

Information Literacy Skills as factors Influencing Library Service Delivery in Public Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

Library service delivery will continue to be desired due to the diversity of information demands of patrons and the academic community. This study investigated information literacy skills as a factor influencing library service delivery of librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The survey research design was used in this study. The population for the study is one hundred and seventy-four (174) professional librarians from seventeen (17) public universities (federal and state) in South-West, Nigeria. The total enumeration method was used for comprehensive coverage of the librarians in the study. The questionnaire was employed as the research instrument for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science version 25. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the level of information literacy skills among librarians was very high on a scale of 4. The findings further revealed that information literacy skills influenced library service delivery among librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study concluded that information literacy skills are a crucial factor that enhanced library service delivery. However, the study recommended that the level of information literacy skills among librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria was high, appraising the librarians will ensure that the factors that make library service delivery effective are continually in place.

Keywords -Information Literacy Skills, Professional Librarians, Library Service Delivery and Nigeria

Introduction

Service delivery is the interaction between a provider and a customer where the provider offers assistance that is to be delivered effectively, reliably, and in a customer-friendly approach. For service to be effective it is necessary to take into cognizance the influencing factors of service delivery which are customized based on the necessity of the customers (Sala et al, 2019). This means that service delivery is solely to make an impact on the well-being of customers, giving them value for whatever assistance is needed geared towards positive outcomes, efficient operations, and consumer satisfaction. Library services then become very essential because it plays an important role in the attainment of success both for the library and the parent organization. According to Kumar and Balaj (2021), the library is seen as an avenue of information access and equality for learning. Optimal satisfaction and commitment to meeting the plight of patrons in the university library largely depend on the service delivery of librarians. Maria (2019) has established that service delivery of librarians in university libraries means packages of activities that the library renders to the users to enhance and achieve the goals of the parent institution. For libraries to gain the justification for their establishment and face the ever-changing competitive environment, it becomes necessary that the services of the libraries be improved at all levels through effective and efficient service delivery.

Library services are assistance rendered by a librarian to users in the form of assistance that enables clientele to get the information he/she wants from the library (Edom & Edom, 2019). Library service delivery is an essential duty that is mandated to discharge by librarians to the library clients which could be physically based on face-to-face contact or virtual. Library services entail all activities performed both technically and those that take place behind the scene to facilitate the use of the library. Ogar et al. (2018) defined library service delivery as the organization of how information is retrieved, communicated, and disseminated to meet the needs of the library community.

Therefore, for any library to provide effective and efficient services, the level of library services must be high especially in aspect that is related to information literacy of librarians. Information literacy is a phenomenon that exists in every organization due to the quest for information. According to CILIP (2018), information literacy skills is the ability to think critically and make a balanced judgment about any information found and used which empowers citizens to reach and express informed views and to engage fully with society. Hence, it is viewed as skills relevant to individuals to take decisions in the information society. It consists of identification, location, evaluation, and use of information ethically. Spisak (2018) describes information literacy as a set of skills and knowledge that not only allows us to find, evaluate and use information needed but allows us to filter out unwanted information. Information literacy skills are conceptualized in different ways by different scholars. It is, therefore, critical to state that when the literacy skills of librarians are lacking, it thereby retards the effectiveness and efficiency of library services. Therefore, for effective service delivery librarians must be highly skilled in information literacy. Studies have proved that information literacy skills with respect to identification, location, evaluation, organization and use of information by librarians could be an influencing factor for library service delivery.

Statement of the Problem

The library is the nerve center on which the parent institution relies to achieve approved programs, learning, teaching, research as well as advancement in the community. Librarians then become the most important person to help achieve these aims. It is evident from the literature that librarians have become ineffective in their primary responsibilities which have led to low service delivery in libraries. It is mentioned by Awujoola and Omorinkoba (2021) that librarians' impatience, unwillingness to assist information seekers, and harsh and unpleasant attitude while interacting with users which have led to a decline in library patronage are dispositional factors that have led to low service delivery among librarians. In the library, these factors disrupt the effectiveness of library services in the public universities in South-West, Nigeria. Highly skilled librarians with the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and use information may influence service delivery in university libraries. Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate the influence of information literacy skills on library service delivery in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives guided the study

1. To determine the level of information literacy skills of librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.
2. To investigate the relationship between information literacy skills and library service delivery in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Question

1. What is the level of information literacy skills of librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Information literacy skills have no significant influence on the service delivery of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to public (federal and state) university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. Respondents were restricted to librarians in the federal and state university libraries that were spread across the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The researchers measured the specific indicators of information literacy skills such as the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and use information against library service delivery.

