Survey of Innovation and Creativity Practices among Librarians in Nigeria

Madukoma, Ezinwanyi
Department of Information Resources Management
Babcock University
Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria
madukomae@bacock.edu.ng

Bamidele, Itunu A.
Laz Otti Memorial Library
Babcock University
bamidelei@babcock.edu.ng

&
Allison, Goodluck O.
Laz Otti Memorial Library
Babcock University
allisong@babcock.edu.ng

Abstract
The study investigated the innovation and creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria. Survey research design was used in this study. Population comprised 165 practicing librarians that attended the 2018 Nigerian Library Association Annual General Meeting held at Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data and hundred percent return rate was achieved from the participants. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Major findings from the study showed that provision of research tools and provision of online search tools were the major types of innovation/creativity practiced among librarians in Nigeria. The result also revealed that librarians always use their experience to invent new things that add value to library service. However, the study further revealed that lack of support from the administration and lack of installation of modern technologies in the library were the major hindrances to the practice of innovation/creativity among librarians in Nigeria. The study concluded that librarians in Nigeria to a great extent practice innovation/creativity. Therefore, this study recommended that hindrances against innovation/creativity in libraries should be addressed by the various library administrations in Nigeria and encouraged more innovations/creativity in library service provision especially in this era of digital environment. Also, professional librarians should be motivated to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops organized by NLA, Library and Information Technology (LITT), Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section, and Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) workshops because the staff development and training prammes serve as the strategy for promoting innovation and creativity among librarians in Nigeria.

Keywords: Innovation practices, Creativity, Librarians, Nigeria.

Introduction
The survival of any organization in a society characterized with competition lies solely on the innovation and creative ability of such organization. To gain competitive advantage, it is imperative that individual organizations, including the library, engage in innovative and creative activities. With the explosion of information as a result of the developments in
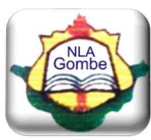
information and communication technologies, libraries and information professionals are encouraged to engage in innovative and creative activities in their services otherwise, be knocked out of the system as clienteles will be left with no choice than to look for alternative or best measure to meet their needs. The library, by extension, information professionals, is traditionally perceived and known as preserver and conserver of information and knowledge contained in documents and other media. It is assumed, from this perspective, that librarians are limited in innovative and creative abilities. Also, past studies have shown that at present, the innovation and creativity used in knowledge production and transfer is not recognized in the information usage community, even among the information practitioners in general (Murat, 1999, & Atata, Oji & Tom, 2014). It is the intent of this study to survey innovation and creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The general objective of the study is to investigate innovation and creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the types of innovation/creativity practiced by librarians in Nigeria;
2. identify the areas innovation/creativity is applied in the library;
3. ascertain the librarians' perception of innovation/creativity;
4. find out the strategies librarians can employ to promote innovation/creativity in the library;
5. identify hindrances to innovation/creativity practice among librarians in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Myriad of factors such as information and communication technologies and global market strategies have led organizations to increasingly engage in innovation and creativity. Libraries are not left out in this global trend. Innovation and creativity is needed in the library for it to be proactive in meeting the users' information need. Moore (2006) assumes that librarianship lends itself to creativity because something is always changing. Hourston (2006) believes that librarianship work requires that librarians identify links between pieces of information and utilize knowledge and resources to get in additional information. She went further to say that librarians navigate a sea of information using their sight into patterns, connections, and relationships. Librarians should have the skills to help library users' travel from one homeostatic structure to another. Librarians' job demands acquiring knowledge and understanding – often from unfamiliar disciplines as the librarians have the sole responsibility of ensuring that goods and services offered support and meet the information needs of their user anywhere and at any point in time without any hinge. Librarians are expected to expand their roles and take on new and unique responsibilities to serve their clientele. In other to achieve this, they need to be innovative and creative.

Creativity according to Oketunji (2007) rearranges, combines, and synthesizes already existing facts, ideas, and frame of reference; it requires unlearning previous strategies and approaches and utilizes the unconscious mind. According to Flach (2004), in its broadest sense, creativity is defined as a response to a situation, one that serves to accomplish a goal. The creativity act as rearranging, combining, and synthesizing already existing facts, ideas and frames of reference minds is one of some of the elements of library work which include acquisition/collection development, cataloguing, classification and indexing, reference interviews/queries, database searching, serials management, among other services. It is the management of knowledge in the library that will bring about innovation and creativity. According to Anyanwu (2010), innovation is the ability to apply new ideas that will enable you to undertake activities differently. Through individual initiatives, imagination, intuition
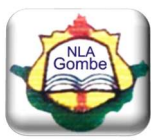
and insight you will be able to change things around or devise ways of doing things to accommodate whatever new situation you may find yourself in.

