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INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCE OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN ANSWERING USERS QUERIES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Information literacy competency is an essential skill needed by all library personnel in rendering their services efficiently and effectively. This study examines the information literacy competence of library personnel on answering users' queries in selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria for the study. Data were obtained through the use of structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that "How to access library resources and services" ($\bar{x} = 4.63$) was ranked highest by the mean score and was followed in succession by "Locating material in the library and beyond (using other libraries, interlibrary loans)" ($\bar{x} = 4.38$), the challenges encountered by library personnel on answering users' queries in selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria. "Lack of periodic training on information literacy skills" ($\bar{x} = 2.62$), It was therefore recommended that there should be sponsorship to attend workshop and conferences, both local and foreign in order to increase library personnel's skills in answering users' queries, and that latest information technology should be used by library personnel on answering users' queries.

Keywords: Information Literacy Competence; Library Personnel; Users Queries; University Library; Nigeria.

Introduction

Libraries are established in the universities to cater for the information needs of students, staff and other members of the community. They are to collect, organize, preserve and disseminate information to their users. The libraries therefore, play a supportive role in their parent

institutions. Adeyoyin (2011) stated that the main function of a university library is to support the teaching, learning, and research activities of the parent institution. In order to do this effectively, these libraries provide their users with current and updated information resources. The information resources are made accessible through cataloguing, technical and indexing services provided by the library. Library personnel should be able to perform to expectations in any given task to be able to meet the needs of library users. They must possess one major skill, which is information literacy competence to perform effectively their assigned tasks.

The provision of accurate and necessary information to answer particular queries of library users cannot be actualized without the library personnel acquiring good information literacy competences. In line with the above, Alberta Education (2010) stated that competency entails knowledge, skills and attitude that are drawn upon and applied to information literacy context. Based on this assertion, competency therefore, has to do with knowledge, skills and attitudes towards recognising when and why information is needed, where to find and access it, how to evaluate and synthesize information and the need to use and communicate it morally and legally. Library personnel are expected to possess all these attributes. According to Julien and Pecoskie (2011), library personnel have a long tradition of offering bibliographic instruction but more recently they have expanded their instructional role to include information literacy competence. This role is important in answering users' queries and meeting their diverse needs on daily basis. Users' queries often come in different forms and at different times and library personnel are expected to be readily prepared to handle them satisfactorily. Thus, in addition to the academic and professional qualifications, library personnel need to possess high level of information literacy competency (Kumar, 2013). This entails demonstrating a mastery over their ability to define information needs, seek and access information from various sources, identify those that are relevant and create an information product useful to complete a given task. Hence, information literacy competence is therefore a core value for library personnel, especially as it seems to have effects on their professional responsibility in terms of answering users' queries (Issa, Amusan, Olarongbe, Igwe and Oguntayo,2015).

Statement of the problem

These sections of the library, the Readers services, the automation/e-library, serials are expected to be manned by staff who possess personal as well as professional skills, which is information

literacy competence in order to effectively handle various queries presented by the users. Unfortunately, it has been observed that some staff (library personnel) who are expected to offer these services do not seem to possess the required skills (information literacy competence) that could enable them to attend to the needs of the users effectively. Lack of adequate capacity for information literacy competence skills among library personnel has the tendency of hampering the effectiveness of the services rendered to users which are based on users' queries. It is against this background that this study investigated the information literacy competence of library personnel in answering users' queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria. Based on this, the following research questions were asked:

1. What is the level of information literacy competence of library personnel in the selected university libraries in Nigeria?
2. How do library personnel answer users' queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria.
3. What are the challenges hindering library personnel in answering users' queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Information literacy competency is essential to future success and task accomplishment among library personnel and information professionals. It is on this note that Rockman, (2010) reiterated that information literacy in the 21st century brings about efficient technical manpower that promote attitudinal change towards the industries and deep an individual involved on commitment to excellence. He stated that what is needed in the information industries such as the libraries are people who know how to analyze, create, effectively convey information and who understand how to use information to bring real value to everything they embark on (Rockman, 2010). American Library Association (ALA) (2000) highlighted the importance of information literacy among library staff to include the ability to have access to information with easy. The library staff needs to be skilled in information literacy in order to meet uses queries because if they failed to do this they may discourage users from using university libraries.

