Significance of Librarians' Work Experience and ICT Skills on Effective Utilization of Information Resources

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the Significance of Librarians' Work Experience and ICT Skills in the Effective Utilization of Information Resources at Federal University Otuoke. Two objectives, research questions, and null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study covered academics. An ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population of the study was ten academic librarians. A census sampling technique was used for the study and a sample size of 10 academic librarians was used. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions 1-2 and a t-test was used to test null hypotheses 1-2. All the null hypotheses were tested at 05 levels of significance. The findings indicated that librarians' characteristics influenced the utilization of electronic information resources. The study concluded that Librarians' work experience and ICT skills are determinants for the influence of effective Utilization of information resources. Librarians' work experience and ICT skills in utilizing information resources are crucial for acquiring current, timely, relevant and up-to-date electronic information resources for academic activities. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the librarians' work experience and ICT skills be open to Utilizing information resources. Every librarian should be able and interested in using information resources regardless of their status.

Keywords: Significance, Librarians', Work experience, ICT skills, Utilization, and Information resources.

INTRODUCTION:

Librarians are in charge of the planning, managing, coordinating, organizing, staffinu and the acquiring resources in the library in terms of human resources and information resources. Academic librarians play vital and varied roles in the life of the university, guiding students and faculty at the reference desk, instructing library research sessions, and developing library collections (Alsop and Bordonaro, 2007). It is a truism to say that librarians in all sectors of an academic library wear many different hats and provide numerous services to the patrons. Skiadas, (1999) opines that the idea of knowledge has been a part of every culture on Earth. According to Chigbu

and Idoko, (2013), Librarians have been the primary agents and providers of information and information materials. Work experience from the training offered to the librarian enhances the quality of information accessibility and utilization in the various formats. Effective and the efficient information resource utilization by librarians is based on work experience, which enhances the living standard of the users and educates and informs those (Tahira & Ameen, 2011). It helps the users make quality and sound decisions, enhances their freedom of expression, empowers them to be conscious of their fundamental human rights, and serves as historical material for references to the clientele (Uhegbu, 2007). The proliferation of

information in various formats and the need to properly package these resources in the library for the users for effective and efficient information utilization can only be sustained by the librarian's work experience. ICT skills can be described as expertise and knowledge possessed by an individual using an electronic device such as a computer and its applications, the Internet applications, or any other technologies to search and the retrieve needed information or sends any information to other people electronically (Evans, 2023).

According to Odede, Ogbomo, and Enakerakpo (2015), ICT skill is the ability of an individual to identify the information required to satisfy their needs and how to use a computer and digital systems to source the information as well as how to use the information collected to solve a felt need. Possession of ICT skills enables one to stand a better chance of utilizing e-resources optimally. ICT skills constitute another skill that librarians must have, especially in this 21st-century information technology-driven world that has continually sharpened and shaped how information is generated, organized, stored, retrieved, and communicated. Palmer *et al.* (2008) emphasized that libraries are moving beyond a custodial role to managing various kinds of digital content. Libraries in Nigeria are increasingly gaining the status of electronic libraries; this portrays that their library consists of electronic materials and services, which can include all types of digital materials, as well as a variety of analog formats requiring electricity to use, such as video tapes (Ojedokun and Moahi, 2007). Nigerian university libraries, in their roles as knowledge creators and gatekeepers of knowledge, are rapidly witnessing the introduction of various information technologies. Some libraries have implemented integrated library systems, built digital collections, developed institutional repositories, and provided electronic services, such as access to the Internet, e-journals, email, and workstations for general computing, including word processing, spreadsheets, data analysis, and a host of other computer-based applications. In other words, libraries are now emphasizing electronic and digital information resources more.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) defined electronic information resources as information-bearing materials that require electronic or computer technology to appreciate their contents.

These resources include electronic databases, e-books, e-journals, online newspapers, and website content. While literate individuals can easily use traditional books and other traditional information resources, they will require some particular skill to utilize electronic information resources effectively. To the full extent of getting required information, the utilization of electronic information resources like e-books and e-journals is paramount to librarians. While there are many concerns about utilizing electronic information resources, Akpojotor, (2016) observed that individuals' information literacy skills are more likely to be effective before they use electronic information resources? Hence, information literacy skills could influence the Utilization of electronic information resources in the Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study
i. To determine the influence of librarians' work experience on utilizing electronic information resources.
ii. To determine the influence of librarians' ICT skills on the utilizing electronic information resources.

Research Questions
i. How do librarians' work experience influence utilizing electronic information resources?
ii. How do librarians' ICT skills influence utilizing electronic information resources?

Research Hypotheses
i. There is no significant influence of librarians' work experience on utilizing electronic information resources.
ii. There is no significant influence of librarians' ICT skills on utilizing electronic information resources.

Conceptual Framework
The concept in this study is the significance of librarians' work experience and ICT skills in university libraries. Librarians for problem-solving and self-enhancement utilize information resources in South-South, Nigeria.

Concept of Utilization of Information Resources
Chiemeke *et al.* (2007) believe that users approach the library with needs they hope to satisfy. They categorized library users into four groups: general readers, creative readers, adult students, and researchers with special interests. According to these

authors, all these people utilize library resources for one purpose or the other. The purpose also informs the choice of resources to be consulted. They observed that the last category, researchers, concentrate on textbooks, journals, online resources, and other relevant resources for research as demanded by their different professions. Utilization can be achieved if there is adequate access to information. Popoola, (2003) observed that information utilization leads to user's liberation from ignorance. Information acessibility, which, in turn, leads to information utilizeation, helps individuals to behave or act in an informed manner (Uheghu, 2007). Every individual, whether such could be recreation, leisure, or meeting tasks that are considered critical to survival. Through Utilization, library users avail themselves of the resources and put them into other purposes. Different people utilize library resources for different purposes. Some utilize library resources for general information on everyday life and economic, social, and political topics, while others utilize them for educational purposes. Azubuike, (2016) opined that information resources are the bedrock of the development of any university community. It is the primary factor applied in decision-making and helps to reduce the level of uncertainty. According to the Dictionary of Library and Information Science, electronic information sources are materials consisting of data or computer programming conceded for reading and manipulation by the computer use of a peripheral device directly connected to the computer or remotely via a network such as the Internet. Electronic information resources are; electronic journals, e-magazines, e-newsletters, e-books, and so on.