Atata, Oji and Tom (2014) defined innovation as the making of a change in something established. They looked at creativity as the ability to generate innovative ideas and manifest them from thought into reality. This is to say that librarians are supposed to make change in existing library products and services, not only bringing changes to existing products and services, they bring or generate new ideas that will add relevance to library products and services. Atata, Oji and Tom (2014) assert that, for libraries to adapt to the needs of clients, more attention should be given to their vital function that is, the repackaging and dissemination of right information at the right moment in the right way. They further stated that to satisfy the three basic functions of the library which are acquisition, organization, and dissemination of knowledge/information innovation/creative services of the management must comprise a set of four principles. These four guiding principles are summed as delight the user of the library. They are user satisfaction; management by fact; user based management; and continuous improvement in their services. This implies that the librarians go all out or do their best to satisfy users' needs especially in the world of constant change, identifying the specific users' needs and doing their best to meet these needs to delight the users. Management by fact - working on achieving quality standard to the services provided to users forms the basis of continuous improvement in library service provision. User based management - library staff understanding what to do, how to do it and getting feedback on their performance, they can be encouraged to take responsibility for the quality of work they offer. They should be made to feel involved, for greater commitment to satisfy users. Library staffs' roles go a long way in bringing improved quality and standard in library service provision. Continuous improvement – being innovative and creative is not a short-term activity that occurs once a set target has been completed. Continuous improvement is management process that clienteles of the library will help the library to achieve through their continuous feedback no matter how much the library may improve. Exposing librarians on hands on the desk through workshops will boost their moral to innovative and creative skills.

Downey and Technical Information Service (2007) identified the following types of innovation: product/service innovation, process innovation, business model innovation, organizational innovation, marketing innovation, supply chain innovation, and financial innovation.

 i. **Product/Service Innovation:** This deals with the introduction of new goods or services that are new or substantially improved in the library.
 ii. **Process Innovation:** This means implementing new or significantly improved production or delivery methods in the library like the use of social media tools in library service delivery.
 iii. **Business Model Innovation:** This implies changing the way business is done. In other words, bringing new ways to carry out business (services) in the library.
 iv. **Organizational Innovation:** This has to do with creating or changing business structures, practices, and models (changing library structure, practices, and models).
 v. **Marketing Innovation:** This deals with alternative marketing techniques to deliver improvements in position, packaging, product design or promotion in the library.
 vi. **Supply Chain Innovation:** This implies improving the way that information materials are sourced from suppliers (information vendors, producers, publishers, etc.) or improving methods of service delivery to clienteles.

Nigerian Library Association, Gombe State Chapter
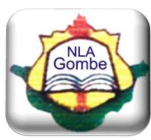
vii. **Financial Innovation:** The organization goes by bringing together basic financial concepts. Financial concepts that will yield benefits to the library and the users.

In a study of the challenges of promoting innovation and creativity among library and information science professionals, Onuoha, Anyanwu, Ossai-Ona, and Amaechi (2015) established that innovation/creativity is mostly visible in the areas of resources' organization, reference/referral services, CD-ROM management services and electronic resources management services. They also established conference/seminar/workshop attendance as the major strategy for promoting innovation and creativity in the library. Their study further revealed that lack of finance to acquire technology facilities, lack of ICT skills, unconducive working environment and lack of management interest in library services were the major challenges to effective application of innovation and creativity in the library.