Review of Related Literature

Library Service Delivery

The essence of service delivery is solely to make an impact on the well-being of customers, giving them value for whatever assistance is needed. The library is also an organization that is responsible for meeting the needs of patrons through service delivery. Service is often regarded as the fundamental value or basic competency for librarians, Professional service enhances quality and reliability in the minds of patrons because service is the hallmark of professionalism (Hicks, 2016).

Service delivery has also been viewed and anchored on some elements of service quality namely, reliability, responsiveness, guarantee-knowledge and courtesy, empathy, and tangible (Prakoso et al., 2017). Ayolugbe et al. (2021) postulated that the success of every academic library in the present digital library environment largely depends on the quality of information service delivery offered to meet the changing and dynamic information needs of library users. Library service delivery encompasses activities, services, and interfaces performed by librarians who constitute the creation, storage, retrieval, and appropriate dissemination of information. Therefore, it is important to note that service delivery is aimed at meeting the information demands and needs of users at the right time, in the right format, and at the shortest possible time, this further indicates that library service delivery is concerned with the provision of a solution to customers need and is the central crux of a library's existence. Likewise, Uyar (2019) submitted that librarians need to provide optimal library services to create quality services. SCONUL (2020) stated that good quality library services attract and retain academic high flyers and contribute to the prestige of an institution. The library service delivery focuses on the five dimensions of SERVQUAL which have been used to identify service delivery of librarians which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Agoh and Omekwu, (2021) library and information service deliveries are essential library processes and activities deployed by libraries to deliver information services and resources to library users, intending to enhance productivity.

Information Literacy Skills

Information literacy is a prerequisite for remaining active in the information society and a basic human right of lifelong learning. The ability to learn, and use information both formally and informally at work, at home, or in an educational setting is a result of information literacy. Information literacy is, therefore, the set of skills and knowledge needed to be able to access both printed and technological resources and assess their accuracy, reliability, and credibility (Gwori & Padma, 2018). Skilled librarians literally could contribute to effective service delivery because among the factors that make librarians deliver effective services are the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize, and use information. Based on the assertion of Eje and Dushu (2018) librarians are expected to brace up for the demand of their work by improving their skills, knowledge, and attitude to enable them to provide appropriate library service delivery. Librarians are expected to be expert searchers and therefore, should develop information literacy skills to navigate the vast world of information (Saunders et al., 2015). Information literacy skills describe one's discrete ability to find, access, use, communicate and share information effectively (Babalola & Umar, 2021, Soltani & Shahrokh, 2020). Information literacy encompasses the need for information, the availability of information resources, the need for evaluation, ethics recognition, responsibility use, and communication or sharing of one's findings (Yebowaah, 2018).

Information literacy helps librarians with the capacity to know when information is needed or required and how to seek the information. It incorporates assessing, combining, and utilizing information properly, morally, and lawfully once it is gotten from any media, including electronic or print sources (Diseiye, 2018). In brief, librarians who possess information literacy skills will be able to access, evaluate, filter, and extract necessary information from diverse sources of information and make use of it judiciously. Bello (2022) examined the information literacy and ICT skills of library staff in federal polytechnics in Nigeria and found that library staff possessed high information literacy skills, which include the ability to recognize a need for information resources, distinguish potential information resources, construct strategies for locating information, compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources, locate and access information resources, organize, apply and communicate information, and ability to synthesize and build on existing information among others. Ebiri (2021) investigated the information literacy skills of librarians and service delivery at the University of Calabar library and stated that information literacy skills are elemental to quality library services, the knowledge of which improves the service delivery and attracts the members of the academic community to the library. Likewise, in South-West Nigeria, Onanuga et al. (2019) *assessed the information literacy skills of library and information science professionals in academic libraries in Southwestern, Nigeria, and revealed that the majority of library professionals acquired their information literacy skills through self-development, training, and seminar*. Scholars such as Durodolu and Adekanye (2017) researched the perception of information literacy skills among the librarians in the University of Lagos library. It was also reported that librarians in the University of Lagos library possess the requisite information literacy skills hence they can be said to be information literate.

Methodology

The study is a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 174 professional librarians from 17 public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The total enumeration method was used to give comprehensive coverage of all librarians in the public universities in the study area. Questionnaire was the main research instrument for this study. The scale of information literacy skills was adapted from Kurbanoglu et al. (2004) and Adamu (2022). Few modifications were made to reflect the context of the study. The data from the research questionnaire was analyzed using version 25 of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation, especially for research questions. The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis. The result was used to attest to the influence that existed between information literacy skills and library service delivery.

