LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 5, Number 1, 2024.
https://lalibjournals.org/index.php/LJLIS
ISSN: Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

JOB KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY AS PREREQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY OF LIBRARIANS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE COLLEGES OF NURSING SCIENCES IN NIGER STATE

Dr. Abubakar N. Usman (CLN, MNLA)
Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University,
Lapai, Niger State

Abstract
Librarians are the professionally trained information providers as such they no longer play passive role, rather they assume an active role. This study discourses the necessary skills and competencies needed for librarians to discharge their services efficiently and effectively in health related institutions. The scope of study covers Colleges of Nursing Sciences in Niger State and the population comprised thirty (30) librarians from the three Colleges of Nursing Sciences in Niger State. Findings of the study revealed that librarians in these Nursing Colleges are following the trends in the profession. More so acquisition of knowledge based- skills and competences were adjudged as one of core areas that if well harnessed could go a long way to improve the performance of librarians. Librarians are trained information providers; as such they are expected to acquire those skills that could enhance their service delivery. The study suggests review of school curricula to reflect the current trends in the field of librarianship. Librarians should be exposed to modern technological tools or search engines to enable them perform and provide information fast and quick and lastly librarians should engage in resource sharing since no library is an island of itself. Through this platform skills acquired could be learnt and shared among themselves thereby breeding cross fertilization of skills and ideas which would invariably improve their service delivery.
Keywords: Job knowledge, Service delivery, Competence, Librarians, Nursing Sciences

Introduction

Improved service delivery of librarians for a better job performance cannot be over emphasised. The librarians could not perform effectively and efficiently their assigned tasks unless they are versatile and up to date with their job knowledge and the their level of competency on their assigned responsibility. According to Eze et –al (2010), knowledge is dynamic, changing with time both in content and in format. In order words, services of libraries are no more the same. in the content and services delivery as we are now in the internet era. This goes to say job knowledge of librarians is a cardinal factor upon which librarians can openly show case their intelligence in the course of discharging their duties. To explain knowledge –based value creation within an organization,

North and Kumta (2012) developed "The knowledge Ladder". It visualises clear interrelation for terms like symbols, data, information, knowledge, action, competence

and competitiveness and shows how knowledge is related to competence. The authors differentiate between three levels of knowledge: "Know what", "Know why" and "Know how". "Know what" is the result of information internalization, e.g through participation in training. "Know how" is the result of transformation of "Know what" through application. "Know why" is specific motives to apply knowledge. The knowledge of ICT has gone a long way in enhancing information delivery provision and dissemination by librarians. The traditional methods of information dissemination have given way to electronic means of communicating; hence acquiring relevant skills to handle information in any area becomes vital (Nikieru, 2016). One can therefore say without missing words that job knowledge and competence married together and form a major yard stick for librarians better and improved job performance. Campbell (2012 listed job- specific technical task proficiency, non-job specific technical proficiency, written and oral communication task proficiency, demonstrating effort, maintaining personal discipline, facilitating peer and team performance, supervision or leadership, and management or administration as dimensions of job performance. Competencies must be relevant to the particular job requirements or type of information organizations. With this, health related information and its sources most be provided for a good service delivery.

Given the above assertion, a balanced and good bibliographic control, processing of library materials, ensuring better job performance by librarians demands good job knowledge and competency. The three Nursing Colleges of Sciences in Niger State are located at Bida, Minna and Kotongora.. The College of Nursing Sciences, School of Nursing Bida was established in 1976, after the creation of Niger State. College of Nursing Sciences, School of Mid-Wifery, Minna was established in 1978, while College pf Nursing Sciences, School of Nursing and Mid-Wifery Kotongora took off in January 2018.

Job Knowledge and Competencies of Librarians in the Health Sector

The role of librarians in providing information to health workers in their organisation cannot be over emphasised. .Eze et-al (2010) in their work titled public libraries driving access to knowledge in the 21st Century, emphasised on access to knowledge for health management. Emphasising on the importance and the need for information provision to health workers, Eze et- al (2010) and Tyerman, stated that: Achievement and realization of all the millennium development goals depends on the level of access to information and knowledge through libraries. Librarians should liaise with government agencies participate actively in every government campaign, workshops, seminars and other awareness programmes This will enable them to collect, organise, translate, package and repackage information to the language that will be understood by users for the actualization of such goals. In this type of foray, librarian's job knowledge and competence come to play in carrying out their responsibilities effectively. Accordingly, (Tyerman, 1996), opines that libraries have the potential of being key needed to combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Providing good services to patrons make them feel good. It is to be accepted that service is not manufactured but being performed by people with better and well-equipped job knowledge and competencies. According to Nkeiru and Ngozi (2010), competencies are those behaviours that excellent performers exhibit consistently and effectively. A behavioural basis is necessary because effective assessment of competencies depends on observed behaviour.