Zaid and Oyelude (2012) established the following forms of creativity and innovations that can be introduced in the library: electronic reservation services, incorporating Web 2.0 tools in the library, electronic resources management, virtual library environment, laptop loan services, provision of research tools, instant messaging and the 24 hours library services. In addition to the above stated, others include WhatsApp, group chat. Onuoha, et. al (2015) assert that the above mentioned innovation and creativity are used in the library now as a result of the internet which has dramatically changed the phase of the library profession. Moreover, Current and emerging trends in library service provision include the use of increasing number of online tools, the management of materials in new formats, providing multilingual options, developing metadata schemes, metadata creation extraction, and manipulation etc. (Okentunji n.d.). Using the range of tools provided by technology such as websites, e-mail, RSS (Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary), SMS, blogs and wikis, libraries can innovate and create services to meet users at the points of their varied needs. For this reason, Oneyeose (2018) stated that digital as a medium for marketing is likely to dominate over the course of the next decade; he further gave two key reasons for such assertion: one, that digital is becoming the predominant channel for accessing content, second, that the digital environment supports highly targeted, measurable campaign. His statements imply that librarians should utilize every opportunity provided by the digital environment to create and innovate services that will attract users to patronize their service, as the immense advantage of technology is that it supports the delivery of services tailored to individual customers at any given time. To this effect, librarians could employ the various emerging ICT tools in innovation practices to provide and advertise library goods and services. Such services include online advertisement, display ads, social media ads, etc.; newsletter, infographics, table cubes and menus, 360 degree photos, among others. All these stated above are innovation and creativity inclined which libraries could leverage on to gain competitive advantage.

However, librarians need to seek both internal and external ideas to accelerate technology development in meeting users' information needs. To achieve the objective and purpose of establishing library, and to ensure the altruism of information profession of providing timely, accurate and high quality information, information professionals (librarians) need to change their mind set and develop a new mindset to deal with the increased complexity of information provision and knowledge management. Innovation in the library means, bringing and practicing new ideas in the ways library operations are being carried out that can lead or bring positive change. These could be in the areas of acquisition, charging and discharging of information resources, serials management, management of e-resources, etc. Onuoha, Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah and Amaechi (2015) identified NLA, Library and
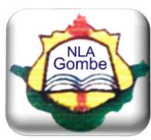
Information Technology Today (LITT), Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section, LRCN Conferences and workshops as various avenues librarians could be exposed to innovative and creative abilities. Hence, a study done by Jantz (2012) revealed that university librarians have a commitment to innovation which means that librarians are obliged to be innovative in their service provision.

Methodology
This study seeks to investigate innovation and creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria. Survey research design was used in this study. Population comprised 165 practicing librarians that attended 2018 Nigerian Library Association annual general meeting held at Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library, Abeokuta, Nigeria. These 165 practicing librarians were purposefully selected as not every person that attended the conference were practicing librarians. Self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Hundred percent return rate was achieved. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis.

Data Presentation
Table I: Demographic Data of the Respondents

Item No	Item Description	Frequency	Percentage
Status			
	University Librarian	6	3.6
	Senior Librarian	45	27.3
	Librarian 1	48	29.1
	Librarian II	33	20
	Assistant Librarian	15	9.1
	Deputy Librarian	18	10.9
	Total	**165**	**100**
Gender			
	Male	87	52.7
	Female	78	47.3
	Total	**165**	**100**
Age			
	20-29	18	10.9
	30-39	39	23.6
	40-49	66	40
	50-59	36	21.8
	60 and above	6	3.6
	Total	**165**	**100**
Highest Academic Qualification			
	PhD	36	21.8
	Master	102	61.8
	MPhil	12	7.3
	BSc	15	9.1
	Total	**165**	**100**
Years of Work experience as a Librarian			
	1- 9	57	34.5
	10-19	60	36.4
	20-29	33	20
	30-39	15	9.1
	Total	**165**	**100**

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents by work status, age, academic qualifications and years of working experience. The work status of the respondents indicates that majority fall under librarian I and senior librarian 48(29.1%) and 45(27.3%) respectively. In the aspect of gender distribution of the respondents, majority
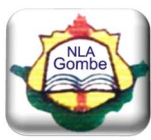
were male 87(52.7%). This result negates the perception of most people that librarianship profession is more of female than male. The age data of the respondents revealed that they were more of those under the ages of 40 - 49 (66, 40%), 30 – 39 (39, 23.6%), and 50 – 59 (36, 21.8%) respectively. In terms of academic qualifications, over 75% of the respondents had postgraduate degrees of masters and PhD degrees. This indicated that librarians were well educated as every respondent had at least a degree. Furthermore, 60 (36.4%) and 57(34.55%) of the respondents had spent 10 to 19 years and 1 – 9 years in librarianship practice; thus, showing that the job experience of the respondents are relevant to library service and still have more to contribute to the growth of the profession.