This has become necessary due to the fact that students and other library users will come-up with different queries that are expected to be answered by the library personnel, then it is becomes

imperative for the library personnel to provide answer users' queries. Based on this it is expedient for library personnel to have necessary skills and information literacy competency that will make them to be more resourceful.

The fact that the library personnel have the mandate to meet users needs and satisfied users' queries. Speaking on the influence of self-efficacy, Lyczkowska (2014) affirmed that library staff who possesses high level of self-efficacy and information literacy competence take better care of their responsibility in the library. The American Library Association (1995) (ALA) code of ethics, stressed that library personnel should provide accurate timely and relevant information to their users.

Cassell (2013) pointed out that information services is necessary and at the same time assisting library users to identify sources of information in response to a particular question, interest, assignment or problem. The American Library Association defines reference transactions as information consultation in which library staff are recommend, interpret, evaluates, and/or use information resources to help users in meeting their information needs. This can be done through telephone, email, and virtual reference technologies. Cassell (2013) argues that library staff in developed countries create websites and provide archives in order to answer users' queries. The essence of this is to satisfy users by providing relevant answers to their questions and at the same time to make them search for information independently. All efforts are designed to anticipate users questions and assist them to find information independently. Traditional reference desk service continue to be highly valued by users, while self-efficacy is one's belief in his/her ability to succeed in specific situation. It also provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. People have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties unless they believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire (Pajares, 2009). Dubicki (2013) asserted that the primary goal of empowering and equipping library personnel is to develop information literacy in order to meet users' needs and enable them to make informed decisions. According to Curzon (2012;29) "Information literacy supports critical thinking since it emphasizes assessing search results for quality and relevance, and evaluating information choices for reliability, validity, authority, and timeliness before making judgments based upon them". Similarly, Newton (2010) submitted that information literacy knowledge has to do with knowing the need for information; the resources

available to the seeker for how to find information; the need to evaluate results; how to work with or exploit results; the ethics and responsibility of using information; how to communicate and share research finding(s); and how to manage research findings.

Anyaoku, et al., (2015) posited that information literacy training has become an important role for library personnel in the 21st century. However, to function effectively as information literacy instructors, library personnel and librarians need to have good perceptions towards the services rendered and also possess the requisite skills to pass on information, more so that information influences every economic sector and affects every individual in all stages of life (Stock, 2013).

Weiner (2011) in a review of information literacy on the workforce revealed multiple reasons for its importance to library personnel. These reasons include: library staff abilities to create, summarise, recommend library resources to users and at the same time meeting users need in respect to their queries. Therefore, there is a need for library personnel in academic libraries to be information literate to be able to seek, assess and use information to answer users' queries.

Ojedokun (2011) identified some challenges faced by library personnel which hinders effective utilization of the library and their ability in answering users queries. These problem include inadequate funding, inadequate staffing, communication problems due to distance, insufficient communication between academic departments and library personnel, distant learners lack of information literacy skills, inadequate copies of library materials for distant and residential students, lack of enabling infrastructure including information technology infrastructure, lack of knowledge of information packaging, lack of information literacy competence as discussed earlier, poor internet connectivity among others.

The gap between library personnel and library users' understandings of the library is largely based on library personnel's lack of knowledge of what library users do and need when they visit the library. It is also based on the fact that the capacity of library service and competence that are offered by the library is not completely known to its users. Based on this, the study tends to investigate the information literacy competence of library personnel in meeting users queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Survey research was adopted for this study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The population of this study comprised library personnel both professionals and para-professionals that attend to users in selected university libraries in Nigeria. Purposive sampling was used to select twenty university libraries for the study. The university libraries were selected based on the fact that they have the necessary infrastructure, information resources and organizational policies that promote and enhance information literacy. Total enumeration method was used for the study in which one hundred and ninety five (195) library personnel in the selected university libraries were used for the study. The population of the study is presented in Table 3.1.

