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## Assessment of Competencies of Library and Information Science Educators in Nigeria

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**ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCIES OF LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATORS IN  
NIGERIA**

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## ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCIES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE EDUCATORS IN NIGERIA

### Abstract

. This paper traced the origin of library and information science education in Nigeria to the advent of new technologies which have brought about tremendous impact in the delivery of services in academic libraries.. The population comprised 17 library educators in library schools in South East Nigeria Federal Universities. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents. Thirteen responses were received giving a response rate of 76.47%. The study centered on acquisition and application of knowledge-based and skills'-based competencies' assessment. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and mean scores. Findings of the study showed that elements of knowledge such as copyright and intellectual property law, evaluation of information communication tools' interfaces, virtual librarianship and digital technologies were not acquired by 45%, 38.75%, 45% and 6.25% of library educators respectively. Skills-based competencies such as website development and web page development were not acquired by 22.50% and 28.75% of library educators respectively. Challenges confronting library educators with respect to acquisition of competencies as well as strategies to enhance their competencies are addressed. There are conclusions and recommendations.

**Keywords:** Library and Information Science Education, Library Educators, 21<sup>st</sup>.century, Nigeria, Library Competencies and Academic Libraries

### Introduction:

The library and information science educators are concerned with the production of competent and dedicated professionals in the management of acquisition, organization and information dissemination in libraries. Saleh (2012) pointed out that library education “was tied up with general social and political history of the country and as such, those who aspired to become Librarians went to Britain to qualify for the Associate Library Association (ALA).” (Saleh, 2012: [http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo\\_saleh.htm](http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo_saleh.htm)). Prior to 1960, “the Carnegie Corporation sponsored two studies in 1939 and 1940 to survey the library needs of West Africa with a view to formalizing its training programmes” ( Saleh,

2012: [http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo\\_saleh.htm](http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo_saleh.htm)). Awareness in library profession in Nigeria was buttressed by the arrival of John Harris as the Librarian of the University College Ibadan in 1948 Dean, (.1966) as recorded in Saleh, (2012). He also stated that “Harris was not only instrumental to the development of University College Library but also organized the Native Authority Libraries in 1950, the first organized library training course.” (Saleh, 2012: [http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo\\_saleh.htm](http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo_saleh.htm)). These pioneering efforts stimulated successive activities geared toward professional librarianship and library education in Nigeria. Thus, “ in 1952, Joan Allen organized library training course for reading room attendants under the Northern Regional Library service, while in the East, the Eastern Regional Library Board was created in 1935. The Board introduced a training course for Library Assistants in 1956”.(Saleh, 2012 : [http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo\\_saleh.htm](http://Unllib.Unl.edu/lpp/gambo_saleh.htm)). Then in 1953, there was a UNESCO Seminar on Public Library Development in Africa which was held at Ibadan (Aguolu and Mohammed,1987)..The UNESCO Seminar of 1953 created a floodgate for establishment of Library schools in the country. The first library school was established at University of Ibadan in 1960 The Library School began with one year basic professional programme leading to the award of a post-graduate diploma. A second library school was set up at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in 1968. This library school mounted undergraduate programmes leading to award of Bachelor of Library Science.( Saleh, 2012). A third library school was set up at University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1983. (Nwaogu, 1986). The library school also mounted undergraduate programmes leading to the award of Bachelor of Library Science. As the need arose for more library

professionals, other library schools were founded in Federal, State and Private Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

These Library Institutions were raised to offer mainly traditional librarianship education. Presently, library educators have to contend with emerging information technologies. These technologies demand acquisition of necessary competencies to enable them remain relevant in the world of information education.

