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Transprofessional Competencies of Information Managers and the Challenges of the New Normal

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Abstract

Librarians and other information professionals are required to possess transprofessional competencies in the form of additional education or knowledge to increase the range of services that could be provided for improved efficiency of information service delivery in the new normal. This study investigates the transprofessional competencies of librarians and their perceptions of what barriers prevent librarians from developing transprofessional knowledge in this changing and knowledge-driven environment. The study is a qualitative research, and the phenomenography method was adopted for this study; The participants constitute librarians and information managers in four academic libraries in Lagos and Oyo states, Nigeria. A semi-structured interview was used and the interview was conducted synchronously between the researcher and the participants. The qualitative data from the interview was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The study found that librarians emphasised the need for competencies such as adapting to remote work, providing guidance on information literacy and digital skills, implementing and maintaining digital platforms. Challenges encountered by librarians include time and resource constraints, inaccessibility to learning opportunities, overcoming disciplinary silos, resistance to change, lack of institutional support and recognition among others. The study concluded that collaboration with professionals from other disciplines is a proactive measure to enhance transprofessional competencies. The study therefore recommended that librarians should embrace continuous learning, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and support reflective practice among others.

Keywords: Transprofessionalism, Competencies, Librarians, Information managers, New normal

Introduction

The demand for remote and digital library services has increased significantly over the years, as a result of the new normal occasioned by the global health crises otherwise known as COVID-19

pandemic. This development has redefined the information users from consumers of physical sources of information to users of electronic sources of information. The development has also brought a shift towards digitization of resources and services; while librarians have been compelled to expand the borders of their profession. Thus, librarians and other information professionals such as archivists, record officers and curators are required to possess transprofessional competencies in the form of additional education or knowledge (especially in other disciplines where their users are concentrated such as health, engineering, law et cetera) to increase the range of services that could be provided for improved efficiency of information service delivery. This transprofessional model may offer a creative solution to meeting the varied needs of patrons especially in the new normal.

Transprofessional competencies refer to the skills and abilities that are applicable across various professional domains or disciplines. Information managers, in particular, are responsible for organizing, managing, and utilizing information within an organization. In the context of the new normal, which may involve remote work, digital transformation, and changing information landscapes, information managers face several challenges. To be relevant and effective in the digital environment, librarians and other information managers need to master new transprofessional competencies, which will enable them to use the skill sets of other careers, develop new skills and abilities, as well as find immediate solutions to professional and learning problems using digital technologies (Yurina, Byrdina & Dolzhenko, 2022). The speed of change in society seems to be constantly increasing, and libraries need to keep pace with those changes to serve their communities as effectively as possible. Thus, Hirsh (2012) reiterates that librarians and other information professionals need to demonstrate positive attitude which should include the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

Sherpa (2017, P. 68) succinctly captures the changing role of librarians and the need for new set of competencies as thus:

Today the concept of the librarian has rapidly changed under the influence of present electronic information age, where information is treated as an economic resource, a marketable commodity and as a social wealth, the librarians are to play an active and important role in the process of information communication system. The librarians are

facing new challenges, new competitors, new demands, new expectations and a variety of information services from users.

New technologies, new services, new demands and new expectations all combine to make the job of a librarian more complicated than it was in many decades ago, or even five or ten years ago. For libraries to keep pace with the speed of these changes in service, and also get out ahead of them to ensure that the value of libraries is not overlooked, requires a swift action. Thus, libraries need to have a crop of competent and dynamic staff to meet these challenges. Without a capable workforce with transprofessional competencies to overcome the current challenges, libraries in the future may be difficult to be sustained especially in the present information environment (Jordan, 2011).

The new normal presents unique challenges for information managers, necessitating the examination of their competencies and the identification of potential hurdles. As the nature of work and information landscapes continue to evolve, information managers must possess a diverse range of transprofessional competencies to thrive in this dynamic environment. However, the specific competencies required and the challenges encountered by information managers in the new normal remain relatively unexplored. Therefore, this empirical article aims to address this gap by systematically investigating the transprofessional competencies of information managers and the challenges they face in the context of the new normal.