Digitization and Information Revolution

Most libraries today are, in fact, already hybrid libraries- they own and subscribe to range of resources and services which are supplied in a variety of formats and media print monographs and serials, electronic journals, abstract and indexing services. An increasing number of end users are also accessing these services from outside the home institution: users and services are both distributed. Users access these services mostly in the library, where these services are made available and managed by librarians who are knowledgeable and competent in their profession. Libraries have always made information available. From the earliest days, they housed and facilitated access to information, through selection, aggregation, organization service and ongoing care of their materials, as shared good. The above mentioned services and the others alike are being provided by librarians who are the information professionals, and as such they must be expected to be knowledgeable and competent in their profession.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the knowledge and competency as a prerequisite for effective and efficient service delivery among the librarians in colleges of Nursing Sciences in Niger State. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Find out knowledge based-competencies among librarians
2. Find out skill- based competences as required from library schools
3. What extent is job knowledge and competency related to service delivery
4 Identify strategies that enhance job knowledge and competency on service delivery

Related Literature

Various reputable authors define job knowledge and competency in their own words and perception. Marshall et-al in (Okoye 2013), defined competency 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. Okoye (2013) carried out a study on assessment of competencies of professional Librarians in Nigeria. The paper investigated professional competencies that are currently expected of library professionals in academic libraries. The population comprised 89 professionals in South East of Nigeria Federal Universities. Structured questionnaire were used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using percentages, mean scores and correlation

coefficient. Findings of the study showed positive correlation between acquired and applied skills from library school and place of work respectively Elements of knowledge such as metadata development, software development and digital technologies were acquired from library school. Skills such as website development, web page design and maintenance and data base management were acquired from library school. The paper recommended revision of library schools curricula to make the content reflect prevailing demands of the labour market

Choi and Rasmussen(2006), carried out a study on identification of perception of the knowledge and skills vital for performing the job of digital librarians. Their respondents rated five highest important skills and knowledge required in performing their work as, communication, leadership skills, understanding of digital library and architecture and software, knowledge of the needs of users, and knowledge of technical and quality standards Respondents were also asked to indicate the most relevant valuable courses they had taken in library and information science skill for performing their current work. The most frequently mentioned courses were in the areas of cataloguing, collection development and management, system analysis and information technology. The result of the study showed overall understanding of the complex interplay of software, lack of vocabulary to communicate to technical staff, knowledge of wed related languages and technologies among others. The findings showed that professionals should be required to have more breadth and length of knowledge and skills across the dimension of professional training on management skills through practical experience.

Ferrein et- al (2007), conducted a survey research on knowledge acquired by respondents via academic education. These were cataloguing, classification, reference services among others. The result showed that skills such as those relating to information and communication technologies, interpersonal relations, management of information units, technical knowledge, research methodology among others were not taught which could have enhanced service delivery of librarians.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study. A total of thirty (30) librarians working in the three schools of nursing sciences of Niger State form the population of the study. Designed and structured questionnaire were the instrument for data collection, while the data gathered were analysed using simple frequencies and percentages. Due to the small size of the population, all librarians were sampled. The research questions were built on 4- point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). 2.5 were taken as criterion mean value. This is to say any calculated mean value above 2.5 was regarded as a positive score, while any mean value less than 2.5 was considered negative and reject

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the data analysis and findings from questionnaires completed by the respondents from the colleges under study

Respondents were presented with components of knowledge as regards better job performance in table 1.

Table 1 Knowledge Based Competencies Components

S /N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	Possession of deep knowledge of books	19	9	2	0	3.5
2	Ability to promote reading	16	13	1	0	2.9
3	Ability to collaborate and communicate effectively and efficiently	11	17	2	0	3.3
4	Ability for quick and fast adaptation to new tools, systems etc	15	12	2	1	2.8
5	Ability to use technology to enhance library services	18	10	1	1	3.5
6	Ability to present information clearly	17	11	2	0	2.9
7	Ability/possession of team work spirit among the colleagues	10	14	4	2	3.7
8	Capable of evaluating resources to address users needs	20	7	3	0	3.5
9	Deep and good knowledge of filling information as well as its maintaining them	11	17	1	2	3.3
10	Knowledge of professional roles and available services in the library	10	15	4	1	3.1

Key: A= Accepted

Table 1 shows the rate of responses to the questionnaire distributed to the respondents. Responses from the respondents showed that possession of deep knowledge of books, ability to use technology and capability of evaluating resources to address users' needs rank high with mean score of 3.5, while the other components falls between mean score of 3.5 and 2.8