Table 2: Types of Innovation/Creativity Practiced Among Librarians

Type(s) Innovation/Creativity I practice in my library	HP	P	SP	NP	X	SD
Provision of research tools	63(38.2)	75(45.5)	21(12.7)	6(3.6)	3.18	0.79
Provision of online search tools	54(32.7)	81(49.1)	24(14.5)	6(3.6)	3.10	0.78
Instant messaging	42(25.5)	66(40.0)	39(23.6)	18(10.9)	2.80	0.94
Lobbying and advocacy	39(23.6)	54(32.7)	60(36.6)	12(7.3)	2.73	0.91
E-reservation services	51(30.9)	51(30.9)	30(18.2)	33(20)	2.72	1.12
Use of Web 2.0 tools in the library	12(7.3)	75(45.5)	57(34.5)	21(12.7)	2.47	0.81
Blogging	24(14.5)	42(25.5)	66(40)	33(20)	2.35	0.94
24 /7 library services	42(25.5)	39(23.6)	42(25.5)	42(25.5)	2.29	1.13

**Highly Practiced (HP) = 4, Practiced (P) = 3, Slightly Practiced (SP) =2, Not Practiced (NP) = 1**

Table 2 shows types of innovation/creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria. In a scale of four, the mean score of the respondents were more than 2.5. This result indicates that librarians in Nigeria engage in innovation/creativity practices. This study is supported by Jantz (2012), who revealed that university librarians have a commitment to innovation which means that librarians are obliged to be innovative in their service provision.

Table 3: Areas Innovation/Creativity are Applied in the Library

Areas Innovation/Creativity are applied in the library	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD
Cataloguing and Classification	108(65.5)	51(30.9)	6(3.6)	0	3.62	0.56
Readers' services	105(63.6)	48(29.1)	12(7.3)	0	3.56	0.62
Reference services	93(56.4)	63(38.2)	9(5.5)	0	3.51	0.60
Acquisition services	81(49.1)	75(45.5)	9(5.5)	0	3.44	0.59
Serials management	84(50.9)	63(38.2)	15(9.1)	3(1.8)	3.38	0.73
E-resources management	90(54.5)	54(32.7)	15(9.1)	6(3.6)	3.38	0.79
Documentation services	63(38.2)	69(41.8)	33(20)	0	3.18	0.74
Document Delivery services	66(40)	60(36.4)	36(21.8)	3(1.8)	3.14	0.82
Special collection services	69(41.8)	63(38.2)	21(12.7)	12(7.3)	3.14	0.90
CD-ROM management services	60(36.3	54(32.7)	36(21.8)	15(9.1)	2.98	1.00

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

The respondents were asked to indicate the areas innovation and creativity is applied in the library. The result as revealed in Table 3 shows that innovation/creativity is applied in the library as all the 10 items listed in the Table had over 2.5 mean values on a scale of four. This study is supported by Onuoha, Anyanwu, Ossai-Ona and Amaechi (2015) who established that innovation/creativity is mostly visible in the areas of resources organization, reference/referral services, CD-ROM management services and electronic resources management services. Hence, Atata and Oji (2014) opined that librarians are supposed to
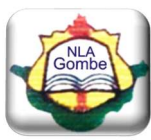
make change in existing library products and services, not only bringing changes to existing products and services, they bring or generate new ideas that will add relevance to library products and services. They also noted that, for libraries to adapt to the needs of clients, more attention should be given to their vital function that is, the repackaging and dissemination of right information at the right moment in the right way.

Table 4: Perception of Librarians' on innovation/creativity practices

Librarians' perception of Innovation/Creativity in Nigeria	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD
Librarians always use their past experience to invest new thing that add value to library service.	78(47.3)	51(30.9)	24(14.5)	12(7.3)	3.60	0.94
Librarian think innovation/creativity is not required in the library.	9(5.5)	39(23.6)	39(23.6)	78(47.3)	3.18	0.96
When a librarian brings new way(s) to improve library service, it is not usually accepted.	21(12.7)	54(32.7)	42(25.5)	48(29.1)	2.29	1.02
Librarians are not given opportunity to develop new ideas in the library.	21(12.7)	54(32.7)	36(21.8)	54(32.7)	2.25	1.05
Librarians think they cannot develop something new that can improve their service to users.	12(7.3)	36(21.8)	30(18.2)	87(52.7)	1.87	1.00

**Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (D) = 1**

In order to know how innovation/creativity is practiced among librarians, the respondents were asked to rate their perception on 5 items listed. Table 4 shows that majority of respondents agreed that librarians are always use their past experience to invest on new things that add value to library services. The result also revealed that librarians think that innovation/creativity is not required in the library; when a librarian brings new way(s) to improve library service, it is not usually accepted; librarians are not given opportunity to develop new ideas in the library; also, librarians think that they cannot develop something new that can improve their service to users. This seems to be discouraging to librarians. This implies that perception of librarians on innovation/creativity need to be established and supported by library management. Zaid and Oyelude (2012) established that electronic reservation services, incorporating Web 2.0 tools in the library, electronic resources management, virtual library environment, laptop loan services, and provision of research tools, instant messaging and the 24 hours library services are forms of creativity/innovations that could be introduced in the library.