Objectives

This study investigates the importance of transprofessional competencies for librarians in the digital environment and their perceptions of what barriers prevent librarians from developing transprofessional knowledge in this changing and knowledge-driven environment. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the key transprofessional competencies required by librarians and information managers in the context of the new normal;
2. explore the ways in which library and information professionals can acquire and develop transprofessional competencies to effectively navigate the challenges of the new normal.
3. examine the challenges encountered by librarians and other information professionals in acquiring transprofessional competencies to overcome the challenges of the new normal.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. What are the key transprofessional competencies required by librarians and information managers in the context of the new normal?
2. In what ways can library and information professionals acquire and develop transprofessional competencies to effectively navigate the challenges of the new normal?
3. What are the challenges encountered by librarians and other information professionals in acquiring transprofessional competencies to overcome the challenges of the new normal?

Literature Review

With the increasing blurring of boundaries between disciplines such as medicine and law, science and education, social science and humanities et cetera and the fluidity of librarians in the information environment, LIS professionals need to possess a range of competencies, such as core disciplinary knowledge, IT-based skills, managerial skills, customer service-oriented skills, generic skills and personal attributes (Tabassum, Roknuzzaman & Begum, 2020).

Transprofessionalism is an evolving and dynamic phenomenon, which is a bit unlike professionalism. A transprofessional librarian possesses the ability to go beyond their profession due to the competencies and abilities such as: the tendency to anticipate, predict or envision the possible outcome of the action and at the same time thinking of the solutions to problems before they happen; ability to function in multi-professional project teams, to establish and manage communications; self-learning and self-organization, which relates to the ability to gather the necessary information from the environment, acquire interdisciplinary knowledge and form the missing competencies (Evtuyugina, Sturikova, & Dorozhkin, 2017). Chupina and Bannikova (2019) identified transprofessional competencies like "ability to solve complex problems, ability to work in polyprofessional project teams, self-learning ability, reflexivity and practical orientation in activities" and identified the process approach as one of the tools for effective formation of transprofessional competencies.

A recent study by Pereira (2022) investigated the digital skills possessed by librarians with a view to evaluate the services being offered during the post pandemic era. The study adopted a survey research with a structured questionnaire to collect data from the librarians working in various higher

education institutions in the State of Goa, India. The study demonstrated that most librarians lack the digital skill set necessary for the post pandemic information environment. To overcome this, however, the librarians are taking the necessary efforts to provide the services and keep the libraries going.

Yurinova, Byrdina and Dolzhenko (2022) examined the perception of education employers on the transprofessional competencies of school teachers in the digital environment with a focus on the challenges preventing teachers from developing transprofessional competencies. The qualitative survey adopted a three-item questionnaire. The findings established that the employers attached the highest level of importance to psychological transprofessional competencies while digital citizenship transprofessional competencies had the least rating. Some of the major barriers to the development of transprofessional competencies by teachers include fear of new trends and their excessive workload. Arising from the results of the survey, a model of transprofessional competencies for teachers in digital teaching and learning was designed, which can be used as an assessment tool in different professional settings.

The need for transprofessional competencies in the present day information environment cannot be underestimated. Transprofessional competencies ensure the ability of library and information professionals to go beyond the framework of resource and information service delivery, to quickly acquire new skills from "other career paths" and perform professional tasks in situations of uncertainty with the help of digital technologies. Ultimately, transprofessional competencies form the basis for librarians' aptitude to continuing professional education, which is an essential factor in the professional development of any specialist. Consequently, library professionals are facing the need to master new transprofessional competencies for the challenges of the new normal vis-a-vis the industrial revolution (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

A set of 14 transprofessional competencies has been identified as predictors of developing transprofessionalism in this emerging digital era. These competencies are also relevant for librarians to facilitate their self-actualization. These competencies include the ability to critically analyze problem situations, demonstrate leadership skills and decision-making capabilities while taking responsibility, exhibit self-organization and self-development skills, including goal setting and reflection, and the ability to adapt to high uncertainty and rapidly changing task conditions, among

others. Additionally, one significant competence is the motivation and aptitude for lifelong learning, enabling librarians to independently acquire new professional knowledge and skills. An expert survey highlighted this competency as the most crucial for professionals in the field of library and information science (Zeer, Zinnatova, Tretyakova & Bukovey, 2017).

The roles and challenges of library practitioners are changing at a fast pace as a result of information explosion and technological advancement (Tabassum, Roknuzzaman & Begum, 2020). Eingorn (2015) considered the ethics of responsibility for professional mobility and professionalism, while Zeer (2017) x-rayed the psychological and pedagogical platform for the formation of trans-professionalism of the teacher of vocational education. A scientific analysis of these two studies demonstrated resulted in the coinage of the concept of "professionalism as an integral or innate characteristic of an individual, including its completeness as a subject of professional activity, professional communication, ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency and stability of activities (Chupina & Bannikova, 2019).