Table 2 Skill- Based Competences as required from Library Schools

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISON
1	Library marketing	18	10	0	2	3.5	A
2	Active participation in library activities	20	7	3	0	3.6	A
3	Leadership skills	14	11	4	1	2.8	A
4	Presentation skills	11	16	1	3	2.9	A
5	Risk management skills	9	12	7	2	2.6	A
6	Human resources development skills	16	10	1	3	2.8	A
7	Commitment to learning and teaching	19	8	3	0	3.5	A
8	Collection development and management skills	10	17	1	2	3.2	A

Key: A=Accepted

In table 2, respondents were asked to indicate components of skill- based competences as required from library schools. Responses from the respondents shows that the majority were regarded to be effective for effective and efficient for service delivery. Active participation in library activities was ranked high showing mean score of 3.6 and followed by Library marketing with mean score of 3.5

Table 3: Extent to which Job Knowledge and Competency related to Performance

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Patron engagement	10	19	1	0	3.6	A
2	Information management	17	11	1	1	3.5	A
3	Evaluation of informa tion and communication technologies in records management	12	16	0	1	2.8	A
4	Knowledge management	18	7	3	2	3.8	A
5	Online cataloguing	11	16	2	0	3.3	A
6	Software development	9	14	6	1	2.7	A
7	Metadata development	17	8	1	4	3.3	A
8	Evaluation of informatio n and communication tools interfaces	13	14	2	1	3.0	A

Key: A= Accepted

The research question was designed to establish the influence of job knowledge and competency to job performance. The respondents were asked to indicate if in their

opinion they agree with any of the listed items as regards improved job performance. Majority of the respondents confirmed that job knowledge and competency is key to better and improved job performance with reference to the listed items. Knowledge management with mean score of 3.8 was ranked the highest, followed by patron engagement with mean score of 3.6 respectively.

Table **4 Strategies that enhance Job Knowledge and Competency on Service Delivery**

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Librarians should be creative in their Profession	17	11	1	1	3.1	A
2	Library schools should revise their curricula to reflect current trends in the profession	20	8	2	0	3.7	A
3	There is need for internship for library and graduates of information science	15	12	I	2	2.8	A
4	Librarians should be flexible,	12	17	0	1	3.3	A
5	Library and information science educators should help students obtain core competences by instilling self confidence in them to acquire skills which were not taught in library schools	12	16	2	0	3.0	A
6	Librarians must be friendly at all times	6	22	1	1	3.0	A
7	Librarians must have broad overview knowledge of life	17	10	2	1	3.4	A

Key: A== Accepted

In Table 6, respondents were asked to indicate if the following items could enhance job knowledge and competency on service delivery. The result in Table 4 revealed that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the items listed in table 4 as they can enhance job knowledge and competency with library revising their curricula to reflect current trends in their profession ranking highest with mean score of 3.7. This is followed by flexibility of librarians to handle the patron's needs with mean score of 3. 3.

Discussion of Findings

Job knowledge and competence are said to be the bed rock upon which better and efficient and effective service delivery is hinged on. Services of librarians in these institutions and their level of job knowledge and competence need to be appraised in view of the strategic nature and value they played in the society and that of their users who are medically inclined. Possession of deep knowledge of books, ability to use technology and capability of evaluating resources to address users' needs are the most knowledge-based competences of librarians. Others include ability to use technology, ability to adapt quickly to new trends and systems were also listed as components of knowledge-based competences.

The study also revealed that active participation in library activities and library marketing are major skill- based competences as required from library schools In addition to these components are leadership skills, presentation skills and risk management skills. In evaluating the importance of job knowledge and competence as it relates to performance, knowledge management and patron engagement are vital to and plays a major role to performance. Others are online cataloguing, software development, metadata development and ability to evaluate information and communication tools. The result of the findings on strategies that could enhance job knowledge and competency on service delivery identified by the respondents includes revision of curricula to reflect current trends in the profession, possession of broad overview knowledge of life, flexibility of librarians, instil self-confidence in students to acquire skills which were not taught in library schools among others.

Conclusion

Librarians in these nursing colleges are following the trends in the profession. More so acquisition of knowledge based- skill and competences were adjudged as one of core areas that if well harnessed could go a long way to improve the performance of librarians. Librarians are professional information providers; as such they are expected to acquire those skills that could enhance their service delivery

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School library curricula should reflect the current trends in the field of librarianship
2. Librarians should be exposed to new technological tools or search engines to enable them provide information fast and quick
3. Libraries should engage in resource sharing since no library is an island of itself. Through this platform skills acquired could be learnt and shared among themselves thereby improving their service delivery
4. Librarians that are science based be employed to work in the health related institutional libraries for fast, quick, effective and efficient service delivery.
5. Librarians working in health related centres should be encouraged to undergo training in elementary medical courses that could enhance their performance in their library
6. The school management should endeavour to provide current and relevant books and non- book materials in the library.

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