### **Competencies:**

Marshall et al (2003) define competencies as the interplay of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes required to do a job effectively from the point of view of both the performer and the observer. They identified two types of competencies for special Librarians. The first type are professional competencies which relate to knowledge in the areas of information resources access, technology, management and research and the ability to use these areas of knowledge to provide library and information services.. The other comprises personal competencies which represent a set of skills, attitudes and values “that enable librarians to work effectively, be good communicators, be able to focus on continuing learning throughout their careers, be able to demonstrate the value added nature of their contributions, and survive in the new world of work’ (Marshall et.al. 2003 , <http://www.sla.org/content/SLA/professional/meaning/competency.cfm>), (Ahmad and Yaseen, 2009, [http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v10n03/ahmad\\_p01.html](http://southernlibrarianship.icaap.org/content/v10n03/ahmad_p01.html)) and (Gulati and Raina, 2000 [http://www.worlib.org/vol10no1-2/print/gulati\\_print.html](http://www.worlib.org/vol10no1-2/print/gulati_print.html)), Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) (2010) defines competencies for a profession as “a list or group of a series of knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours

that define and contribute to performance.” (CARL, 2010: [http://carl-abrc.ca/uploads/pdfs/care\\_comp\\_profile-e.pdf](http://carl-abrc.ca/uploads/pdfs/care_comp_profile-e.pdf)). Choi and Rasmussen (2006) and Ferreira et al (2007) concur that competencies comprise knowledge, skills (abilities) and attitudes .They pointed out that knowledge should be acquired through formal education and training, while skills/abilities could be acquired through practice. They also opined that attitude involves emotional and social aspects. CARL (2010) presents holistic compendium of competencies for library educators and librarians working in an intense research environment. The competencies are encapsulated under seven areas of the following

1. foundational knowledge
2. interpersonal skills
3. leadership and management
4. collections development
5. information literacy
6. research and contributions to the profession and
- 7 information technology skills.

These competencies are compelling on library educators because new and more sophisticated information and communication technology products are being introduced and appropriated into the profession.. “Transformation technologies and the behaviours they engender have rapidly changed the creation and distribution of scholarly journals, data and other research outputs” (Ross and Pongracz, 2008: 145 – 146). The study brings to the fore the critical issues involved in meeting the challenges faced by LIS educators. It behooves on them to reflect on their acquired competencies and address any observed

shortcomings. Within the country and within our institutions, academic output of library educators are being re-assessed and this paper hopes to provide that re-assessment with respect to acquisition and application of competencies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that products of Library and Information Science Schools are not equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills demanded by the labour market, (Ferreira) et al (2007). This situation calls into question the quality of knowledge and skills being acquired from the library schools. In addition to their traditional library skills and knowledge, many of today's library educators are expected to possess additional knowledge and skills required in library education. It is in this connection that this study has tried to investigate competencies which have been acquired by library educators as the outcome can help them address their shortcomings.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

Objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out knowledge-based competencies acquired from library schools by library science educators.
2. Investigate extent of application of knowledge-based competencies to teaching by library science educators.
3. Identify skills'-based competencies acquired by library science educators.
4. Investigate extent of application of skills'-based competencies to teaching by library science educators.
5. Identify challenges encountered in teaching by library science educators with respect to competencies.

- 6 Identify strategies to enhance competencies of library science educators.

## **Literature Review**

The paper reviewed literature on competencies expected of library educators in the 21<sup>st</sup>. century. Whitlatch et al (2003) describe competencies as “behaviors that excellent performers exhibit more consistently and effectively than average performers and that these competencies are focused on abilities, skills and knowledge.”.(Whitlatch et al, 2003: <http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/professionals> ). Ferreira et al (2007) believe that competencies comprise three elements, knowledge, skills or abilities and attitudes. Canadian Association of Research Libraries. (2010) reeled out seven areas of competencies designed specially for academic librarians and library educators. They are foundational knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership and management, collections development, information literacy, research and contributions to the profession and information technology skills.

Tennant (2002) emphasizes that library educators face the problem of shortage of experienced library educators. He opines that they should acquire current knowledge and skills in creation of databases, information systems, digitization, creation of virtual libraries, metadata, development of intranets, extranets and portals. In the same vein, Chiware, (2007) and Saleh (2012) decried a situation where library schools’ curricula emphasized theories and principles that underlie professional practice instead of practical skills which would be of interest to employers.