Ishola, Ojokuku, Akpobasah-Amugen, and Eluyemi (2022) conducted a qualitative research study to investigate library services amid the COVID-19 pandemic in two prominent Nigerian university libraries. The study focused on the utilization of remotely exploitable electronic academic databases as case studies. Data were collected through interviews with e-Librarians from the two Federal University libraries using an interview guide. The findings of the study revealed that both libraries had functional e-libraries and subscribed to essential databases. Furthermore, it was found that the libraries' websites were connected to open-source databases, providing remote access to library users. These findings underscore the importance of embracing the changes in the global architecture of library services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring the remote accessibility of e-resources to users. The study recommends that library managers adopt best practices in providing users with remote access to their e-resources. It also highlights the significance of library managers reevaluating their memorandum of understanding with e-database aggregators, allowing for the remote accessibility of e-resources to library users. This approach can help limit users' physical contact with the library environment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In their study, MacPherson et al. (2022) delve into the emerging field of mindfulness-based teaching and learning (MBTL), which encompasses various professions such as education, organizational

management, and clinical practice. The researchers acknowledge the necessity for a comprehensive set of transprofessional competencies to effectively address the demands of this developing specialization. To address this need, the authors undertook the development and validation of the Mindfulness-Based Teaching and Learning - Teacher Competency Framework (MBTL-TCF).

Theoretical Framework: Social Learning Theory

This study is underpinned by the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). The theory stresses the role of observation and imitation in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies. According to Bandura, individuals learn by observing others' behaviours and the consequences arising from such behaviours. The theory proposes that learning transpires through a process of imitation, where individuals observe and replicate the behaviours of others, and thereafter strengthen or adjust their own behaviours based on observed outcomes. Albert Bandura (1977) developed the social learning theory, which highlights the significance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses of others. This theory explores the interaction between environmental factors and cognitive processes in shaping human learning and behavior (McLeod, 2016, para. 1). Observational learning, commonly known as social learning, is centered around the idea that behaviors can be acquired through the process of observing and imitating others (Vahedi, 2020).

Social learning theory specifically addresses the enhancement of self-efficacy. In the context of professional development, social learning provides an avenue for participants to openly discuss problems, exchange ideas, consider different perspectives, and collaborate on finding solutions. By incorporating transprofessional competencies rooted in social learning theory, librarians can effectively acquire best practices in information management through social influence and reinforcement (Strickland-Davis, Kosloski, & Reed, 2020).

Several studies have explored the application of Social Learning Theory in the development of competencies among information professionals. Bond and Blevins (2020) used the social learning theory to study faculty professional development in fostering organizational change. The study through the findings suggested intervention strategies, change strategies and design considerations which could help practitioners make decisions regarding their own individual higher education settings. Watson (2013) examined professional development (PD) through the lens of Social

Learning Theory (SLT), focusing on the application of reform-oriented professional development in the study. Social Learning Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding learning, encompassing individual cognitive factors such as knowledge and beliefs, as well as social and participatory elements. The study findings demonstrated the potential value of SLT as a theoretical framework for exploring professional learning dynamics.

Strickland-Davis, Kosloski, and Reed (2020) conducted a study to examine the impact of social learning-based professional development on the efficacy of community college faculty. The findings revealed a significant difference in the overall teacher efficacy scores between new and experienced faculty after participating in the faculty development program. These studies demonstrate the relevance of Social Learning Theory in understanding the acquisition and development of competencies among information professionals. By observing and imitating professionals from diverse disciplines, information managers can expand their knowledge base, acquire new skills, and adapt their practices to effectively address the challenges of the new normal. Social Learning Theory offers valuable insights into how information managers acquire and develop their transprofessional competencies. By observing and imitating professionals from various disciplines, information managers can learn from their experiences, adopt innovative practices, and enhance their ability to navigate the challenges of the new normal. Applying Social Learning Theory in the design of training programs and professional development initiatives can support information managers in acquiring the necessary competencies to thrive in the evolving information landscape.

