LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 7, Number 1, 2025.
Available online: https://journals.fulafia.edu.ng/index.php/ljlis
ISSN: Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS AMONG LIBRARIANS WORKING IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study investigates digital literacy skills among librarians working in university libraries in Benue State Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. Three objectives and five research questions guided the study and one null hypotheses was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study was 76 librarians in the five university libraries in Benue State from which purposive sampling technique was used to select three university libraries in Benue State. Census sampling technique was adopted where all the 66 librarians in the three university libraries were used as the sample. A structured questionnaire titled: Digital Literacy Skills among Librarians in University Libraries Questionnaire (DLSLULQ) was used for data collection with 4-point scales. The instrument was given to two experts from Federal University Lafia to ascertain face and content validity by ensuring that items in the questionnaire matched with the research questions by modifications of some items. A trial testing technique was adopted to ensure reliability of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the data. The output yielded an Alpha coefficient of 0.96. The data was analyzed using simple percentage for demographic data, mean and standard deviation for research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings show that electronic mailing, social networking, use of PDAs, mobile phones and internet surfing are the major DLS amongst librarians. It was also discovered that librarians acquired DLS through colleague's assistance, trial and error, IT programmes and formal education while librarian's level of use of DLS is low amongst other findings. The researcher recommends that management of university libraries should provide training for librarians so as to help update their knowledge in application of digital skills and digital skill competence should be giving more attention during recruitment of librarians amongst others.
Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Literacy, Skills, Librarians, University Libraries*

Introduction

In a long memory of human race, libraries have served as source of information and a reliable place where the most desirable information can be sought, but in recent times, it has continually seen a decline in patronage. This could be credited to old workflows, limited collaborations, ineffective service paradigm, lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and a host of other challenges. The ineffectiveness of traditional librarianship in the face of continuous technological demands, current realities, and the need to improve on services in the libraries has become more concern to librarians. Also, with the continued increase of competitors or other information services providers such as bloggers and rival information platforms like the Google and web 2.0 with more sophisticated software, hardware, products and services, the sustenance of libraries has become a function of its creative abilities to remain relevant in the face of technological development. Thus, for this survival to subsist, university libraries must repackage their services, enhance the skills of the staff and leverage technology for improved services.

Campbell (2006) stated that digital technology has pervaded every aspect of our civilization, it has set forth a revolution not only in how we store and transmit recorded knowledge, historical records, and a host of other kinds of communication but also in how we seek and gain access to these materials. Sharma (2009) confirmed that digital resources are increasingly available in Nigerian universities thereby making it possible for students and school staff to access and use current and relevant materials for studies, research, learning and job. Over the last decade, a significant transformation has been noticed in collection development policies and practices. Print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials. Information dissemination among the university communities has been tremendously enhanced with the introduction of digital technology facilities in the universities. Technologies are changing and there is need for both professional and para-professional library staff to embrace them. Librarians need much more in this digital age to embrace digital literacy skills on their work than ever before. Digital literacy helps professionals of all works of life to develop skills that can add to their economic status and improve their overall job performance and standard of living. There is need for librarians to have digital literacy skills, so that they can use them to progress on their jobs and on their careers. With these skills, librarians will be more equipped for resource sharing, social networking, surfing the net, instant messaging and blogging and host of others digital oriented activities. These skills can also help them on their jobs to assist users get desired information and

education. Since these are skills that can be learnt, digital skills are skills that all information professionals should thrive to possess. Therefore the findings of the study will be relevant for making decisions by library management for employment processes, the training and development of librarians and equipping libraries with digital resources for adequate learning.

