Awareness and Practice of Information Literacy among the Professional Librarian of Public Libraries. Amid Covid 19 Pandemic in Nigeria.

By

Mujahid Sunusi Abdullahi[1]
Sule Hamma Library
Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano
mnusaiba2014@gmail.com
08033875034-08027373190

And

Yusuf Eissa Abdallah Seed[2]
Dean faculty of postgraduate Studies
Islamic University, Omdurman
The Republic of Sudan
Yusufeissa51@yahoo.com.

Abstract

Information literacy is knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner. The purpose of this paper is to examine the level of awareness and practices of information literacy among the professional librarian of Kano State Public library amid COVID-19 pandemic. Quantitative research method was adopted for the study using survey research design. The population of the study was 32. Simple random sampling techniques were used. And the sample size was 162. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study descriptive statistics and frequency percentage ware used to analyze data. The findings of the study indicated that majority of the respondents were aware of the information literacy practices but were not practicing it in the library due to poor management and lack of concentration. Some also said it's an academic library issue, while others mentioned that the practices are the same with what they conducted in the library. The study also recommend that librarian need training and re-training on information literacy practices this will guide them in serving users with relevant information despite pandemic and any other occurrences that would not allow users to come to the library physically.

Keywords: Awareness; Practice; information; Literacy; Professional; librarian; public library; Covid19; Pandemic; Nigeria

Introduction

Information has always been a prime factor for the development of society and economic growth (Ogunlana; Oshinaike; Akinbode & Okunoye 2013). The growth of information and the dependency on it have paved the way for the information society and subsequently the knowledge society. The ability to recognize the need for the available information, retrieve, evaluate and use this information is characteristic of the direction taken by information literacy in any society. Horton (2007) posited that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strongly advocated the building of knowledge societies where the power of information and communication helps people access the knowledge they need to improve their daily lives and achieve their full potential.

The problem now is not having enough information but rather too much information in different formats and not all has the necessary value. Some authors have written about the issue of information and information overload. Ifijeh (2010) explained that the information explosion has implications for the environment in which we live, for the work place, the academic world, and our own peace of mind. The issues of information explosion, information literacy and information retrieval are issues that should be consistently considered. Roth (1990) described the information environment and the pitfalls facing libraries with the explosion of information that is generated and stored, and the case of seemingly infinite reproduction of words and pictures through the unregulated sprawl of the internet, the shift from a print to an image based electronic media. All these pitfalls pose problems regarding evaluating, finding and using information, hence the necessity for the concept of information literacy. Also users are not allowed access to libraries during pandemic as the case of Covid 19. Libraries were locked as a result of guide line and protocol design by the presidential committee of Covid 19 pandemic. Therefore if users are properly trained on how to access and utilize the resources without necessarily coming to the library the services will be encourage and the users will fill happy.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the level of awareness of information literacy among the professional librarians of public libraries.

2. To examine the resources and facilities of the library in relation to information literacy skills development.

3. To identify the types of information literacy programmes and practices in the library.

4. To determine the information literacy competency levels of professional librarians in Kano State public library.

5. To identify the challenges facing information literacy practices in the library under study

Review of Literature

The concept of information literacy (IL) was introduced in 1974 by Paul Zurkwski in a proposal submitted to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), recommending that a national program be established to achieve universal information literacy (Jiyane & Onyancha 2010, Eisenberg, Lowe & Spitzer 2004; De Jager & Nassimbeni 2002). During the 1980s this term gradually started to replace the concepts of 'user education' and 'library skills'. The personification of the concept IL is stipulated in McCaskie (2004) who exposed its importance by giving the significant events of its lifespan which includes the establishment of the American Library Association's (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (PCIL) in 1987 and its subsequent report which followed in 1989.

The American Library Association's (ALA) Presidential Committee on the Information Literacy (PCIL) report in 1989 linked IL to the goals of lifelong learning and effective citizenship. The underlying concept of IL is quite old, as libraries and information centers were already practicing the concept as library orientation, orientation program user education, bibliographical instruction, library instruction, and initiation of a freshman and user assistance programs all these are concerned with introducing new users to the library, its

resources, tools, and general techniques of library usage, services, facilities and physical layout (Singh 2009).

The concept of IL has been promoted by library and information professionals for several decades. The most commonly cited and used IL definition is the one adopted by the American Library Association (1998) which states that:

"To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. The information literate individuals are those who have learned how to learn."

Zurkowski (1974) has earlier described 'information literate' individuals as "people trained in the application of information resources to their work".