Table 1*Figures of university libraries and Librarians in South-West, Nigeria*

Demographic Variables	Frequency Retrieved Questionnaire (N)= 174	Percentage (%)
Name of University		
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba	4	2.3
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Ikere-Ekiti	4	2.3
Ekiti State University	9	5.2
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti	7	4.0
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	24	13.8
Federal University of Technology, Akure	10	5.7
Ladoke Akintola University of Education	10	5.7
Lagos State University (LASU)	19	10.9
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	18	10.3
Olabisi Onabanjo, University (OOU)	5	2.9
Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology	4	2.3
OSUTECH	6	3.4
Oyo State Technical University	2	1.1
Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED)	7	4.0
University of Ibadan (UI)	24	13.8
University of Lagos (UNILAG)	13	7.5
University of Lagos, Medical Library	4	2.3
University of Medical Sciences, Ondo	4	2.3
Total	174	100

Source: Administration Office records of each University listed above, (2023)

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of information literacy skills of librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 2

Information literacy skills of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria

Information Literacy Skills	Very high level (4)	High level (3)	Low level (2)	Very low level (1)	Mean	Std.
Ability to identify an information need					3.46	0.623
My ability to determine my need for information is	123 (70.7%)	47 (27.0%)	3 (1.7%)	1 (0.6%)	3.68	0.537
My ability to identify a variety of potential sources of information is	99 (56.9%)	57 (32.8%)	17 (9.8%)	1 (0.6%)	3.46	0.694
My ability to define concepts of a topic request made by a library patron is	82 (47.1%)	87 (50.0%)	4 (2.3%)	1 (0.6%)	3.44	0.573
My ability to identify diverse types of information that will best meet the information needs of my users is	65 (37.4%)	93 (53.4%)	12 (6.9%)	4 (2.3%)	3.26	0.686
Ability to locate information					3.44	0.611
My skills to locate information from different sources is	110 (63.2%)	60 (34.5%)	4 (2.3%)	-	3.61	0.535
My ability to search information resources by subject, title, author, and date is	106 (60.9%)	58 (33.3%)	8 (4.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3.54	0.642
My expertise to discover the scope and access information requirement of my user is	91 (52.3%)	77 (44.3%)	5 (2.9%)	1 (0.6%)	3.48	0.586
My skills to select the appropriate electronic resources to meet information needs is	62 (35.6%)	105 (60.3%)	5 (2.9%)	2 (1.1%)	3.30	0.583
My capability to make a selection of appropriate information search tools to access information is	67 (38.5%)	86 (49.4%)	18 (10.3%)	3 (1.7%)	3.25	0.707

Ability to use information					3.36	0.701
My ability to choose an appropriate format to communicate with my audience is	116 (66.7%)	48 (27.6%)	5 (2.9%)	5 (2.9%)	3.58	0.690
My ability to use information technology applications to perform a task is	101 (58.0%)	60 (34.5%)	12 (6.9%)	1 (0.6%)	3.50	0.652
My ability to recognize the issues of copyright of information sources is	109 (62.6%)	43 (24.7%)	19 (10.9%)	3 (1.7%)	3.48	0.758
My ability to apply the digital text as needed is	59 (33.9%)	101 (58.0%)	14 (8.0%)	-	3.26	0.596
My ability to filter relevant information for use from diverse sources of information is	72 (41.4%)	73 (42.0%)	15 (8.6%)	14 (8.0%)	3.17	0.894
My ability to make citations using referencing styles is	48 (27.6%)	109 (62.6%)	15 (8.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3.17	0.618
Ability to organize					3.30	0.646
My expertise to apply information resources to the problem at hand is	69 (39.7%)	95 (54.6%)	8 (4.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3.33	0.619
My ability to sort out relevant information from different information sources is	82 (47.1%)	70 (40.2%)	17 (9.8%)	5 (2.9%)	3.32	0.766
My ability to synthesize information to avoid plagiarism is	53 (30.5%)	113 (64.9%)	7 (4.0%)	1 (0.6%)	3.25	0.553
Ability to evaluate information					3.16	0.792
My skills to evaluate the authenticity of an information source is	107 (61.5%)	53 (30.5%)	10 (5.7%)	4 (2.3%)	3.51	0.711
My ability to evaluate information resources obtained from the internet is	95 (54.6%)	70 (40.2%)	6 (3.4%)	3 (1.7%)	3.48	0.651
My ability to make conclusions based on the information I got from the printed information sources is	46 (26.4%)	71 (40.8%)	41 (23.6%)	16 (9.2%)	2.84	0.921

