
4.	Federal University of Agriculture Markurdi	Federal
5.	Federal University Technology, Minna	Federal
6.	IBB University, Lapai	State
7.	Kwara State University	State
8.	Kogi State University Ayangba	State
9.	Nassarawa State University, Keffi	State
10.	Salem University, Lokoja	Private
11.	University of Ilorin Ilorin	Federal
12.	University of Jos, Jos	Federal

TABLE 2 **DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE**

UNIVERSITY	TOTAL	SAMPLE (15%)
PRIVATE	220	33
Al-Hikman University Ilorin		
Salem University, Lokoja	135	20
STATE		
Benue State University, Makurdi	325	49
Nassarawa State University, Keffi	430	64
FEDERAL	780	117
Federal University of Technology Minna		
University of Jos	920	138
	2810	421

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ION OF SAMPLE

	TOTAL	SAMPLE (15%)
	220	33
	135	20
	325	49
	430	64
	780	117
na	920	138
	2810	421

frequency, the mean score and percentage). This dealt with the method and technique of summarizing and describing information (data).

PRESENTATION OF DATA

RESEARCH QUESTION I

What is the level (very low, low, high and very high) of the information literacy competencies possessed by the academic staff of the universities?

A standard information literacy test called James Madison University information literacy competency test was used for this test. This test was developed using the constructs of information literacy competencies as it appears in the curriculum of James Madison University. The 40 items in the test were scored over 100%. The respondents were grouped based on their performance of very high (VH), high (H), low (L), and very low (VL). A score of 81% and above is very high VH, 50 to 69% is high, 30% to 49% is low (L) while 29% and below is very low (VL).

TABLE 3. Academic Staff Information Literacy Competency Levels

Levels	Frequency	Percent
0 - 40 (Very Low)	39	17.2
41 - 60 (Low)	128	56.4
60 - 80 (High)	60	26.4
81 - 100 (Very High)	0	.0

The result in table 3 above indicated that the largest percentage (56.4%) of the academic staff possessed low level of information literacy competency. This was followed by those with high level of information literacy competency as indicated by 26.4% of the respondents. Very low score was indicated by 17.2% of the respondents while very high was not indicated at all. There is therefore no respondent with very high level of information literacy competency.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What is the level (very low (VL) low (L) high (h) very high (VH) of academic staff productivity in the Nigerian Universities under study?.

The above research question sought to determine the level of Productivity by academic staff in the universities under study. An Academic Productivity Index was used as an instrument to elicit information on what constitute academic productivity. Such index according to Academic Analytic includes how many books published, how many journals articles written, how many grants won, how many times publications have been cited and how many awards won. Here the academic staff were scored over 100%. The respondent were grouped based on their performance of below 40 (very low productivity), 41 to 60 (low productivity), 61-80 (high productivity), and 81 and above (very high productivity).