Choi and Rasmussen (2006) employed survey method to identify perception of the knowledge and skills important in performing the job of digital librarians. Copies of the survey questionnaire were distributed to 123 directors that were members of Association of Research Libraries (ARL). They had 45 responses from 39 libraries. Their respondents rated importance of skills and knowledge in performing their work very highly.. Respondents were asked to indicate the most relevant/valuable courses they had taken in library and information science school for performing their current work. The most frequently mentioned courses were in the areas of cataloguing, collections development and management, systems analysis and information technology.. Respondents were also asked to identify areas for which their education and training had not prepared them adequately. They (respondents) indicated overall understanding of the complex interplay of software, lack of vocabulary to communicate to technical staff, knowledge of web-related languages and technologies, web design, digital imaging and formatting, and XML standards and technologies among others. Concluding the findings in their survey, Chio and Rasmussen (2006), opined that professionals should be required to have more breadth and depth of knowledge, and skills across the dimensions of professional training on management skills through practical experience. Chio and Rasmussen (2006), Hashim and Mokhtar (2005), Chowdhury and Chowdhury ((2003) and Tanner (2001) affirmed that library educators required opportunities to update their knowledge and skills especially in creating web pages prior to teaching., They recommended that LIS educators should pay attention to additional education in interpersonal and communication skills. They concurred that practical skills, experience

with digital collections management and digital technologies should be integrated into library schools' curricula..

Ferreira et al (2007) conducted a survey using sixty graduates who were employed as information professionals. They found out that knowledge acquired by their respondents through academic education were cataloguing, classification, indexing, reference services and a host of other courses which emphasized traditional librarianship. They also listed skills which their respondents considered necessary but were not acquired during academic work as: skills relating to information and communication technologies, interpersonal relations, management of information units, technical knowledge, research methodology and leadership and management skills.

### **Methodology**

The study was a descriptive survey designed to obtain data which would identify competencies needed by library educators in educating would-be librarians. The research covered Library and Information Science Schools in Federal Universities in South East Nigeria. They are University of Nigeria, Nsukka (10 library educators) and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (7 library educators). The population comprised 17 library educators/lecturers.

The questionnaire used for data collection contained 78 items. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to establish the reliability of the instrument at 0.76. The instrument contained two sections. Section A was on respondents' profile while section B was on competencies. A total of 17 copies of library educators' questionnaire were distributed and 13 copies (UNN = 8 and UNIZIK 5) were returned, giving 76.47%

response rate. All of the returned copies of the questionnaire were found usable. Scoring of items in section B was based on a four-point weighting scale. Analysis of the items was done using percentages and mean scores. Items that had percentages of 50 and above and mean scores of 2.5 and above were accepted. In the study, library science educators were used interchangeably with library educators.

## Results and Analysis of Results

### Section A

#### Demographic Information

##### (1) Libraries

**Table 1 (a) Qualification of Library Educators**

S/N	Qualification	UNN	UNIZIK	Total	% of Q
1)	BLS	1		1	7.69
2)	MLS	2	3	5	38.46
3)	Ph.D	5	2	7	53.85
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Key :

UNN=University of Nigeria, Nsukka

UNIZIK=Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

% of Q=Percentage of number of Library Educators in each category to the total number of Library Educators

Table 1 (a) shows that respondents who have Ph.Ds are in the majority. That is not surprising since library schools currently require library educators to acquire higher degrees, preferably, Ph.Ds.

**Table 1 (b) Years of Teaching as a Lecturer**

S/N	Years of Teaching Experience	UNN	UNIZIK	Total	% of Y
1)	1 – 5	3	-	3	23.08
2)	6 – 10	2	1	3	23.08
3)	11 – 15	1	3	4	30.77
4)	16 – 20	-	1	1	7.69
5)	21 – 25	1	-	1	7.69
6)	26 – 30	1	-	1	7.69
7)	31 and above	-	-	-	-
	Total	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.00</b>

% of Y=Percentage of number of lecturers in each category of years of experience to the total number of Library Educators

Table 1 (b) shows that library educators who have spent 11 to 15 years teaching experience are in the majority. They are senior lecturers mainly who have decided to settle down temporarily to acquire professorial status before contemplating on the next mobility. They secured 30.77%.