Statement of the Problem

Digital literacy is a great tool for development. It has been observed that there is progression in the use of technology which can improve economic opportunities for the poor, increase delivery of services to the underserved, improve management and benefit social change. World Bank Group strategies in ICT have focused on promoting reform, increasing access, supporting ICT human capacity, and ICT applications. But access and use of the digital resources is still much lower in developing countries like Nigeria. The education standard of Nigeria is falling every day. More so, digital/computer levels have been noticed to be very low amongst university librarians. In the developed countries, universities are continuously updating their curriculum for digital literacy to keep up with accelerating technological developments. This often includes computers and a wide range of digital gadgets in the librarians which are proficiently handled and managed by librarians for proper service delivery for users. The use of educational software, digital gadgets and resources to teach curriculum, library and course materials are now being made available to students, library users and librarians most especially. In Nigeria the revised is the case. There is lack of utilization of digital literacy skills in our libraries, many librarians in Nigeria seem to lack skills on how to operate the computer, access the email or interact through the internet. Many librarians also seem not to possess the skills to use the computer to access information and automate their libraries. Librarians are faced with so many challenges on their jobs in the acquisition of both print and information resources, organization, retrieval and dissemination to all patrons and potential users of these information resources for their accessibility and utilization. Librarians however are not finding it very easy to manage the influx of information. These have constituted a challenge in the provision, maintenance and management of information resources in many academic libraries all over the nations. It is in view of this that digital literacy skills among librarians working in university libraries is investigated.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out if librarians possess and use certain digital literacy skills in university libraries in Benue State and how these skills influence

their jobs as professionals. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- identify he types of digital literacy skills (DLS) librarians possess in university libraries in Benue State
- find out how librarians acquired their DLS
- determine the level of use of DLS
- how does DLS possessed by librarians help in service delivery
- find out the level of proficiency of librarians with DLS

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study;

- What are the types of DLS acquired by librarians in university libraries in Benue State?
- How do librarians acquired their Digital Literacy Skills?
- What is the level of use of Digital Literacy Skills by librarians?
- What influence does the use of Digital Literacy Skills have on service delivery among librarians?
- What is the level of proficiency of Digital Literacy Skills among librarians?

Research Hypothesis

One hypotheses was formulated for the study and to be tested at a 0.05 level of significance include the following;

Ho1: There is no significant influence of digital literacy skill acquisition on librarian service delivery in the university libraries

Review of Related Literature

Digital literacy skills of librarians are those technological and or computer skills and knowledge required by librarians to be able to fully exploit information services in digital environment. Oyedokun, Oyewumi, Akanbi, and Laaro, (2018) viewed digital literacy skills of library staff to be those relevant skills and knowledge acquired by those working in the library to be able to fully exploit information search, retrieval, and delivery using electronic format. According to Ojiegbe (2010) it is demonstrating the knowledge, skills, experience and attributes necessary to carry out a defined function effectively. It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform appropriately and professionally a given task in a work place. Digital literacy skills are one of the most essential in daily work procedures and the fastest expanding skill sets today, and are currently in huge demand across multiple ally

markets (Buarki, 2015). More than just as an industry of its own, digital literacy skills has also permeated into different job functions evolving from being a specified niche to becoming a basic requirement across different verticals. The increasing dominance and explosion of digital content has prompted information managers to redefine themselves over time. In the last few years, the swift advances in information technology have conveyed revolution in the way in which information is acquired, processed, presented, stored, disseminated and accessed. However, numerous studies have attempted to address issues related to ICT skills as they are required by librarians in order to meet information needs of their patrons (Bhangu, 2013). NwosuI. Okeke, and Ejedafiru, (2013) recommended the need for strategic and specialized ICT skills among staff of library schools in order to enhance their optimum productivity. Abubakar (2010) posited that digital literacy skill and its applications improve service delivery in libraries and other institutions charged with information provision. According to him, most library services such as, acquisition, cataloguing and classification and reference services which were performed manually are now performed electronically using ICTs. This has helped to reduce time spent in rendering these services and with little mistakes. The implication is that the library personnel who are at the forefront of information service delivery in these libraries must possess ICT skills.

Concept of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to effectively and confidently use a range of digital technology to fined, evaluate, create, and communicate information, encompassing both technical and cognitive skills.

Bawden (2008) defined digital literacy is the set of attitudes, understanding and skills to handle and communicate information and knowledge effectively, in a variety of media and formats. Digital literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments. Digital Literacy means the ability to use technology competently, interpret and understand digital content and assess its credibility, create, research, and communicate with appropriate tools. Digital Literacy programs are an essential element of media education and involve basic learning tools and a curriculum in critical thinking and creativity (www. commonsensemedia. org/ digitalliteracy.htm). According to Wikipedia (2015), digital literacy is the knowledge, skills, and behaviours used in a broad range of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop PCs, all of which are seen as network rather than computing devices. Digital literacy initially focused on digital skills