Methodology

The study is a qualitative research, and the phenomenography method was adopted for this study; whereby, the librarians and other individuals perceive the various aspects of a phenomenon in their environment vis-a-vis their understanding, experience and conceptualisation (Bowden et al, 1992 and Marton, 1986). This method is considered appropriate for the study as it offered an insight into how librarians in academic libraries perceive the relevance of transprofessionalism in the new normal. The participants constitute librarians and information managers in four academic libraries in Lagos and Oyo states, Nigeria. These libraries included University of Ibadan (UI), University of Lagos (UNILAG), Ladoké Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) and Lagos State University (LASU).

A purposive sampling strategy will be utilized to select information managers who have experience in the new normal. Participants will be chosen based on their expertise, years of experience, and organizational roles related to information management. The sample size will be determined based on the principle of data saturation, where data collection continues until no new insights or themes emerge (Guest et al., 2006).

A structured interview method was used as the instrument for data collection. The interview guide contains eight questions that addressed the three objectives of the study. The interview was conducted synchronously between the researcher and the participants. With the permission of the participants, the interview session was recorded with a smart phone to enable the researcher capture every details of the interview. The qualitative data from the interview was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The transcribed interviews were coded and organized into themes and sub-themes using a systematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Interview Schedule

The following interview questions were structured to gather insights about the transprofessional competencies of information managers and the challenges they face in the new normal:

1. Can you describe your role as an information manager in the current professional landscape? How has it evolved in the face of the new normal?
2. What do you consider as the key transprofessional competencies necessary for information managers to navigate the challenges of the new normal?
3. In your experience, how have information management practices and strategies evolved in response to the challenges of the new normal? How have your transprofessional competencies influenced these changes?
4. How do you acquire and develop your transprofessional competencies? Are there any specific training programs, professional development activities, or resources that have been helpful?
5. How do you collaborate with professionals from other disciplines to leverage their expertise and enhance your transprofessional competencies?

6. How do you stay updated with the latest trends, technologies, and practices in information management? How do you ensure that your transprofessional competencies remain relevant in the dynamic professional landscape?
7. What are the main challenges you encounter in acquiring your transprofessional competencies in the new normal? How do you overcome these challenges?
8. In your opinion, what are the future trends and directions for transprofessional competencies of information managers in the context of the new normal?

Table 1: Mapping objectives with interview questions

S/n	Objectives	Interview (Themes)
1	Key transprofessional competencies required by librarians	#1 Evolving role of library and information professionals
		#2 Key transprofessional competencies
		#3 Evolving information management practices and strategies, and the influence of transprofessional competencies
2	Ways in which transprofessional competencies are acquired by librarians	#4 Acquiring transprofessional competencies
		#5 Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines
		#6 Staying updated with the latest trends, technologies, and practices
3	Challenges encountered by librarians	#7 Challenges encountered in applying transprofessional competencies
		#8 Future trends and directions for transprofessional competencies

The survey has three objectives with nine structured interview questions. Objective one takes care of three questions, objective two with three questions and objective three with two questions (see Table 1). The interview schedule was also structured in line with the research questions.

Results

The findings from this qualitative research reflect the librarians' views on the relevance of transprofessional competencies for information service delivery and the associated barriers. The responses of librarians to the research questions are presented; while the results are also discussed with recommendations.

Research Question 1: What are the key transprofessional competencies required by librarians and information managers in the context of the new normal?

Table 2 shows the analysis of the qualitative data from the study areas concerning the key transprofessional competencies required by librarians in the new normal.

Table 2: Key transprofessional competencies required by librarians

Themes	Responses
Evolving role of library and information professionals	Current roles: oversee the organization, preservation, and dissemination of information; ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is accessible to the users; curating, organizing, and disseminating information resources to support decision-making; managing the information lifecycle, ensuring its accuracy, accessibility, and security
	Evolving roles: adapting to remote work arrangements; increased emphasis on digital information management; finding innovative ways to connect with users; staying updated on the latest technologies and information management practices; providing guidance on information literacy and digital skills; educating and empowering colleagues in using digital resources; implementing and maintaining digital platforms and systems for information storage, retrieval, and sharing; evaluating and selecting reliable sources of information to meet the changing needs
Key transprofessional competencies	adaptability and flexibility; effective communication skills; strong digital literacy and technological proficiency; information literacy skills; critical thinking and problem-solving skills; collaboration and teamwork skills; project management skills; strategic thinking and foresight; emotional intelligence; research and analytical skills
Evolving information management practices and strategies, and the Influence of transprofessional competencies	Evolving information management practices: adoption of more flexible and accessible information management systems; adoption of robust virtual platforms and streamlined workflows; a greater emphasis on digitization, virtual collaboration, and user-centric approaches; greater emphasis on digital platforms, online resources, and enhanced user engagement
	Influence of transprofessional competencies: Ability to identify and implement digital tools and platforms that support remote collaboration and information sharing; implementing efficient data management systems, enabling remote access and analysis; development of user-friendly interfaces and digital platforms that enhance information access and retrieval; design and implementation of efficient digital repositories; development of policies and guidelines for the responsible use of digital resources