Many definitions of IL address learning as an ongoing, developmental process, a continuous evaluation of and adaptation to the information environment. Writers have often said that "information literacy cannot be seen as something to be addressed once and then ignored. It is an integrated part of lifelong learning which must be recognized, enhanced and continually updated" (Welsh Information Literacy Project, 2011).

According to Virkus (2003), several other terms and combinations of terms have also been used by different authors to define information literacy such as: 'info literacy', 'informacy', 'information empowerment', 'information competence', 'information competency', 'information competencies', 'information literacy skills', 'information literacy and skills', 'skills of information literacy', 'information literacy competence', 'information literacy competencies', 'information competence skills', 'information handling skills', 'information problem solving', 'information problem solving skills', 'information fluency', 'information mediacy' and even 'information mastery'. Information literacy is common to all disciplines (be it humanities, medical sciences, social sciences, engineering and technology), all learning environments and to all levels of education.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003), defined information literacy as an intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating and using information. It includes determining the nature and extent of needed information; accessing information effectively and efficiently; evaluating critically information and its sources; incorporating selected information in the learner's knowledge base and value system; using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understanding the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and information technology; and observing laws, regulations, and institutional policies related to the access and use of information."

Hadengue (2004) stated that information literacy implies three independent but linked steps: becoming aware of your own information needs, being able to perform efficient information retrieval and being able to evaluate and use the results obtained.

The definition that has achieved wider consensus is that given by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP 2004) which defined information literacy as "knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner." This definition implies several skills and these skills (or competencies) that are required to be information literate require an understanding of the need for information, the resources available, how to find information, the need to evaluate

results, how to work with or exploit results, ethics and responsibility of use, how to communicate or share your findings and how to manage your findings.

Bundy (2004) opined that information literacy is an intellectual framework for recognizing the need for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information. Rockman (2006), however, argued that IL is no longer a library issue, but is the critical campus-wide issue in the twenty-first century. In line with the above, Scott and O'Sullivan (2005) supported the fact that IL skills must be incorporated throughout all areas of the school's curriculum, not just in library orientation classes or isolated skills presentations. In the information society, IL has become a necessity for everyone; it forms the basis for lifelong learning (Abid 2008). Everyone needs to use IL to make choices that arise every day.

Despite the definitional clarifications and observations, many librarians continue to debate the appropriate definition of information literacy (Owusu-Ansah, 2005). Bruce (1997) and Candy (2000) affirm that there is a growing appreciation of the importance and nature of information literacy and the need for contextualization in specific institutions and disciplines is discernible. As in the rest of the world, the agenda is characterized by a range of interpretations of information literacy.

Significance of Information Literacy

Information literacy is important owing to the amount of information that is available in contemporary society. Simply being exposed to a great deal of information will not make people informed citizens; they need to learn how to use this information effectively, ACRL (2000).

Due to the information explosion and data smog all students and the society face many difficulties to locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information. Due to the expansion of internet services we receive a lot of information that is not evaluated, unlike the printed sources. Hence the authenticity, validity, and reliability of this information is in doubt.

Information literacy skills are helpful to eve body, especially students, in order to succeed academically and in their future job opportunities. Teachers and lecturers are greatly in need of information literacy skills, in order to carry out their occupations efficiently and successfully. Basically, everybody in the society is in need of information literacy skills.

Information literate individuals improve the society's quality of life in general and academically. Information literacy helps us in our day to day life such as buying a house, choosing a school, making an investment, voting for the election, and many more. Information literacy skills are of prime importance in order to achieve every body's academic goals. Truly information literacy is the foundation of the democratic society.

A society that is capable to access, evaluate, use and communicate information in an effective and efficient manner is called an information literate society. When we educate our children with the necessary information literacy skills, consequently, the society becomes information literate.

Research Methodology

Quantitative research method was adopted for the study using survey research design**.** A research population means the total number of people living is a specific geographical area. This can also be defined as a group of people who are similar in one way or more than that form the subject of the study. The population of this study will consist of 280 professional librarians and library attendant or helpers of Murtala Muhammad Library, Kano. The sampling technique adopted for this study was non- probability sampling techniques, using convenience sampling procedure. The technique was employed by the researcher considering some factors such as access to location, access to needed data and costs of generating the data. A sample size of 162 staff was used to represent the entire population of Murtala Muhammad Library, Kano which will be selected based on the researcher's judgment. The staffs are selected based on the availability of data covering the years under consideration. In all, a total of 162 questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents. The sample was drawn bearing the fact that all the items in the population possess almost the same feature or characteristics; hence conclusion drawn on one may suffice the other.

