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Assessment of Levels Computer Literacy Skills of library Personnel in University Libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract

The focus of this study was Assessment of levels Computer Literacy Skills of library Personnel in University Libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria. This is of interest as the present information environment in University libraries requires that, librarians and library officers are skilled in Computer literacy to delivery effective information services that meet users' needs and satisfaction. In order to meet its objectives, descriptive survey method was used. The target population for the study consisted of 319 library personnel (166 librarians and 153 library officers) from selected seventeen (17) University libraries under study. The entire population of 319 was purposively adopted and used. A self- designed questionnaire was personally administered, out of which 255 (79.9%) were properly filled, returned and used for the study. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Weighted Mean was used to determine the levels of ICT skills acquired by library personnel. Analysis revealed that the levels of computer literacy skills acquired by library personnel for Information service delivery in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria, were generally Low. Researcher recommended among others, that University library management should organize training and re-training for library personnel to improve the levels of computer literacy skills. Library schools should include more ICT components in their curricula and include hand on desk practical in major services expected by library users, this will provide the necessary skills for effective information service delivery by graduates, all things being equal.

Keywords: Computer literacy Skills, University libraries, Library personnel, North-Central Zone, Nigeria., Librarians, Library officers.

Introduction

The present high expectation for effective information service delivery by well informed users of University libraries across the globe has created a lot of pressures on the library personnel to as a matter of necessity be ICT literates. Nwachuku (2005) contended that using

computers to make information accessible and consumable engages diverse skills needs by information professionals, especially librarians. He further opined that computer skills for academic librarians will mean the use of computers for giving service quickly and inexpensively. Computers have enhanced efficiency and librarians must acquire relevant computer skill and competence to make their profession and roles relevant in this information-driven age. Danner and Pessu(2013) opined that today's fast-paced world is becoming increasingly characterized by technology driven communication, which has transformed the world into a large global connected community with ever-increasing outreach of information and communication technology (ICT). Technology plays an increasingly important role in people's lives, and it is envisaged that technological literacy will soon become a functional requirement for people's work, social, and even personal lives.

Similarly, Omolayole (2002) pointed out that when librarians are not computer literate, utilizing the facility would be a problem. In other words, having a good background in computer skill makes the use of computers in work places very practicable. Similarly, Nkanu and Obaje (2005) asserted that when librarians are literate in computer operations, they will be conscious of the fact that the technology driven libraries of today would most likely lead to a situation in which those without technological skills would be rendered redundant. Librarians who are computer literate now perform their role with ease. Meredith (2006) opined that computer skills are not just useful; they are a requirement in today's workplace, which means that today's job seeker needs basic computer literacy skills to be competitive. Not only will computer skills allow job seekers to attain jobs they would otherwise be unqualified for, these same skills are increasingly necessary simply to find a job, as more and more companies post openings online and require potential employees to fill out applications online or use email to send resumes. Computer literacy begins with familiarity with computer components - the computer itself, monitor, mouse and printer. Computer literacy also refers to an ability to navigate and use computer operating systems, such as Windows XP or Windows 7, word processing and spreadsheet programs and email programs among others.

Statement of the Problem

Preliminary investigation carried out by the researcher revealed that University libraries in North-Central Zone, Nigeria, are not well equipped in terms of skilled manpower to effectively and efficiently provide ICT- based information services expected of University libraries of 21st Century. Observation also revealed that most library personnel's knowledge of the Internet use does not seem to extend beyond the sending or receiving e-mail, face book and web searching. Also, A careful perusal of available literature indicates that, on the average, the ICT skills of librarians and library officers are not at the level which could be regarded as 'adequate' in an electronic library environment.

Supporting the researcher's preliminary investigation, Kari(2006) in a study of 100 academic librarians in Nigerian Universities and their attitude to the Internet revealed that most academic librarians' knowledge of the Internet do not extend beyond the basic of e-mail and web searching. Similarly, Safahieh and Asemi (2008) assessed the levels of computer skills and computer use experience of librarians in one of Iranian University. The findings showed that majority of the respondents had not yet possessed a good level of computer skills and even their long duration experience of computer use has not necessarily improved their level of computer literacy skills. Ajidahun (2007) in a related research, found out that out of 276 professional librarians working in 20 University libraries in Nigeria, only 89 (32.24%) of them were computer literate. In addition, results revealed that out of 1,163 staff in other categories in the libraries, only 95 (8.16%) were computer literate. This showed that most of the library personnel in University libraries in Nigeria were not computer literate. A recent study by James (2012) on assessment of computer literacy skills of Librarians in Federal university of technology, owerri revealed that majority of the respondents were not computer literate and also have not acquired enough skill. This study investigates the levels of computer skills of library personnel in the University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria, to validate or invalidate previous findings

Objective of the study

Objective of the Study is to determine the levels of computer literacy skills of library personnel in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The research question is what are the levels of computer literacy skills of library personnel in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria?