Analysis from Table 2 shows that the librarians were very explicit and consistent about the various transprofessional competencies needed by library and information professionals especially in the new normal. Addressing the evolving role of librarians in this age, the respondents identified their current roles as overseeing the organization, preservation, and dissemination of information; ensuring that accurate and up-to-date information is accessible to the users; curating, organizing, and disseminating information resources to support decision-making; as well as managing the information lifecycle, ensuring its accuracy, accessibility, and security among others. It was also

revealed that the evolving role of the librarians are multifaceted including: adapting to remote work arrangements; increased emphasis on digital information management; finding innovative ways to connect with users; staying updated on the latest technologies and information management practices; providing guidance on information literacy and digital skills; educating and empowering colleagues in using digital resources; implementing and maintaining digital platforms and systems for information storage, retrieval, and sharing; evaluating and selecting reliable sources of information to meet the changing needs.

As an information manager, my role is to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is accessible to the users within my organization. The new normal has brought about a shift in the way information is generated and consumed. With remote work becoming the norm, I have had to find innovative ways to connect with users and provide them with the information they need. This has involved developing online databases, implementing virtual reference services, and collaborating with colleagues from different departments to meet the evolving information needs. Additionally, I have had to stay updated on the latest technologies and information management practices to effectively adapt to the changing professional landscape (Participant #2).

Likewise, another participant gave a concise description of how her role as information manager has evolved vis-à-vis the new normal:

The increased reliance on online information sources has necessitated a heightened focus on information quality and credibility. I have had to adapt my strategies for evaluating and selecting reliable sources of information to meet the changing needs of my organization. Overall, the new normal has propelled me to become more technologically savvy and adaptable in order to effectively support the information needs of my colleagues.

Participant demonstrated that the key competencies required by librarians in the new normal are diverse and specific to their job roles. In this regard, key competencies identified include adaptability and flexibility; effective communication skills; strong digital literacy and technological proficiency; information literacy skills; critical thinking and problem-solving skills; collaboration and teamwork skills; project management skills; strategic thinking and foresight; emotional intelligence; research and analytical skills.

To navigate the challenges of the new normal, information managers should have transprofessional competencies such as adaptability and resilience. The ability to quickly adapt to changing circumstances, embrace new technologies, and find creative solutions is crucial. Information managers should also possess strong research and analytical skills to effectively gather, evaluate, and synthesize information from diverse sources. Additionally, the ability to think critically and make informed decisions in complex and uncertain situations is vital for providing reliable and relevant information services in the new normal.

Participants felt that information management practices have generally been impacted and evolved in response to the challenges of the new normal, such that the shift towards remote work and digital transformation has led to the adoption of more flexible and accessible information management systems. Also, the reliance on remote work and digital communication has necessitated the adoption of robust virtual platforms and streamlined workflows, as well as a greater emphasis on digitization, virtual collaboration, and user-centric approaches. In response to these changes, however, the participants claimed that their transprofessional competencies have enable them to identify and implement digital tools and platforms that support remote collaboration and information sharing; implementing efficient data management systems, enabling remote access and analysis; development of user-friendly interfaces and digital platforms that enhance information access and retrieval; design and implementation of efficient digital repositories.

Research Question 2: In what ways can library and information professionals acquire and develop transprofessional competencies to effectively navigate the challenges of the new normal?

Responses in Table 3 represent the various ways through which the participants acquire or develop their transprofessional competencies, the specific training programmes they attend, collaboration with professionals from other disciplines, and the strategies adopted to stay updated with the latest trends, technologies, and practices.