**Table 1(c) Position/Status of Library Educators**

S/N	Status of Educators	UNN	UNIZIK	Total	% of S
1)	Assistant lecturer	2	-	2	15.38
2)	Lecturer II	1	-	1	7.69
3)	Lecturer I	1	2	3	23.08
4)	Senior lecturer	3	2	5	38.46

5)	Associate Prof.	1	1	2	15.39
6)	Prof.	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.00</b>

% of S=Percentage of the number of lecturers in each status to the total number of library educators

In Table 1 (c), Senior lecturers have the greatest percentage (38.46%) because they decided to settle down temporarily to acquire professorial status before contemplating on the next mobility. Lecturer IIs have the least percentage (7.69%) Fewness of lecturer IIs could be attributed to poor recruitment of that caliber of academic staff by library schools' management.

## Section B

### 2 Competencies

Competencies comprise knowledge, skills/ability and attitudes. However in this study, only knowledge and skills were considered.

**Table 2 (a) Percentage of Library Educators Who Acquired Knowledge-Based Competencies from Library Schools.**

S/N	Knowledge-Based Competencies	UNN	UNIZIK	Cumulative % Average	Accepted or Not Accepted
1	Theoretical themes that	87.50	100	93.75	A

	are relevant in the field of information				
2	Theoretical themes that are growing in the field of information	75.00	80	77.50	A
3	Bibliometrics	62.50	80	71.25	A
4	Patron engagement	75.00	80	77.50	A
5	The influence of technology on the structure of information	87.50	100	93.75	A
6	Copyright and intellectual property law	50.00	40	45	N.A.
7	Evaluation of information communication tools' interfaces	37.50	40	38.75	N.A.
8	Use of information and communication technologies in records management	62.50	60	61.25	A
9	Information management	75.00	80	77.50	A
10	Knowledge management	75.00	80	77.50	A
11	Virtual librarianship	50.00	40	45.00	N.A.
12	Online cataloguing	50.00	60	55.00	A
13	Metadata development	50.00	60	55.00	A
14	Software development	50.00	60	55.00	A
15	Digital technologies such as OAI –PMH and XML	12.50	0	6.25	N.A.
16	User studies/scholarly communication	62.50	60	61.25	A

Key :

A = Accepted

NA = Not Accepted

Table 2 (a) shows that copyright and intellectual property law, evaluation of information communication tool interfaces, virtual librarianship and digital technologies such as QAI-PMH and XML were acquired by 45%, 38.75%, 45% and 6.25% of library educators

respectively, from their library schools during their school days. These percentages are below acceptable mean. It has earlier been mentioned that library educators needed additional education and these findings have testified to that assertion. These findings are consistent with those of Choi and Rasmussen, (2006), Hashim & Mokhtar (2005), Tanner (2001) and Ferreira, et. al.(2007)’s findings from their studies.

**Table 2 (b) Mean Scores of Extent of Application of Knowledge-Based Competencies to Teaching by Library Educators.**

S/N	Knowledge-Based Competencies	UNN	UNIZIK	Average Mean	Accepted or not Accepted
		$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$	
1	Theoretical themes that are relevant in the field of information	3.13	3.60	3.37	A
2	Theoretical themes that are growing in the field of information	3.13	3.40	3.27	A
3	Bibliometrics	2.38	2.40	2.39	NA
4	Patron engagement	3.00	3.40	3.20	A
5	The influence of technology on the structure of information	2.63	2.60	2.62	A
6	Copyright and intellectual property law	2.25	2.20	2.23	N.A.
7	Evaluation of information communication tools' interfaces	2.38	2.20	2.29	N.A.
8	Use of information and communication technologies in records management	2.38	2.20	2.29	N.A.
9	Information management	2.88	3.00	2.94	A
10	Knowledge management	2.75	3.20	2.98	A
11	Virtual librarianship	2.50	2.60	2.55	A
12	Online cataloguing	2.38	3.00	2.69	A
13	Metadata development	2.50	2.60	2.55	A
14	Software development	2.13	2.00	2.07	N.A.
15	Digital technologies such as OAI – PMH and XML	2.13	2.80	2.47	N.A.
16	User studies/scholarly	2.88	2.80	2.84	A

communication				
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Key: A = Accepted