Significance of the study

The findings of this study will benefit University librarians in the North-Central Zone, Nigeria, as the level of computer literacy skills of library personnel empirically determined will guide them in areas of training needs. The study will also be useful to Nigeria Library Associations (NLA) in organizing focused ICT training workshops and conferences to bridge the gap in skill deficiencies for quality service delivery. Nigeria library schools will benefit by re-positioning librarianship education and designing a very dynamic curriculum for LIS education and training that will match the skills requirements of the millennium library service. This, on the long run, will benefit graduates from library schools in gaining employment on time, having acquired the necessary computer skills. The significance of this study also lies in its contribution to the existing literature on computer literacy skills of library personnel in University libraries.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on selected seventeen University libraries in the North-Central Zone, Nigeria, covering federal, state and private University libraries. The study investigates the levels of computer literacy skills of librarians and library officers for information service delivery in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The variables investigated are: Ability to install, update and use Microsoft Office, ability to install, update and use Microsoft Office, ability to configure and troubleshoot basic ICT hardware such as computers, printers, ability to install and configure basic operating systems, applications and databases, ability to Select, install and monitor basic ICT security systems including antivirus, ability to use PowerPoint and other ICT related devices to teach information literacy/bibliographic instruction/user education, ability to index, classify, catalogue and use abstract schemes, compilation of bibliographies using computers, ability to charge and discharge library materials at Circulation desk with the use of computers,

Research methodology

Descriptive survey method was used for the study because data were collected so as to describe and interpret the levels of computer literacy skills acquired by library personnel for information service delivery in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria. Survey

research was appropriate because of the large area covered. This method gave a fair chance for every library personnel to be selected. The main research instrument for this study was self-designed questionnaires.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised three hundred and nineteen (319) librarians and library officers in the seventeen (17) selected University libraries (Federal, State and Private) spread across the North-Central Zone, Nigeria. The population of librarians and library officers in the selected University libraries is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Selected Universities from the North-Central Zone, Nigeria

S/N	UNIVERSITY	Year of Establishment	Librarians	Library officers	Total
1	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	1975	15	22	37
2	University of Jos, Jos	1975	22	20	42
3	Federal University of Technology, Minna	1982	28	18	46
4	University of Abuja, Gwagwalada	1988	15	8	23
5	University of Agriculture, Makurdi	1988	13	45	58
6	Benue State University, Makurdi	1992	8	8	16
7	Kogi State University, Anyigba	1999	14	9	23
8	Nasarawa State University, Keffi	2002	5	5	10
9	National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja	2003	4	1	5
10	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	2005	14	5	19
11	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	2005	6	1	7
12	Bingham University, Karu	2005	6	0	6

13	University of Mkar, Mkar	2005	4	6	10
14	Salem University, Lokoja	2007	2	2	4
15	African University of Science and Technology, Abuja	2007	2	0	2
16	Kwara State University, Malete-Ilorin	2009	6	3	9
17	Nigerian Turkish Nile University, Abuja	2009	2	0	2
TOTAL			166	153	319

Source: Field Survey and NUC Bullenn (2012)

Using the purposive sampling technique, the entire population of 166 librarians and 153 library officers was used for this study because it was manageable in terms of accessibility to the target population and cost. According to Afolabi (1999), entire population can be adopted in a study if it is manageable in terms of cost and accessibility to subjects. Hence, a complete census or enumeration of the entire population of all librarians and library officers in the selected seventeen (17) University libraries established before 2010 was considered by the researcher

Data Analysis

Response Rate : A total of 319 questionnaire was distributed to librarians and library officers in the seventeen (17) University libraries in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Out of 319 copies distributed, 255 copies (79.9%) were filled, returned and found usable. The high response rate could be attributed to the self-administration of the instrument by the researcher and the effort of the trained research assistants.

Table 2: Classification of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency (Library Personnel)	Percentage (%)
Male	145	56.9
Female	110	43.1
Total	255	100

The responses in Table2 revealed that out of 255 library personnel, 145 (56.9%) were males while 110 (43.1%) were females. This shows that male and female were well represented in the study.

Table 3: Classification of Respondents by their years of experience on the job

Years of working experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	88	34.5
6-10 years	105	41.2
11-15 years	35	13.7
16-20 years	7	2.7
Above 20 years	20	7.8
Total	255	100

Table 3 revealed that majority 192(75.7%) of the respondents had between 6 and 10 years working experience, this is followed by respondents who had between 1 and 5 years working experience, the respondents who had working experience between 11 and 15 years (13.7%), above 20years (7.8%), and between 16 and 20years (2.7) followed respectively. This shows that many library personnel had working experience of not more than 10years; hence skills acquisition opportunities could be utilized to improve information service delivery. It revealed also, that University libraries have few long-years working experienced library personnel. These personnel were more grounded in the traditional library services than ICT based services.