The justifications for using total enumeration was based on the assertion of Farooq (2013) that total enumeration method should be used particularly when the population is not large. In addition, the method permits an in-depth study of the population for accuracy in data collection. Considering the small population of the study, this method becomes imperative. However, out of the 195 copies of questionnaire distributed one hundred and sixty nine (169) personnel responded to the questionnaire which represents 86.6%

Table 1.0: Library personnel that attend to users' queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria

S/N	NAMES OF INSTITUTION	LIBRARIANS	LIBRARY OFFICERS	TOTAL	RESPONSE RATE
1	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB)	15	9	24	19
2	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	12	6	18	16
3	Lead City University, Ibadan	6	2	8	7
4	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	30	28	58	52
5	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH),	10	5	15	12

	Ogbomoso				
6	Tai-Solarin University of Education, I-Ode	5	7	12	10
7	BABCOCK University, Ilishan	7	3	10	8
8	Adetokunbo University, Sagamu	2	-	2	2
9	Crescent University, Abeokuta	2	3	5	5
10	Covenant University, Ota	8	3	11	9
11	Bells University of Technology, Ota	5	-	5	5
12	Crawford University, Igbesa,	4	-	4	4
13	Mountain top University, Mowe	3	-	3	3
14	Mcpherson University, Ajebo	2	-	2	2
15	Christopher University, Mowe	2	1	3	3
16	Kola Daisi University, Ibadan	2	1	3	2
17	Dominican University, Ibadan	3	-	3	3
18	Ajay iCrowther University, Oyo	3	2	5	3
19	Southwestern University, Okuowa, Remo	2	-	2	2
20	Hallmark University, Ijebu Itele	2	-	2	2
	Total	125	70	195	169

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

1. What is the level of information literacy competence of library personnel in the selected

Table 2.0: Information literacy competence of library personnel

s/n	Items	SD	D	A	SA	\bar{x}	S.D
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1	Ability to identify the general purpose of information for a task given	-	2	48	119	3.69	0.49
			(1.22)	(28.41)	(70.41)		
2	Ability to use search engines like Google and databases to locate information	-	7	60	102	3.56	0.58
			(4.12)	(35.52)	(60.42)		
3	Ability to formulate questions which will guide the task given	-	2	73	94	3.54	0.52
			(1.22)	(43.22)	(55.63)		
4	Ability to use several sources to increase familiarity with the subject of the task	-	5	70	94	3.53	0.56
			(3.02)	(41.43)	(55.63)		
5	Ability to use encyclopedia and other reference resources to gather background information	-	6	70	93	3.51	0.57
			(3.62)	(41.43)	(55.04)		
6	Ability to use library catalogues effectively	1	5	75	88	3.48	0.59
			(0.63)	(3.04)	(44.43)	(52.13)	
7	Ability to formulate right keywords such as author, title and subject in searching for information	1	7	71	90	3.48	0.61
			(0.64)	(4.14)	(42.03)	(53.34)	
8	Ability to evaluate prints resources using the acceptable criteria	5	9	56	99	3.47	0.73
			(3.03)	(5.33)	(33.13)	(58.64)	
9	Ability to use the collected information in a legally accepted	2	12	60	95	3.47	0.68
			(1.24)	(7.13)	(35.53)	(56.24)	

manner

10	Ability to use abstracting and indexing databases to find information	1 (0.64)	7 (4.14)	80 (47.33)	81 (47.91)	3.43	0.60
11	Ability to evaluate information resources irrespective of the sources	4 (2.43)	9 (5.34)	67 (39.62)	89 (52.71)	3.43	0.70
12	Ability to evaluate information resources based on authority , accuracy and relevance	7 (4.14)	8 (4.74)	62 (36.73)	92 (54.41)	3.41	0.77
13	Ability to use appropriate presentation software to present information	4 (2.43)	11 (6.53)	68 (40.22)	86 (50.93)	3.40	0.72
14	Ability to analyze the collected information	3 (1.83)	13 (7.74)	68 (40.23)	85 (50.33)	3.39	0.71
15	Ability to develop new knowledge and understanding from collected information	4 (2.43)	12 (7.14)	69 (40.81)	84 (49.73)	3.38	0.72
16	Ability to carry out search using Boolean operators or ,and not	4 (2.43)	15 (8.91)	72 (42.61)	78 (46.23)	3.33	0.74
17	Ability to use acceptable writing and citation styles to present results	6 (3.65)	13 (7.74)	72 (42.63)	78 (46.22)	3.31	0.77

Weighted mean=3.46

Key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3= Agree (A), 4= Strongly Agree (SA)

The table shows the information literacy competence of library personnel in the selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria. “Ability to identify the general purpose of information for a task given” ($\bar{x} = 3.69$) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by “Ability to use search engines like Google and databases to locate information resources” ($\bar{x} = 3.56$). Inference to be drawn from the expression is that library personnel are competent as far as information literacy is concerned.