and stand-alone computers, but the focus has moved from stand-alone to network devices. Digital literacy skill is a more contemporary term but is limited to practical abilities in using digital devices (such as laptops and smartphones). Digital literacy is the marrying of the two terms digital and literacy; however, it is much more than a combination of the two terms. (Warschwer and Tina 2010). Digital literacy is the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information using a range of digital technologies. It requires one "to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms" (Jenkins, 2009 p12. Persons who are digitally literate person possess a wide range of digital skills which includes knowledge of the basic principles of computing devices, skills in using computer networks, having ability to engage in online communities and social networks with adherence to behavioural protocols, be able to find, capture and evaluate information, an understanding of the societal issues raised by digital technologies and possess critical thinking skills (Gui and Argentin, 2011). Finn (2004) takes a rather narrower, utilitarian view, stating that digital literacy is a means for ascertaining the computer skills competency of an individual to function in the workplace.

The Need for Digital Literacy in University Libraries

This dynamic new world requires new comprehension and communication skills, as well as new codes of conduct, to ensure that these powerful media and technologies are used responsibly and ethically. Much of the interaction in this digital world happens at a distance, which can diminish the rules of cause and effect, action and consequence. Additionally, much of digital life takes place under the cloak of anonymity, making it easier to participate in unethical and even illegal behaviours. According to Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009), the primary purpose of university libraries is to support teaching, learning, and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of, the institution's mission and goals. In addition, library resources and services should be sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency to support the institution's curriculum. As a result of this, university library is often considered the most important resource center A of the parent institution. Adequate library resources and services at the appropriate level for degrees offered should be made available to support the intellectual, cultural, and technical development of students enrolled in Nigerian universities.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study was 76 which comprised librarians in the five university libraries in Benue

State from which purposive sampling technique was used to select three university libraries in Benue State. Census sampling technique was adopted where all the 66 librarians in the three university libraries were used as the sample. A structured questionnaire titled: Digital literacy skills among librarians in university libraries questionnaire (DLSALULQ) was used for data collection with 4 point scales. The instrument was given to two experts from Federal university Lafia to ascertain face and content validity by ensuring that items in the questionnaire matched with the research questions by modifications of some items. A trial testing technique was adopted to ensure reliability of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the data. The output yielded the Alpha coefficient of 0.96. Out of 66 copies of the questionnaire administered, 64 copies were found valid for analysis. The data was analysed using simple percentage for demographic data, mean and standard for research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses.

Results and Findings

Table 1. Distribution of the Population of the Study

Library	No of Librarians
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi	**30**
Benue State University Makurdi	**23**
University of Mkar, mkar, Gboko	**7**
Federal university of health technology Otukpo	**13**
National open University of Nigeria	**3**
Total	**76**

Table 2: Distribution of the Sample of the Study

Libraries	No of Librarians
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi	30
Benue State University Makurdi	23
Federal university of health technology Otukpo	13
Total	**66**

Research Question One: What are the types of DLS possessed by librarians in University libraries in university libraries in Benue State?

DLS	Frequency	Percentage
Electronic mailing	65	88
Electronic conferencing	9	12
Mobile phone	56	76
Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)	48	65
Computer accessories navigation	33	45
Internet surfing	53	72
Computer operation	49	66
Social Networking	42	57
Multimedia projecting	5	7
Electronic Bulletin Board	10	13

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Table 3 showed that the services that librarians use their DLS for Scholarly communications 74(100%) ranked highest followed by internet services 66(89%) while programming 3(4%) ranked lowest. This implies librarians indulge more on scholarly communications. The purpose of this may not be unconnected with the fact that librarians in academic libraries are academics and the "publish or perish syndrome" could be the reason for this observation.

Research Question Two

How librarians do acquired their Digital Literacy Skills?

The result in Table 4 shows that the librarians in sampled universities acquired digital literacy skills through trial and error was 42 (57%), colleague's support 60(81%), self-study using user guide 35(47%), training offered by management 23(31%), formal education 51(69%), attending seminars and workshop 44(59%) and IT programmes 64 (87%). Hence, it could be inferred that librarians acquire digital literacy skill mostly through colleague's support, IT programmes and formal education.