Table 4: Classification of Respondents by their highest academic qualification

Highest Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma certificate (DLS)	76	29.8
Bachelor Degree (BLS, BSc)	112	43.9

Master Degree (MLS)	60	23.5
PhD	7	2.7
Total	255	100

The table 4 revealed that majority of library personnel, 112 (43.9%) obtained BLS or B.Sc, this is followed by diploma certificate holders 76 (29.8%), personnel with MLS and PhD are 60(23.5%) and 7(2.7%) respectively. This shows a bright future for University libraries as 172 (67.4%) library personnel were holders of BLS/B.Sc or MLS. These categories are movers of innovations if given the necessary supports and training in ICT skills. The personnel with PhD are few: this is not unconnected with the fact that, as soon as a librarian obtains this qualification, to avoid stagnation he or she moves to a library school to lecture in order to progress professionally to a professorial cadre.

Research Question: What are the levels of computer literacy skills of library personnel in the University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria? The analysis that revealed the answers is presented in table 5 below.

Table 5: Levels of Computer Literacy Skills of Library Personnel

Computer Literacy skills		Level of Computer Literacy Skills Acquired by Library Personnel of University Libraries of North Central Zone, Nigeria											Mean	Remark
		NS		LS		AS		HS		VHS				
S	N	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	F	Q			
1	Ability to install, update and use Microsoft Office	6	2.4	37	14.5	85	33.3	105	41.2	2	2	8.6	3.39	Majority have High Skill
2	Ability to configure and troubleshoot basic ICT hardware such as computers, printers	24	9.4	73	28.6	110	43.1	33	12.9	1	5	5.9	2.2	Majority Have Average Skill
3	Ability to Install and configure basic operating systems, applications and databases	92	36.1	101	39.6	53	20.8	4	1.6	5	2.0	1.94	Majority have low Skill	
4	Ability to Select, Install and monitor basic ICT security systems including antivirus	62	24.3	126	49.4	51	20.0	10	3.9	6	2.4	1.87	Majority have Low Skill	
5	Ability to use PowerPoint and other ICT related devices to teach information literacy/bibliographic instruction/user education	39	15.3	56	22.0	105	41.2	44	17.3	1	1	4.3	2.1	Majority have Average skill
6	Ability to index, classify, catalogue and use abstract schemes, compilation of bibliographies using computers	148	58.0	75	29.4	28	11.0	4	1.6	-	-	1.56	Majority have No skill	
7	Ability to charge and discharge materials at	132	52.2	102	40.0	15	5.9	5	2.0	-	-	1.58	Majority have No skill	

Circulation desk with the use of computers.											
Average Level of Computer Literacy skills of Library Personnel	72	28.2	81	31.8	64	25.1	29	11.4	9	3.5	Weighted Mean 2.09 (Low Skills)

Key: NS= No Skill, LS= Low Skill, AS= Average Skill, HS = High Skill, VHS= Very high Skill

The responses in Table 5 revealed that most of the library personnel 105(41.2%) have High skill in ability to install, update and use of Microsoft office, 110(43.1%) have Average skill to configure and troubleshoot basic ICT hardware and 105(41.2%) have Average skill to use PowerPoint and other ICT related devices for user education and information literacy. Also, most of the library personnel 101(39.6%) have Low skill in ability to install and configure basic operating systems and 126(49.4%) have Low skill in ability to install and monitor basic ICT security systems. Most of the library personnel 148(58%) and 133(52.2%) have no skills in ability to index, classify, catalogue using computers and no skill to charge and discharge library materials at circulation desk with the use of Computers respectively .

On the average, 72 (28.2%) of library personnel have No skills, 81(31.8%) have Low skills, 64(25.1%) have Average skills, 29(11.4%) have High skills and 9(3.5%) have Very high skills in computer literacy skills. The combination of library personnel that have No skills and low skills is 153(60.0%). This implies that majority of library personnel in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria, were not skilled in computer literacy useful for information service delivery. The computer literacy skills acquired mostly by library personnel were the use of Microsoft Office with mean of 3.39. The bench mark is mean of 5. Means below 2.5 are considered unskilled. Ability to troubleshoot computers, printers and use PowerPoint followed with means of 2.2 and 2.1 respectively. Generally, the level of computer literacy skills of library personnel in University libraries of North-Central Zone, Nigeria is Low with weighted mean of 2.09 below average.

Discussion of Results

The result of this study agrees with Kari(2006) that most academic librarians' knowledge of the Internet do not extend beyond the basic of e-mail and web searching as well as Safahieh and Asemi (2008) where the findings showed that majority of the respondents had not yet possessed a good level of computer skills and even their long duration experience of computer use has not necessarily improved their level of computer literacy skills. The finding is also in line with Ajidahun (2007)where the researcher found out that out of 276 professional librarians working in 20 University libraries in Nigeria, only 89 (32.24%) of them were computer literate and out of 1,163 staff in other categories in the libraries, only 95 (8.16%) were computer literate. The finding supports a recent study by James (2012) on assessment of computer literacy skills of Librarians in Federal university of technology, owerri, which revealed that majority of the respondents, were not computer literate and also have not acquired enough skill.

Conclusion and recommendation

The research has shown that majority of library personnel in University libraries of Nigeria were skilled in computer literacy. It is recommended that intensive training and re-training of library personnel on regular basis is necessary to improve the levels of computer skills. Library schools graduating both Diploma and Degree programmes should include in their curricula ICT-based skills to equip graduates with the necessary skills for today's library service challenge.

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