Research question 2

How do the library personnel answers users’ queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria.

Patterns of answering users’ queries by library personnel in university libraries

s/n	Items	N	R	S	W	AE	\bar{x}	S.D
1	Accessing library resources and services	1 (0.61)	1 (0.61)	14 (8.32)	28 (16.62)	125 (74.01)	4.63	0.71
2	Locating material in the library and beyond (using other libraries, interlibrary loans)	2 (1.22)	2 (1.22)	21 (12.44)	48 (28.43)	96 (56.83)	4.38	0.84
3	Guidance on the use of information resources (catalogues, database and electronic resources)	3 (1.82)	3 (1.82)	21 (12.43)	42 (24.93)	100 (59.22)	4.38	0.90

4	Information on services offered by the library	3	1	19	53	93	4.37	0.84
		(1.82)	(0.62)	(11.23)	(31.43)	(55.02)		
5	Reference assistance	2	5	23	48	91	4.31	0.90
		(1.23)	(3.03)	(13.63)	(28.42)	(53.82)		
6	Instruction in the use of library resources and services	1	4	24	56	84	4.29	0.84
		(0.63)	(2.42)	(14.21)	(33.11)	(49.73)		
7	Directional queries and services (where users ask for direction or location)	-	3	29	59	78	4.25	0.80
			(1.82)	(17.23)	(34.93)	(46.22)		
8	User guidance (where users are guided in selecting the most appropriate information resources and services)	2	6	25	50	86	4.25	0.92
		(1.22)	(3.62)	(14.82)	(29.63)	(50.93)		
9	Bibliographic instruction	1	2	37	50	79	4.21	0.87
		(0.63)	(1.23)	(21.92)	(29.63)	(46.72)		
10	Guiding users on assignment and other inter library loan services	3	5	31	48	82	4.19	0.96
		(1.83)	(3.01)	(18.32)	(28.42)	(48.52)		

Weighted mean= 4.33

Key:1= Never (N), 2= Rarely (R), 3= Sometimes (S), 4= Weekly (W), 5= Almost every day (AE).

The above table shows how library personnel answer users' queries in selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria. It was observed that the respondents answer users queries by accessing library resources and services" ($\bar{x} = 4.63$) which was ranked highest by the

mean score and was followed in succession by “Locating material in the library and beyond (using other libraries, interlibrary loans)” ($\bar{x} = 4.38$). Conclusively, library personnel answers users’ queries in selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo States, Nigeria by accessing library resources and services, locating materials in the library, using the appropriate database, using directional queries and services among others.

Research Question 3

What are the challenges hindering library personnel in answering users’ queries in selected university libraries in Nigeria?

Table 4.0: Challenges hindering answering users’ queries

s/n	Items	NC	LC	S	VS	\bar{x}	S.D
1	Lack of sponsorship to attend workshop and seminars that will enhance my knowledge.	32 (18.92)	28 (16.61)	40 (23.72)		2.86	1.15
2	Lack of periodic training on information literacy skills	35 (20.72)	40 (23.71)	48 (28.43)	46 (27.23)	2.62	1.10
3	Not having adequate practical knowledge	55 (32.53)	27 (16.04)	54 (32.02)	33 (19.54)	2.38	1.13
4	Information explosion and overload	49 (29.03)	42 (24.93)	48 (28.43)	30 (17.82)	2.35	1.08
5	Users ability to express their needs	52 (30.82)	40 (23.73)	51 (30.22)	26 (15.43)	2.30	1.07
6	Lack of confidence in information professionals	63	34	44	28	2.22	1.12

		(37.33)	(20.13)	(26.04)	(16.63)		
7	Frequent change in technology	62	37	45	25	2.20	1.09
		(36.73)	(21.91)	(26.63)	(14.84)		
8	Lack of knowledge of search techniques to retrieve information effectively	79	21	27	42	2.19	1.26
		(46.74)	(12.44)	(16.04)	(24.94)		
9	Too much time required to explore the information resources	79	23	43	24	2.07	1.14
		(46.72)	(13.62)	(25.42)	(14.23)		
10	Difficulty in accessing and using the internet	82	38	37	12	1.88	0.99
		(48.54)	(22.54)	(21.91)	(7.14)		