NA = Not Accepted

Table 2 (b) shows that bibliometrics (2.39), copyright and intellectual property law (2.23), evaluation of information communication tools' interfaces (2.29), use of information and communication technologies in records management (2.29), software development (2.07) and digital technologies such as OAI-PMH and XML (2.47) are less taught in library schools in South East States of Nigeria by library educators. These findings underscored the fact that the lecturers were not well groomed in such knowledge during their school days. The findings are in consonance with the findings of Choi and Rasmussen (2006) 's study.

**Table 2 (c) Percentage of Library Educators Who Acquired skills'-Based Competencies for Educating Academic Librarians**

S/ N	Skills'-Based Competencies	UNN	UNIZIK	Cumulative % Average	Accepted or not Accepted
1	Command of information and communication technology products to relate to library services	87.50	100	93.75	A
2	Change management	50.00	80	65.00	A
3	Marketing library services	75.00	80	77.50	A
4	Technical knowledge of web page development	50.00	60	55.00	A
5	Management of information unit	50.00	60	55.00	A
6	Knowledge of trouble-shooting with respect to computer technology	50.00	60	55.00	A
7	Website development skill	25.00	20	22.50	N.A.
8	Web page development	37.50	20	28.75	N.A.
9	Digital library development	62.50	80	71.25	A

10	Institutional repositories management	75.00	80	77.50	A
11	Assessment and evaluation of library resources	62.50	60	61.25	A

Table 2 (c) shows that website development and web page development skills were acquired by 22.50% and 28.75% library educators respectively. These percentages are below acceptable level. These findings have also been observed by Chowdhury and Chowdhury (2003).

**Table 2(d ) Mean Scores of Extent of Application of Skills'-Based Competencies by Library Educators**

S/N	Core Skills	UNN		Accepted or not Accepted
		X̄	X̄	
1	Command of information and communication technology products to relate to library services	3.00	3.60	A
2	Change management	2.88	2.80	A
3	Marketing library services	2.75	3.20	A
4	Technical knowledge of web page development	2.38	2.40	N.A
5	Management of information unit	2.63	3.00	A
6	Knowledge of trouble-shooting with respect to computer technology	2.75	3.20	A
7	Website development skill	2.38	2.00	N.A
8	Web page development	2.50	2.60	A
9	Digital library development	2.88	2.60	A
10	Institutional repositories management	2.63	2.60	A
11	Assessment and evaluation of library resources	2.75	2.60	A

Table 2 (d) shows that technical knowledge of web page development and website development skills are less applied by library educators to teaching. These findings similarly underscored the fact that library educators are not sufficiently trained in such skills. These findings confirmed continuing importance of web page and website development skills and they are in consonance with the findings of Chowdhury and Chowdhury (2003) 's study.

Respondents agreed that they acquired technical knowledge of web page development in item 4 of Table 2 ( c ) but they have not had any challenges to enable them display the skills. This explains respondents non-acceptance of application of technical knowledge of web page development in Table 2 ( d ).