Table 3: Ways in which transprofessional competencies are acquired by librarians

Themes	Responses
Methods of acquiring or develop transprofessional competencies	Acquiring transprofessional competencies: through a combination of formal training programs and self-directed learning; engaging in continuous learning and collaboration with professionals from diverse disciplines; through professional certifications, and on-the-job experience
	Specific training programs: Attending conferences, workshops, and seminars; seeking professional development activities; using online resources such as webinars, online courses, and e-learning platforms; seeking mentorship opportunities and engaging in job shadowing; pursuing advanced degrees; reading books, research papers, and industry publications; actively seeking cross-functional projects and collaborative initiatives
Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines	I actively seek out opportunities for interdisciplinary projects or initiatives; attended interdisciplinary conferences and workshops; reaching out to professionals in relevant fields, expressing my interest in collaborating and sharing knowledge; regular meetings and joint projects to leverage the expertise of professionals; active participation in interdisciplinary teams or committees; make use of digital collaboration tools and platforms to facilitate virtual collaboration
Staying updated with the latest trends, technologies, and practices	Continuous Professional Development; Networking and Collaboration; Online Research and Publications; Join Professional Associations; Web Resources and Blogs;

Almost all the participants attested to the fact that they acquired their transprofessional competencies through a combination of formal training programmes and self-directed learning; engaging in continuous learning and collaboration with professionals from diverse disciplines; as well as through professional certifications, and on-the-job experience. Specific training programmes exploited by the participants were: attending conferences, workshops, and seminars; seeking professional development activities; using online resources such as webinars, online courses, and e-learning platforms; seeking mentorship opportunities and engaging in job shadowing; pursuing advanced degrees; reading books, research papers, and industry publications; actively seeking cross-functional projects and collaborative initiatives. One of the participants specifically noted that:

I actively participate in professional networks and communities, attending meetups, and joining online forums where I can connect with experts and practitioners from different fields. This allows me to learn from their experiences, exchange ideas, and gain insights into their approaches to information management. Additionally, I seek out mentorship opportunities and engage in job shadowing to learn from experienced professionals and observe their transprofessional practices.

In addition, participants also revealed that collaborating with professionals from other disciplines to leverage their expertise and enhance transprofessional competencies involve a lot of proactive measures like actively seeking out opportunities for interdisciplinary projects or initiatives; attending interdisciplinary conferences and workshops; reaching out to professionals in relevant fields, expressing interest in collaborating and sharing knowledge; regular meetings and joint projects to leverage the expertise of professionals; active participation in interdisciplinary teams or committees; making use of digital collaboration tools and platforms to facilitate virtual collaboration. This further corroborated the various methods adopted by the information professionals in developing their transprofessional competencies.

According to the participants, acquiring the transprofessional competencies alone is not enough, but staying up-to-date with the latest trends, technologies, and practices in information management, and ensuring that their competencies remain relevant in the dynamic professional landscape. Some of the ways of staying up-to-date include: continuous professional development and mentoring; networking and collaboration; online research and publications; joining professional associations; web resources and blogs; online courses and certifications; collaborating with cross-disciplinary professionals; following thought leaders; and engaging in reflective practice.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges encountered by librarians and other information professionals in acquiring transprofessional competencies to overcome the challenges of the new normal?

Table 4 represents the challenges encountered by librarians in the new normal especially in acquiring transprofessional competencies and future trends.

Table 4: Challenges encountered by librarians

Themes	Responses
Challenges encountered in acquiring transprofessional competencies	Challenges time and resource constraints, access to learning opportunities, overcoming disciplinary silos, resistance to change, identifying relevance and application, balancing expertise and breadth, institutional support and recognition
	Overcoming the challenges: regularly engage in professional development activities; actively seek feedback from colleagues and users; established clear communication channels and foster open dialogue with colleagues and users; leveraged video conferencing platforms to enhance visual communication and build rapport; participate in virtual networking events and communities; actively engaging with users to understand their specific needs and preferences; continuously evaluate and update my digital curation strategies; seek opportunities to establish virtual social interactions; prioritize self-care practices such as setting clear work-life boundaries, taking regular breaks, and practicing mindfulness; seek support from colleagues
Future trends and directions for transprofessional competencies	need to possess strong digital skills and be proficient in utilizing emerging tools and platforms; need to develop expertise in cybersecurity measures, risk management, and compliance with data protection regulations; need to develop competencies in user experience design, information architecture, and usability testing; need to understand the applications and implications AI and ML for information retrieval, knowledge organization, and data analysis