Weighted mean=2.31

Key: 1= Not a challenge (NC), 2= Less Challenge (LC), 3= Serious (S), 4= Very Serious (VS)

The table above shows the challenges hindering library personnel in answering users' queries in selected university libraries in Ogun and Oyo state, Nigeria. "Lack of sponsorship to attend workshop and seminars to acquire skills" ($\bar{x} = 2.86$) was ranked highest by the mean score. This was followed by "Lack of periodic training on information literacy skills" ($\bar{x} = 2.62$), "Not having adequate practical knowledge" ($\bar{x} = 2.38$), "Information explosion and overload" ($\bar{x} = 2.35$). Inference to be drawn from the expression is that the main challenges of solving users' queries are: lack of sponsorship to attend workshop and seminars, lack of periodic training on information literacy skills, not having adequate practical knowledge and information explosion and overload.

Discussion and findings

One of the findings of the study revealed that there is a high level of information literacy competence among library personnel in selected university libraries. This supports the finding of Kurbanoglu (2016) among library personnel in the republic of Czech. Also, Tella, Ayeni and Omooba (2007) in a similar study in Nigeria revealed that there is high level of competency of information literacy level among library personnel in selected university libraries in Nigeria. Various studies that corroborated the finding of the study include Osunrinde, Adejiya and Adeyemo (2002), Lent , Lopez and Beischile (1993), Pajares and Johnson (1996) and Pajares (2002).

In addition, another finding of the study identified the various ways in which library personnel meet the users queries through the following ways which include accessing library resources and services, assisting users in locating materials , teaching them on how to use database and using directional queries and services among others. This finding corroborated the finding of Durodolu (2018) in a similar research among teacher–librarians in South Africa. It was revealed that library personnel assist users to seek for information in the libraries. In addition, the finding of the research affirmed the finding of Du and Evans (2011) on ways in which library personnel assist the users in Australia. It was revealed that the library personnel assist users through location of library materials, teaching them how to use database and reference materials. Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) conducted a similar study in Benin, Nigeria. The finding supported the finding of the study. In addition, Weaver (2012) indicates that library personnel in Canada effectively meet the users need because they have high level of competence particularly in the use of computer and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools.

The study shows the main challenges of answering users' queries to include: lack of sponsorship to attend workshop and seminars, lack of periodic training on information literacy skills, not having adequate practical knowledge and information explosion and overload. This finding supported the finding of Newton (2005) that the challenges faced from his findings include lack of institutional information literacy policy and support to drive information literacy, among others. Furthermore, the issue of lack of sponsorship to attend workshops and seminars and lack of periodic training on information literacy skills are major challenges in most universities as it deprive and hinders productivity of library personnel as the personnel who needed to be updated

in their day-to-day task of answering users' queries and the required professionalism may also be missing in discharging their duties. In addition, lack of sponsorship to attend trainings and workshops was identified as the major hindrance facing the library personnel in developing effective self-efficacy and relevant information literacy competence in meeting users' needs. This finding corroborated the finding of Omosor (2014) in a study carried out in Benin, it was revealed that inadequate training is a challenge that is facing library personnel in developing necessary information skills that can assist them in meeting users' needs. Also, the finding of the study supported the finding of Abban (2018) in two universities in Ghana. The finding affirmed that inadequate training is the major hindrance facing library personnel in developing necessary self-efficacy and relevant information skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The library personnel need necessary information literacy skills and high level of self-efficacy that can permit them to meet the needs of their users with ease. Various ways in which library personnel can meet users' queries include the following: assisting them in accessing library resources and services, locating materials in the library, using the appropriate database, using directional queries and services among others. Inadequate training is the major challenge facing the library personnel in developing their self-efficacy and information skills? Based on the findings, the study recommends that there is a need for library management to expose the staff to various training on librarianship; this will enhance their professional competency. There is also a need for library staff to be exposed to modern ways of answering users queries through the provision of ICT tools, relevant references materials and current books and journals. The library management needs to make all these available for its personnel.

This study contributes to knowledge in the areas of literature because students that are doing research on similar topic can make use of the study. In addition, the study provides fresh data for policy makers on ways to improve professional competencies of library personnel. Despite this, the limitation of the study lies on the fact that it used selected university libraries in the South-west, Nigeria. The implication of this is that the study can be replicated in the other university libraries in different geo-political zones in the country and also in the other higher education environments in the country.

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