Since the descriptive survey research design has been chosen for this research study, therefore the research instrument which was applicable and chosen is the questionnaire drawn to elicit information on the research topic from the respondents. The questionnaire was constructed as a quick way to cover the scope of the question that was asked from the respondents during the interview process. Though there is no generally acceptable laid down procedures specially for the construction of a good questionnaire, the researcher followed by acceptable rule in order to serve as a guide in the construction of the questionnaire and the interview conducted. Misleading, ambiguous and bias questions were avoided.

A questionnaire is essentially a structured technique for collecting primary data it is generally a series of written questions for which the respondents has to provide the answers (Bell 2017**).** The research intend to use simple data analysis thus, tabulation and simple percentage will be employed for the study to analyze the questionnaire, while analysis will be applied in analyzing the interviews.

Findings of the Result

Questionnaire Administration

TABLE 1

Questionnaire	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Returned	129	80
Not Returned	33	20
Total	**162**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 2 shows that out of 162 copies of questionnaire administered at Murtala Muhammad Library Kano, only 129 that is 80% were returned as duly completed. While 33 that is 20% were not returned. This is due to the follow up made by the researcher and 80% is significant of any analysis

Table 2:   Bio-Data of Respondent

Analysis of Respondents by Sezs

Sezs	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	113	70
Female	16	30
TOTAL	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

From the above analysis, there are more males than females in the staff composition. The reason for this may be because of the nature of the work which often require more human capital which is always available among the male folk. Hence, management must be careful not to favor one gender with the right to work and other to prevent noncompliance with organizational goals and objectives.

Table 3:   Analysis of Age of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
20 – 30 Years	65	50
31 – 40 Years	52	40
41 years and above	12	10
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 3 indicates that the active workplace in age 20 – 30 years and 31 – 40 years represents 50% and 40% of staff that are aware of information literacy by the staff of Murtala Muhammad Library Kano. while only 10% or ages 41 and above belong to the older staff. This proportion is good for easy assessment of information literacy skills.

Table 4:   Analysis of educational Status

Variables	Frequency	Percentage%
SSCE/GCE	29	22.5
OND	65	50
HND/B.Sc	32	25
Other HIGHER CERT.	3	2.5
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 4 indicates a total of 77.5% or 32 respondents that have sound educational background, ranging from OND, HND/B.Sc and other higher certificate as having a great understanding of the awareness and practice of information literacy among professional librarians.

Table 5: Analysis of Respondents Status

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Senior Staff	4	5
Middle level management	45	35
Junior Staff	78	60
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 5 shows both Junior Staff and middle level management staff responded well to the questionnaires which leads to the conclusion that a true picture of the practice of information literacy among professional librarians will be obtained. 24 or 60% of the respondents were Junior staff, seventy eight (78) or 35% of the respondents are middle level management staffs and are forty five (45) or 5% are Senior staff.

Table 6:   Are you Aware of Information Literacy?

Variables	frequency	Percentages%
Yes	71	55
No	58	45
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 6 above shows the response of the staff in the awareness and practice of information literacy among professional librarians. A critical look at Table 6 shows that 71 respondents (55%) are aware of the practice of information literacy among professional librarians while 58 or 45% are not fully aware of the practice of information literacy among professional librarians.

TABLE 7: what is the Level of Awareness of Information Literacy Among the Staff?

Variables	Frequency	Percentages%
Highly	25	20
Moderately	91	70
Not aware	13	10
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

An examination of Table 7 shows that 25 respondents representing 20% are highly aware of the practice of information literacy among professional librarian, while 91 or 70% of the respondents are moderately aware and 13 or 10% of respondents are not aware.

 Let us recall at this Information literacy is widely considered to be an essential survival skill for life in the Information Age, a vital underpinning to lifelong learning, and critical for a thriving democracy.

Therefore, Alan Bundy (2002) has identified information literacy as an issue of importance to all of society. Public libraries are regarded as being a leading and powerful force, ideally suited to promoting the development of information literacy and encouraging lifelong learning in their communities.

The provision of information literacy training by public libraries is highlighted as an 'essential service and the most important goal of libraries' with some suggesting that no other entity government or private is as ready to take on this growing need, has the skill-set necessary, or can do it as inexpensively as the public library. Public libraries have recognized and accepted this responsibility as reflected in the inclusion of information literacy as a goal in their various mission statements and strategic plans. Public libraries, in providing information literacy instruction, have the opportunity to foster the lifelong learning of their communities; lifelong learning being described as 'gaining knowledge to lead better, more fulfilling lives' and differentiated from formal, accredited programs of study. In fact, the concepts have become inextricably linked in the literature and it is not uncommon to find the two terms used interchangeably. There is also a tendency for information literacy to be used synonymously with 'user education' and it has been suggested that information literacy is simply a new brand name for the user education that librarians have traditionally provided.