Acquiring transprofessional competencies can present several challenges for individuals. Stating the challenges in acquiring transprofessional competencies by librarians, participants indicated time and resource constraints, inaccessibility to learning opportunities, overcoming disciplinary silos, resistance to change, identifying relevance and application, balancing expertise and breadth, institutional support and recognition. In order to overcome these challenges, however, the participants identified regular engagement in professional development activities, actively seeking

feedback from colleagues and users; establishing clear communication channels and fostering open dialogue with colleagues and users; leveraging video conferencing platforms to enhance visual communication and build rapport; participating in virtual networking events and communities; actively engaging with users to understand their specific needs and preferences; continuously evaluating and updating digital curation strategies; seeking opportunities to establish virtual social interactions; prioritising self-care practices such as setting clear work-life boundaries, taking regular breaks, and practicing mindfulness; and also seeking support from colleagues. Despite these challenges, acquiring transprofessional competencies is a valuable pursuit that can enhance an individual's skills, expand their professional horizons, and contribute to their overall career growth. Overcoming these challenges requires determination, persistence, seeking out opportunities, and advocating for the importance of transprofessional development within one's organization or professional network.

Future trends and directions for transprofessional competencies for librarians include: need to possess strong digital skills and be proficient in utilizing emerging tools and platforms; need to develop expertise in cybersecurity measures, risk management, and compliance with data protection regulations; need to develop competencies in user experience design, information architecture, and usability testing; need to understand the applications and implications of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) for information retrieval, knowledge organization, and data analysis.

As AI and ML technologies advance, information managers will need to understand their applications and implications for information retrieval, knowledge organization, and data analysis. Developing competencies in AI and ML will enable information managers to harness the power of these technologies to automate processes, improve information discovery, and gain insights from large datasets.

These opinions reflect different perspectives on future trends and directions for transprofessional competencies of information managers in the context of the new normal. It is important to consider these diverse viewpoints to gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential directions in the field.

Discussion of Results

The findings from the analysis of Table 2 align with existing literature on the evolving role of librarians and information professionals in the new normal. The participants explicitly and consistently identified various transprofessional competencies required for library and information

professionals in this changing landscape. The respondents recognized their roles in overseeing the organization, preservation, and dissemination of information, ensuring accessibility to accurate and up-to-date information, and curating resources to support decision-making. These findings are in line with the literature on the evolving role of librarians as information managers in the present information environment (Momoh & Folorunso, 2019). The multifaceted nature of their evolving roles, including adapting to remote work arrangements, emphasizing digital information management, and staying updated on technologies and information management practices, is consistent with the literature on the changing landscape of library and information professions (Musangi, 2015; Tietie, 2019).

The participants highlighted the importance of transprofessional competencies in addressing the challenges of the new normal. They emphasized the need for competencies such as adapting to remote work, providing guidance on information literacy and digital skills, implementing and maintaining digital platforms, and evaluating reliable sources of information. These competencies align with Santos-Hermosa and Atenas (2022) which advocated that new skills are required for library and information professionals for the uptake and widespread of open science, data and access (para.5). Furthermore, the participants acknowledged that the shift towards remote work and digital transformation has led to the adoption of flexible and accessible information management systems, as supported by existing literature (Clark & Lischer-Katz, 2023). The reliance on remote work has also necessitated the adoption of virtual platforms, streamlined workflows, and digitization, aligning with Dempsey (2023) who highlighted the role of technologies in assisting academic libraries to thrive in physical, virtual and hybrid environments.

The participants claimed that their transprofessional competencies enabled them to identify and implement digital tools and platforms, develop user-friendly interfaces, and design efficient digital repositories. Chupina and Bannikova (2019) also identified ability to solve complex problems, ability to work in polyprofessional project teams, self-learning ability et cetera as some of the transprofessional competencies required in this digital era. Overall, the findings of this study align with existing literature, highlighting the importance of transprofessional competencies in addressing the evolving role of librarians and information professionals in the new normal, and their impact on information management practices.

The results of the study indicate that the acquisition of transprofessional competencies among the participants was achieved through a combination of formal training programs, self-directed learning, continuous learning, collaboration with professionals from diverse disciplines, professional certifications, and on-the-job experience. These findings align with existing literature on the development of competencies in the professional landscape. Formal training programs, such as attending conferences, workshops, and seminars, have been recognized as effective methods for acquiring and enhancing professional competencies (Idiegbeyan-Ose, Ohaegbulam & Osayande, 2017). Similarly, engaging in continuous learning and seeking professional development activities, including online resources such as webinars, online courses, and e-learning platforms, have been acknowledged as valuable approaches for staying updated with emerging knowledge and practices (Arua, 2019).

Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines to enhance transprofessional competencies is consistent with the concept of interdisciplinary collaboration. Actively seeking out opportunities for interdisciplinary projects, attending interdisciplinary conferences and workshops, and leveraging digital collaboration tools and platforms have been recognized as effective strategies for fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing across disciplines (Brandenburg, Cordell, Joque, MacEachern & Song, 2017). These findings highlight the proactive and multifaceted approaches adopted by information professionals to enhance their competencies and adapt to the dynamic professional landscape.

This study revealed many challenges to the development of transprofessional competencies by librarians such as time and resource constraints, inaccessibility to learning opportunities, overcoming disciplinary silos, resistance to change, lack of institutional support and recognition among others. These challenges make it almost impossible for many professionals to acquire and develop necessary transprofessional competencies that librarians need to function effectively and remain relevant in this new normal. This result is corroborated by previous findings. For instance, Tomczyk et al. (2020) identified fear of new trends and techno-pessimism, while Yurina, Byrdina and Dolzhenko (2022) identified inability of the participants to adapt flexibly to new conditions, a lack of confidence in their own digital abilities, excessive workload leading to inadequate time for self-development and professional burnout, as well as lack of administrative support for motivation and incentives among others. Likewise, a recent study by Pereira (2022) reported that most

librarians lack the digital skill set necessary for the post pandemic information environment. However, librarians and information managers need to take all necessary steps to overcome these challenges.

This study reported that some of the measures librarians can take to overcome the challenges of acquiring transprofessional competencies encompass seeking out opportunities, taking full advantage of artificial intelligence (AI) for information retrieval and advocating for the importance of transprofessional development within one's organization or professional network. This result is in line with Pereira (2022) who submitted that librarians in higher education institutes need to equip themselves with the necessary sets of competencies to provide efficient and user-centered services, especially in the post-pandemic. Taking these and other measures would contribute immensely to the expansion of librarians' professional horizons, and overall career growth.

Conclusion

In the contemporary information landscape, which is mainly characterised by interdisciplinarity, digitisation, remote work, big data and metadata, librarians and information managers in education, healthcare, research and development institutes require a number of transprofessional competencies to remain relevant. The need for adaptability and flexibility of job roles is becoming more and more evident as established in this study. The study has revealed the evolving nature of library services and the need for librarians and information managers to adapt to the new normal. The digital revolution and emergency reforms have transformed traditional libraries into smart libraries, requiring professionals to possess a diverse set of competencies that go beyond their traditional roles.

The findings suggest that librarians and information managers acquire transprofessional competencies through a combination of formal training programs, self-directed learning, continuous learning, collaboration with professionals from diverse disciplines, and on-the-job experience. The participants highlighted the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest trends, technologies, and practices in information management to ensure the relevance of their competencies in the dynamic professional landscape. Collaboration with professionals from other disciplines was emphasized as a proactive measure to enhance transprofessional competencies. This collaboration

involves seeking interdisciplinary projects, attending interdisciplinary conferences and workshops, and utilizing digital collaboration tools and platforms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, it is clear that libraries and information professionals should consider the following recommendations:

1. **Embrace Continuous Learning:** Libraries should provide support for ongoing professional development, including training programs, workshops, and access to online resources. Librarians and information managers should proactively engage in continuous learning to stay updated with emerging technologies and practices in information management.
2. **Promote Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Libraries should create opportunities for collaboration with professionals from diverse disciplines. This can be achieved through interdisciplinary projects, joint initiatives, and participation in interdisciplinary teams or committees. Leveraging the expertise of professionals from various fields can enhance transprofessional competencies and lead to innovative approaches in information management.
3. **Utilize Digital Tools and Platforms:** Libraries should adopt digital collaboration tools and platforms to facilitate virtual collaboration and knowledge-sharing. This can enable professionals to collaborate with colleagues from different disciplines, access remote resources, and engage in virtual meetings and discussions.
4. **Strengthen Networking and Knowledge-Sharing:** Libraries should encourage professionals to actively network and engage in knowledge-sharing activities. Joining professional associations, participating in conferences and workshops, and following thought leaders can provide valuable opportunities for networking and staying updated with the latest developments in the field.
5. **Support Reflective Practice:** Libraries should promote reflective practice among professionals, encouraging them to critically evaluate their experiences, learn from them, and continuously improve their competencies. Reflection can enhance self-awareness, identify areas for growth, and contribute to professional development.

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