**Table 2 (e) Mean Scores of Challenges Encountered by Library Educators in the Execution of Their Duties with Respect to Competencies**

S/N	Challenges	UNN X̄	UNIZIK X̄	Average X̄	Accepted or Not Accepted 1
1	There are challenges of acquiring advanced knowledge to augment what I have traditionally learnt	3.13	3.2	3.17	A
2	There are challenges of acquiring ICT skills for operating library functions	3.25	3.2	3.23	A
3	There is lack of control of emerging and rapidly changing ICT products for use in library practicals	3.00	3.4	3.20	A
4	Library and information science curricula cover more of traditional librarianship	3.38	3.6	3.49	A
5	There is lack of current curricula in the area of ICT	3.13	3.2	3.17	A
6	There is shortage of experienced LIS mentors	3.13	3.0	3.07	A
7	There is lack of control on what to teach in LIS	2.75	2.4	2.58	A
8	Some experienced LIS educators are reluctant to mentor their successors	3.00	2.8	2.9	A
9	There is lack of incorporating and exploiting the new technologies and products into LIS educators' services	2.88	3.6	3.24	A
10	There is lack of developing teaching skills in library educators	3.00	2.6	2.8	A

Table 2 (e) shows that respondents agreed with all the listed items. They constitute challenges confronting library educators. These findings are consistent with the findings

of Chiware (2007) s' study and observations of Canadian Association of Research Libraries, (CARL) (2010)

**Table 2( f ). Mean Scores of Strategies to Enhance Competencies of Library Educators**

S/N	Strategies	UNN X̄	UNIZIK X̄	Accepted or Not Accepted
1	Required competencies should be identified by LIS schools	3.75	3.62	A
2	Necessary facilities should be put in place	3.75	3.41	A
3	LIS educators should benefit from human development programme	3.63	3.45	A
4	LIS educators should be groomed in computer technology	3.63	3.62	A
5	LIS educators should be groomed in communications technologies	3.75	3.42	A
6	LIS educators should be groomed in networking technologies	3.73	3.84	A
7	Educators should be versed in information literacy skills, e.g. use of information media	3.75	3.42	A
8	LIS curricula should embrace generic skills such as leadership skills	3.75	3.80	A
9	Library schools should share resources and expertise to cover all types of competencies	3.63	3.62	A
10	LIS educators should be knowledgeable in collections development especially in records management	3.75	3.43	A
11	LIS educators should be versed in electronic/digital librarianship.	3.63	3.60	A

Table 2 (f) shows that library educators concurred with the items which have been listed as strategies that could enhance their competencies. These findings also agree with those of Ferreira et. al. (2007)'s study.

## **Conclusion**

The needs of library educators present two main aspects. The first one is the need to emphasize acquisition and updating of knowledge.-based competencies. The other should address the need to improve acquisition of skills'-based competencies.

Library educators are supposed to impart knowledge-based and skills'-based competencies to their students. However, it has been observed from the study that they have not acquired core ICT-based competencies from the library schools which they attended. This fact has manifested in the extent of application of these competencies to teaching. Consequently, there is a correlation between acquired competencies from library schools which they attended and the extent of application of these competencies to teaching. There is thus lack of mastery of core ICT competencies among library educators in library schools in South East Nigeria

Challenges encountered by library educators with respect to competencies could be ascribed to non-currency of the library schools' curricular and strategies geared toward enhancing their competencies bore testimony to that fact. It could be concluded therefore that library educators in S. E. Nigeria are yet to become information and communication technologically savvy.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Library educators should be given thorough exposure through sponsorship to continuing education programmes, workshops and conferences.

- (2) They need to update their ICT knowledge-based and skills'-based competencies. The first step is to become computer literate. The situation should be improved by provision of internet access as well as encouraging them to exploit internet facilities. To this end, there is need to engage ICT knowledgeable professional or ICT savvy library educator to mentor others.
- (3) The curricula of library schools address traditional librarianship courses mostly. In the 21<sup>st</sup>. century where electronic/digital librarianship holds sway, revision of library schools' curricular to update course content in order to reflect prevailing situation is apt and prudent
- .
- (4) Library schools should consider working in partnership with employers of labour and their organizations. This arrangement will guarantee opportunities whereby seasoned professionals could be invited occasionally to deliver lectures and organize workshops on ICT competencies for library educators.
- (5) A similar study should be conducted for library professionals to determine their needed core competencies.

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