Influence of Librarians' Working Experience
Aramide *et al.* (2015) reported academic discipline as another factor determining the adoption and use of electronic information resources. They reported a significant difference between the academic disciplines of librarians. Various scholars also investigated the relationship between years of the librarian experience and ICT use, with the results showing variations in findings. Relating working experience to several studies carried out by scholars has revealed that the number of working experiences is a significant predictor of librarians. In addition, job lengths in service also tend to improve job performance because of acquaintance.

Influence of Librarians' ICT Skills
The ICT skills needed to use e-resources optimally include computer operations, applications software, Internet, and World Wide Web (www) skills (Oliver and Towers, 2000; Sejane, 2017). Another study by Adetimirin, (2012) on the availability, use of ICT, and the ICT literacy skills of undergraduate students in seven universities in Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted, and seven universities were selected. The study's findings showed that the Internet, telephone, and computer were the three ICTs most used by undergraduates. It also revealed that undergraduates in Benue State University and Imo State University had poor ICT literacy skills in their usage of ICT, while those with average ICT literacy skills were in UNIMAID and ABU (the federal universities). Nevertheless, university libraries are doing well by subscribing to many of these electronic resources. Hence, the greater Utilization of electronic resources by undergraduates constitutes a significant percentage of the user community and makes it necessary to examine the variable (ICT skills) that influences the effective and efficient use of the electronic resources.

METHODOLOGY:
This study adopted the ex post facto research design; the study's population comprised ten librarians. The study's sample size was ten librarians, comprising only academic librarians. Census sampling techniques were used to select the sample.

The researcher developed an instrument that elicits information on the librarians' indices (work experience and ICT skills) on utilizing information resources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:
Research Question 1
What influence do librarians' working experiences have on using electronic information resources?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Librarians' Working Experience.

	Influence of Librarians' Working Experience	N	Mean	SD
Utilization of electronic information resources	Agreed	09	58.31	2.05
	Disagreed	01	28.37	3.07

The researcher administered the questionnaire and analyzed the data obtained from the fieldwork, using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while a t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a .05 level of significance. The result in **Table 1** above reveals that librarians with more work experience have a higher mean score of 58.31, while those with less work experience have a lower mean score of 28.37. The result means that the higher working experience librarians influence the utilization of electronic information resources of the librarians with lower working experience in Federal University Otuoke library. The result in **Table 2** above reveals that the librarians with high skills in ICT have a higher mean score of 44.55 than the librarians who are less skilled in ICT, with a lower mean score of 21.72. The result means that highly ICT-inclined librarians influence the ones with less ICT-inclined librarians in the utilizing information resources in the Federal University Otuoke library.

Research Question 2
What is the influence of librarians' ICT skills on utilizing information resources?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the Influence of Librarians' ICT Skills.

	Influence of Librarians' ICT Skills	N	Mean	SD
Utilization of information resources	Agreed	08	44.55	4.18
	Disagreed	02	21.72	4.31

Testing of Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1
Ho$_1$: Librarians' working experiences do not significantly influence information resource utilization.

Table 3: Independent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Librarians' Working Experiences.

	Influence of Librarians' Working Experiences	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-cri Decision at .05 alpha
Utilization of information resources	Agreed	09	32.28	2.50		
	Disagreed	01	26.42	3.27	12.85*	1.876 S

*significant at P< .05; df= 8

The result in **Table 3** above reveals that the calculated t-value of 12.85 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.876 at 05 significance levels with 8-degree freedom. The result is significant; therefore, the null hypothesis that Librarians' working experiences do not significantly influence the utilization of information resources was rejected. The result means that Librarians' working experiences significantly influence the utilization of information resources. The result in **Table 4** reveals that the calculated t-value of 9.83 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.876 at a 05 significance level with 8-degree freedom.

Hypothesis 2
Ho$_2$: Librarians' ICT Skills do not significantly influence the utilization of information resources.

Table 4: Independent T-test Analysis of the Influence of Librarians' ICT Skills.

	Influence of Librarians' ICT Skills	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-cri Decision at .05 alpha
Utilization of electronic information resources	Agreed	08	31.39	3.1		
	Disagreed	02	25.81	3.39	9.83*	1.876 S

*significant at P< .05; df= 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
Based on the study's findings, librarians' characteristics, with particular emphasis on librarians' working experiences and ICT skills, have utilized electronic information resources at the Federal University Otuoke Library. Librarians' working experiences significantly influence the utilization of electronic information resources. Hence, hypothesis one, which assumed no significant influence of librarians' working experiences in the Federal University Otuoke Library, was rejected. Librarians' ICT skills significantly influences the utilization of electronic information resources. The result is significant; therefore, the null hypothesis that librarians' ICT skills do not significantly influence the utilization of electronic information resources was rejected. The result means that Librarians' ICT skills significantly influence the utilization of information resources.

1) Librarians should have adequate working experience in order to be able to utilize electronic information resources.
2) Librarians should be proficient to use ICT. Librarians' ICT skills are paramount to enhance electronic information resources usage.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The authors confirm that they have no conflict of interest.

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