Acquisition Technique	Frequency	Percentages%
By trial and error	42	57
Colleague support	60	81
Self-study using user's guide	35	47
Training offered by library management	23	31
Formal Education	51	69
Attending workshops and seminars	44	59
IT programmes	64	87

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Research Question Three: What is the level of use of Digital Literacy Skills by Librarians?

Table 5 showed that the level of use of DLS to be 5(7%) very frequent, 9(12%) frequent, 26(35%) moderate, 24(32%) low and 10(14%) very low with no non-use of DLS. The results show that the level of use of DLS is moderate and low.

Table 5 level of use of digital literacy skills

Level of use	Frequency	Percentage%
Very frequent	5	8
Frequent	9	12
Moderate	26	35
Low	24	32
Very low	10	0
Non – use	-	0
Total	**74**	**100**

Research Question Four. What influence does the use of Digital Literacy Skills have on service delivery among librarians?

Table 6: influence of digital literacy skills on service delivery

Influence	Frequency	Percentages %
Highly positive	28	38
positive	26	35
Insignificant	10	14
Negative	6	8
Highly negative	4	5
Total	**74**	**100**

Table 6 showed that the influence of DLS on service delivery is highly positive with 28(38%), 26(35%) positive, 10(14%) insignificant, 6(8%) negative and 4(5%) highly negative. Majority of respondents believed that the influence of DLS is good for service delivery.

Research Question Five: What is the level of proficiency of Digital Literacy Skills among librarians?

Proficiency	Frequency	Percentages%
Very high	6	8
High	9	12
Moderate	17	23
Low	33	45
Very low	9	12
Non – proficient	-	-
Total	**74**	**100**

Proficiency levels of DLS was shown in table 8 as 6(8%) very high, 9(12%) high, 17(23%) moderate, 33(45%) low, 9(12%) very low and no non-proficient librarians.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of digital literacy skill acquisition on librarian service delivery in the university libraries.

Decision Rule: if the critical value is greater than the calculated value, then accept null hypothesis and vice versa.

Table 6: Influence of digital literacy skills on service delivery.

Variable	N	Mean	Std.Dev	P	Df	X2Cit	X2calc
Skill Acquisition	74	28.0	15.19	0.05	15	24.996	55.06
Service Delivery	74	8.75	4.01				

From the analysis, the critical value of chi-square was 21.03 while the calculated value was 55.08. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate accepted. The acquisition of DLS was correlated with service delivery of librarians and it revealed that there is a significant influence between skill acquisition and service delivery (X2Calc.=55.08, Df=15, P.)

Discussion of Findings

Result from the research question one shows the series that librarians use their DLS for scholarly communications is ranked highest. This implies that, librarian indulge in more scholarly communications. The second findings of this study revealed that sampled universities acquired digital skills through trial and error, colleagues support, self-study using user guide etc.

Findings on research question three shows the level of use of DLS is moderate and low among librarians. The fourth finding show that the influence of

DLS on service delivery is highly positive. Majority of respondents believe that the influence of DLS is good for service delivery. The final finding on proficiency level shows that DLS is very low and non-proficient librarians.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings

- Management of university libraries should provide training for librarians so as to help update their knowledge in application of digital skills
- Digital skill competence should be giving more attention during recruitment of librarians
- Nigerian government should speed up on-going improvement of power supply
- Management should make available human and technical resources that are up to date in university libraries so as to encourage librarians to use the resources
- Library management should continue to mount pressure on organizational management to invest more in digital libraries services/skill development

Conclusion

The acquisition digital literacy skills by librarians have been discovered to enhance individual service delivery and career progression. For librarians to fulfil their primary aim of meeting the information needs of users and the institutions, the librarians must be empowered with all necessary digital literacy skills to accomplish their mission. Librarians of this present age have very low knowledge of DLS in the sampled states with a little level of use and proficiency in the skills. Skills have been acquired through informal means like through colleagues, trial and error and sometimes through assistance from friends. Librarians are asset to libraries, therefore training and development of DLS will enhance productivity. The level of expertise of the librarians will determine to a large extent how effectively they are able to perform their jobs and carry out routine jobs in the library. When libraries are automated and functioning, the librarians are also very satisfied with how they perform their jobs and they are also well motivated and progress on their career. However, the challenges with the utilization of these skills must be checked and corrected.

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