Table 5: Strategies Librarians can use to promote Innovation/Creativity in the Library

Strategies librarians can use to promote Innovation/Creativity in the library	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD
Mentoring.	117(70.9)	33(20)	12(7.3)	3(1.8)	3.60	0.71
Conference/workshop/seminar attendance.	114(69.1)	36(21.8)	9(5.5)	6(3.6)	3.56	0.75
Recognition of librarians with innovative/ creative skills.	111(67.3)	33(20)	18(10.9)	3(1.8)	3.52	0.76
Implementation of modern technologies.	102(61.8)	45(27.3)	18(10.9)	0	3.50	0.69
Training on modern technologies.	102(61.8)	45(27.3)	18(10.9)	0	3.50	0.69

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (D) = 1

The respondents were requested to identify strategies librarians can use to promote innovation/creativity in the library. Table 5 shows the various avenues to promote innovation/creativity in the library as all 5 items listed in the table had over 3 mean values. In support of this finding are Onuoha, Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah and Amaechi (2015) whose study
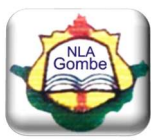
established attending conferences/seminar/workshops as the major strategy for promoting innovation and creativity in the library. They however specified NLA, Library and Information Technology Today (LITT), Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing section, LRCN Conferences and workshops as various avenues librarians could be exposed to innovative and creative abilities.

Table 6: Hindrances to Innovation/Creativity practice among Librarians in Nigeria

Hindrances to Innovation/Creativity practice	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD
Lack of support from the university administration.	78(47.3)	57(34.5)	18(10.9)	12 (7.3)	3.21	0.91
Lack of installation of modern technology in the library.	66(40)	60(36.4)	24(14.5)	15 (9.1)	3.07	0.95
Maintaining status quo.	60(36.4)	69(41.8)	21(12.7)	15 (9.1)	3.05	0.92
Lack of knowledge management practice culture in the library.	54(32.7)	69(41.8)	30(18.2)	12 (7.3)	3.00	0.89
Lack of recognition to those that possess innovative/creative skills.	57(34.5)	60(36.4)	36(21.8)	12 (7.3)	2.98	0.92
Librarians lack innovative/creative ability.	21(12.7)	39(23.6)	48(29.1)	57(34.5)	2.14	1.04

Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (D) = 1

Table 6 reveals hindrances to innovation/creativity practices among librarians in Nigeria. Presenting their responses from the highest mean to the lowest, it shows lack of support from the university administration, lack of installation of modern technology in the library, maintaining status quo, lack of knowledge management practice culture in the library, etc. were hindrances to innovation/creativity practices in the library.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is very glaring in this study that librarians in Nigeria practice innovation/creativity in their libraries. However, they always use their experience to invent new things that add value to library service. Provision of research tools and provision of online search tools were the major types of innovation/creativity practiced among librarians in Nigeria. The study further revealed that lack of support from the university administration, maintaining status quo, lack of installation of modern technology in the library, lack of knowledge management practice culture in the library, and lack of recognition to those that possess innovative/creative skills are the major factors that hinder librarians in their innovative/creativity practices.

Based on the results of this study, the study recommends that

1. Hindrances against innovation/creativity in libraries should be addressed by the various library administrations in Nigeria and encouraged more innovations/creativity in library service provision especially in this era of digital environment.
2. University administration should continue to support and encourage librarians by giving urgent attention to librarian's requests on acquisition of modern technology, current information materials and current research tools in the library.
3. Librarians should be encouraged to attend conferences/seminar/workshops organized by NLA, Library and Information Technology Today (LITT), Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section, LRCN conferences and workshops because, the staff development and training prgrams serve as the synergy strategy for promoting innovation and creativity in the library and librarians could be more exposed to innovative and creative abilities
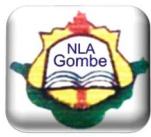
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