My ability to criticize the relevance of information resources found on the internet is	36 (20.7%)	87 (50.0%)	33 (19.0%)	18 (10.3%)	2.81	0.883
Grand Mean					3.34	0.675

Decision Rule: 1.0-1.74 = Very low level; 1.75-2.49 = Low level; 2.50-3.24 = High level; 3.25-4.00 = Very high level

The findings in Table 2 revealed the level to which librarians possess information literacy skills in public universities in South-West Nigeria. The grand mean ($\bar{x} = 3.34$, $SD = 0.675$) on a 4-point Likert-type scale indicates that the level of information literacy skill of the librarians is very high. This implies that to a very high extent, librarians can identify information needs, locate information, evaluate information, organize information, and use information ethically. Among all the measures of information literacy skills, the ability to identify information need was considered highest ($\bar{x} = 3.46$), the ability to locate information ($\bar{x} = 3.44$), the ability to use information ($\bar{x} = 3.36$), the ability to organize information ($\bar{x} = 3.30$) and ability to evaluate information ($\bar{x} = 3.16$) were also considered to be high among the five constructs. This implies that librarians were skilled to adequately deliver the services expected of them and this would enhance their sense of responsibility.

Testing of Hypothesis and Interpretation

The only hypothesis for this study was tested using simple linear regression analysis which was used to assess the influence of the independent variable and the dependent variable. The result generated was used to attest to the relationship that existed among the variables (information literacy skills and library service delivery) in this study.

Decision Rule

The level of pre-test significance for this study is 0.05. it is presumed that there is no significant relationship between the variables under consideration if the p-value is seen to be less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$) then the hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₁: Information literacy skills have no significant influence on the service delivery of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

Table 3

Simple linear regression analysis of information literacy skills on library service delivery (n=174)

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	T	P	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	ANOVA (Sig.)
(Constant)	2.032	0.190		10.668	.000	0.244	0.240	55.661	0.000
Information literacy skills	0.422	0.057	.494	7.461	.000				
Dependent Variable: Information Literacy Skills Predictor: (Constant), Library Service Delivery DF (F-Statistic) = 1, 173 DF (T-Statistic) = 172									

Sig. at p < 0.05,

Note: β = Standardized coefficient

The result in Table 3 indicated that information literacy skills influence library service delivery in public universities in South-West Nigeria ($R^2 = 0.244$, $\beta = 0.494$, $t(172) = 7.461$, $p < 0.05$). This showed that the predictor variable (information literacy skills) accounts for 24.4% ($R^2 = 0.244$) of the variation in library service delivery in public universities in South-West Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that information literacy skills have no significant influence on service delivery is rejected. This result suggests that improved information literacy skills of librarians in public universities in South-West Nigeria lead to the improvement of library service delivery.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question one revealed a high level to which information literacy skills are evident among librarians in public universities in South-West. In other words, librarians in the study context possess information literacy skills. The results were supported by the submission of Durodolu and Adekanye, (2017), Onanuga et al., (2019) who noted that librarians in the South-West region of Nigeria had a very much understanding of information literacy skills and are said to be information literate. The implication is that librarians are not only saddled with responsibilities to discharge services but also have the responsibility of teaching library patrons requisite skills in information literacy.

The finding of research question one was further buttressed by the findings of Bello (2022) established that library staff possessed high information literacy skills, which include the ability to recognize a need for information resources, distinguish potential information resources, construct strategies for locating information, compare and evaluate information obtained from

different sources, locate and access information resources, organize, apply and communicate information, and ability to synthesize and build on existing information among others. It can be well said that when a librarian possesses all the five dimensions of information literacy skills it tends to make librarians perform optimally based on the above claim.

Furthermore, as revealed from the findings of the hypothesis tested in Table 3, the null hypothesis which states that information literacy skills have no significant influence on library service delivery was rejected. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between information literacy skills and library service delivery by librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The result agreed with Ebiri (2021) who claimed that information literacy skills are elemental to quality library services, the knowledge of which improves the service delivery and attracts the members of the academic community to the library.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Library service delivery is very crucial in any organization, particularly in public university libraries. However, to achieve effective service delivery, a high level of information literacy is expected from librarians in particular. In this study, librarians showed a high level of information literacy skills in library service delivery. It also showed that information literacy skill is an influencing factor in the effective discharge of services in the library. The result of this study can be generalized for librarians in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

In line with the findings, the study, therefore, recommends that library service delivery should continuously be sustained by highly skilled information literate librarians; this can only be achieved when librarians are permitted to update their requisite skills through training and workshops.

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