Table 8: What Type of Information Literacy Skills Do the Staff Use?

Variables	Frequency	Percentages%
E-mail	4	2
Social media Chatting	4	2
WWW	5	3
User orientation	129	79
Library tour	10	7
Reference service	10	7
Total	**162**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 9 indicates that 129 (79%) practice library orientation, while 10 simultaneously practiced library tour and reference services with (7%) respectively. And 5(3%) practiced World Wide Web and 4(2%) practiced email and social media chatting. The analysis of the results indicated that majority of librarian participated in the library orientation and only few participated in the social media and email service. This may affect the services of the library since majority cannot provide literacy practices to library users outside the library wall

Table 9: How Effective is Information Literacy Programs to Professional Librarians

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Excellent	68	52.5

Very Good	45	35
Fair	16	12.5
Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 10 shows the effectiveness of information literacy programs to professional librarians. This inference is confirmed by the data in Table 10 in which 68 (52.5%) of respondents are excellent. A further examination of Table 10 shows that 45 respondents (35%) are very good respectively and (12.5%) are fair.

TABLE 10: What are the Challenges of information Literacy Practice in the Library?

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
1	Power failure	16	12.
2	System malfunction	1	1
3	Network breakdown	7	5
4	Low level of literacy	5	4
5	Inadequate training	7	5
6	Insufficient funding	67	52
7	Inadequate networking	12	10
8	Insufficient facilities	7	5
9	Lack of written guideline or policy that would guide the conduct of information literacy	7	5.5
	Total	**129**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Questionnaire, 2021.

Table 10 reveals the challenges of information literacy. A look at table 10 indicates that 16(12.5%) point out to power failure as the challenge for information literacy in the library while 1(1%) opined that system malfunction and also 7(5%) respondents opined that network breakdown and 5(4%) respondents low level of literacy and 7(5%) of the respondents said that inadequate training of staff and 67(52%) of the respondent said insufficient funding while 12(10%) of the respondents said inadequate networking and 7(5%) respondents said inadequate facilities while However, 7(5.5%) of the respondents said that Lack of written guideline or policy that would guide the conduct of information literacy.

The researcher found out from the respondents that the lingering challenge encountered in the awareness and practice of information literacy among professional librarians is insufficient funding. And closely to it is inadequate networking and power failure.

Nigerian Library Association, Gombe State Chapter

Summary of findings

The study investigated the awareness and practice of information literacy among professional librarians in public library Kano state. Information resources as determinant of academics' research productivity in Nigeria. From the analysis of data, the following findings and conclusion were reached:

1. The management of public libraries should adopt one of the information literacy competency standards available to be used in the institution and make such available to each course instructor while the necessity for achieving the standards should be stressed.

2. To implement these fully, the library should review its mission and educational goals to determine how information literacy would improve learning and enhance effectiveness.

3. It should also embark on staff development programmes for the acceptance of the implementation of the standards. It should stress the need for the librarians in teaching information literacy skills to the users.

4. The libraries should urgently develop its e-library project by procuring all necessary facilities and also open the planned Internet café for users to access the e-library and make effective use of its resource

5. The respondents suggested things that should be done to embed effective information literacy programmes in public library System. These are lofty suggestions which when implemented will go a long way in entrenching information literacy training in public libraries.

Conclusion

Clearly information literacy is central to the mission of any institution engaged in teaching, learning and research and librarians have a pivotal role in this regard. Lack of requisite skills, formalized and standardized information literacy programmes in our institutions will be detrimental to librarians contributing to building a knowledge society which will ensure equal participation in the developmental process. With well-organized and adequately taught information literacy in Nigerian universities, librarians will contribute in producing global citizens and lifelong learners who will make meaningful contributions to the world's developmental processes.

Information literacy programmes need to be implemented mainly by the library staff in schools, universities, public and other libraries in order to achieve library goals and to convert their users to lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Information literacy programmes will enable librarians to play a more prominent and meaningful role among their clients.

Recommendations

The following recommendations as evidenced from the findings of this study will improve the use of information literacy in institutions in the South East zone of Nigeria.

1. Librarians should reach out to partner with other stake holders in information literacy such as ICT staff and the faculty for a more enhanced approach in the teaching of information literacy. Impact assessment of information literacy should be constantly measured for institutions to appreciate it and want to key into it.

2. Librarians should lobby and advocate for more institutional involvement and for stakeholders to buy-in to the importance of information literacy. This will help improve the implementation of information literacy programmes and the acquisition of adequate ICT infrastructure to drive it.

3. Practical ways to improve the teaching of information literacy should be engaged for instance, offline posters may be culled out form online pages and used in the event of power outages, which are common in these institutions. CD ROM version of online materials can also be used when there are issues with Internet connections.

References.

Aveyard, H. 2014. *Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social Care*. UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Bell, J. 2010. *Doing your Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*. 5th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Bryman, A. 2008. *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Culpepper, JC. 2001. Pragmatic Assessment Impacts Support for Distance Education. *Collection Management*, 26(4):59.

Curry, A. 2005. World Library and Information Congress: 71th IFLA General Conference and Council "Libraries - A voyage of discovery" August 14th - 18th, Oslo, Norway Conference Programme. Available at: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/Programme.htm (Accessed 29 August 2021).

De Jager, K. & Nassimbeni.M. 2002. Institutionalizing Information Literacy in Tertiary Education: Lessons Learned from South African Programmes. *Library Trends*, 51(2):167-18.

De Vries, R. 2002. What does Research on Constructivist Education tell us about Effective Schooling? Iowa. The Iowa Academy of Education Occasional Research Paper, Des Moines.Available at http://www2.education.uiowa.edu/html/iae/iae-z-op-devries-1-5.pdf (Accessed 21 July 2021).

Gall, M., Gall, J. & Borg, W. 2007. *Educational Research: An Introduction*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson.

Jiyane, G. & Onyancha, O. 2010. Information Literacy Education and Instruction in Academic Libraries and LIS Schools in Institutions of Higher Education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Libraries & Information Science,* 76(1):11-23.

Martin, JL. 2013. Learning from Recent British Information Literacy Models: A Report to ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Task Force. MLIS, MA Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Mason, M. 2010. Myths Associated with Undergraduate Use of Academic Library. Available at: http://www.moyak.com/papers/academic-library-anxiety.html. (Accessed 23 May 2015)

McCaskie, L. 2004. What are the Implications for Information Literacy Training in Higher Education with the Introduction of Federated Search Tools? Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Sheffield. Available at:

http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dissertations/200304/External/McCaskie_Lucy_MAlib.pdf (Accessed 21 July 2021)

McQueen, M. 2002. Language and Power in Profit/non-profit Relationships: A Grounded Theory of Inter-sectoral Collaboration. Available at http://au.geocities.com/dr_meryl_mcqueen/phd/mcqueench3.htm (Accessed 8 October 2020).

Menjo, DK. 2011. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Implementation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Primary Teacher Training Colleges: A Case of Rift Valley Province, Kenya. PhD thesis, Moi University, Nairobi.

Ngulube, P. 2010. Mapping Mixed Methods Research in Library and Information Science Journals in Sub-Saharan Africa 2004-2008. *The International Information & Library Review,* (42):252-261.

Niemi, JA., Ehrkard, BJ & Neeley, L. 1998. Off-Campus Library Support for Distance Adult Learners. *Library Trends,* 47(1):65-74.

Nwezeh, MT. & Shabi, IN. 2011. Students' Use of Academic libraries in Nigeria: A Case of Obafemi Awolowo University Library, Ile-Ife. Library Philosophy and Practice, Available at: https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/nwezeh-shabi.pdf (Accessed 20 June 2016).

O'Connor, Lisa. 2009. Information Literacy as Professional Legitimate: A Critical Analysis, *Journal of Library & Information Science*, 50(2):79-89

O'Leary, M. 2002. E-global Library Advances the Virtual Library. *Information Today*, 1(3):19. Available at:http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/guidelinesdistancelearning (Accessed 20 May 2015).

Ojedokun, AA. 2007. *Information Literacy for Tertiary Education Students in Africa*. Ibadan: Third World Information Services.

Okojie, V. 2012.Information Literacy Skills and Use of Information and Communication Technologies by Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries. A Doctoral dissertation submitted to the Postgraduate School, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.

Polit, DF. & Beck, CT. 2012.*Nursing Research: Generating and Assessing Evidence for Nursing Practice.* 9th ed. London: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Polit, DF. & Hungler, BP. 2013. *Essentials of Nursing Research: Methods, Appraisal, and Utilization.* 8th ed. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.

Osuala EC (2016) introduction to research methodology African feb-publishers 1980 Bayero University Kano: a guide to the library 1982. Guidelines for handing library for serial and periodicals Chicago: ALA 2002.

Madu, E.C and ADeriran, T.N (2015). Information Technology uses and preservation of resources in libraries and information centers. Ibadan: EUi-colem